



Three Chords and the Truth B8

Beachcombing Report A5

Nature Notes A5

The Art of Island Life A6

Backwater Adventures B1

Issue 1130

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The Island Moon

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December 11, 2025

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Octopus on the rocks by Padre Island Madre

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Island Moon Live

By Dale Rankin

Airwaves have been flooded in this early Christmas season with a grocery store ad that uses a few lines from George Strait's *When it's Christmas Time in Texas* but a few of the omitted lines come to mind as we wind down into the La Posada weekend *Around The Island*.

*When it's Christmas time in Texas
It might look just like a summer day
There may not be snow in San Antonio
But it's a Texas Christmas to me*

As I was looking back through the Moon archives this week at photos from our beautiful snowfall on Christmas Eve 2004 I came across a forgotten dusting of snow we got in 2017 which was also the same year Hurricane Harvey paid us a visit. But as of this writing it looks like we may have some Chamber of Commerce Weather for our Friday and Saturday boat parades that should bring out the smaller boats that often hide when Old Man Winter comes calling. This is the big weekend on the island calendar and we want to thank Hilda and her army of volunteers who have worked all year to make this happen. If you can't find the Christmas Spirit after watching the lighted boat parades on The Island you might be a Grinch!

The Friday night parade ends with a party on Jackfish that has been going on for decades. If you have never been you might want to stop by as it is a place where you will see fellow Islanders who hibernate the rest of the year and some who have moved OTB and come back to just to see old friends. Like all parties *Around The Island* if you have heard about a party you are invited – it's The Island Way.

Drone fishing

In the last issue of the Island Moon we took on the question of what is legal when it comes to using a drone to catch fish. Our story prompted a flurry of activity on theislandmoonnewspaper Facebook page and on our Island

Around cont. on A3

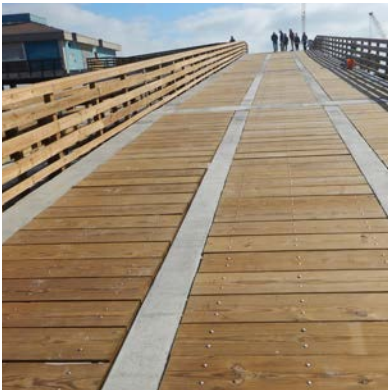
Bob Hall Pier nearing completion

Tentative public opening set for mid-January

By Dale Rankin

The new \$22.7 million Bob Hall Pier may be open for public use by mid-January, 2026 according to county officials this week.

Officials from Callan Marine, Ltd, the company doing the construction work on the pier said Monday they expect work on the pier to be finished by the end of December and the pier should be ready to open to the public by "mid-January."



Boards at the ramp of the pier

The majority of the wooden planks that make up the 20 foot-wide walkway of the 1253 foot-long pier are in place. The last piece of the pier is the assembly of the D-shaped structure at the seaward end of the pier which will be supported by concrete beams which weigh 130,000 pounds each and must be lifted into place with a crane. The beams are currently at the construction site on a barge awaiting two consecu-

Bob Hall cont. on page A3

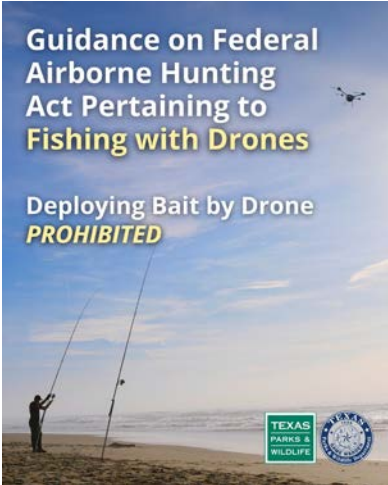
Drone Fishing Clarity Provided

Texas Parks and Wildlife issues formal statement

By Jacob Augs

We received a ton of reactions and questions about our drone article from last week, and the larger movement coast-wide has sparked a formal reaction from Texas Parks and Wildlife.

AUSTIN – Due to technological advancements with Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), also known as drones, now widely available, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Depart-



ment (TPWD) has noticed an increase in questions connected to their use in relation to fishing and wildlife. Some of the most frequent questions have been about the legality of using drones for deploying bait by surf or bank fisherman.

To address this, TPWD staff reviewed Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 19.11, also known as the Federal

Drone Fishing cont. on page A4

Funds to repair Michael J. Ellis Seawall in limbo

\$15 million earmarked no longer available

By Dale Rankin

A plan to use \$15 million committed to the restoration of the Michael J. Ellis Seawall on Padre Island hit a snag this week when the Board of Directors of the Island Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #2 (TIRZ #2) were informed that \$15 million in funds from the zone are no longer available and a new source of funding will need to be identified.

One source of funding, suggested by Corpus Christi City Manager



Seawall repairs in 1981

Peter Zaroni, is a 1/8 cent Type B Sales Tax which was approved by voters in 2023 and is set to begin in 2026 which is earmarked for drainage and erosion protection projects. A tentative meeting of the board was set for later in December to address the issue. The presence of the protective seawall affects the flood insurance rates of more than half of Island structures, primarily residential homes.

It is estimated that a total of up

Seawall cont. on page A6

A little Island history

When the Pirate Jean Lafitte Used The Island as a Hideout

*Baffin Bay and Lafitte Island were his lair
Left loot buried that has never been found*

By Dale Rankin

Outside of the men who died at the Alamo few characters in Texas history stir the imagination like the pirate Jean Lafitte. One of the most intriguing things about Lafitte's time in Texas is that there is very little contemporary writing about it. Almost all of what we know, whether it is his smuggling prowess or the location of his



Portrait of Jean Lafitte

buried treasure, was passed down by word of mouth then at some time well after his death reduced to writing not by others. Even his death is shrouded in mystery with stories that stretch from Campeche to St. Louis, MO. But there is ample documentation gathered here from a wide variety of sources that link Lafitte to Padre Island.

History cont. on A8

The new Bob Hall Pier

Costs

The following numbers come from the firm of Lockwood, Andres and Newnam (LAN) who were hired by Nueces County to review the numbers for the Bob Hall Pier reconstruction project.

\$22.7 budget

\$2,691,151 Spent on demolition

\$2,851,221 Committed to professions services

\$2 million for restaurant building

Dimensions

1253 feet long

18.5 feet above the water

20 feet wide

La Posada Weekend!

*The lighted
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Friday December 12 7:00 pm

televised by KRIS 6 at Doc's Waterline. Register your boat to participate at Laposadadfoundation.org

Saturday December 13 Parade

begins at 6:00 at Caravel Boat Ramp



Funding for new \$8 million Briscoe King Pavilion in place

*\$1.2 million in additional funding approved
No date set for construction*

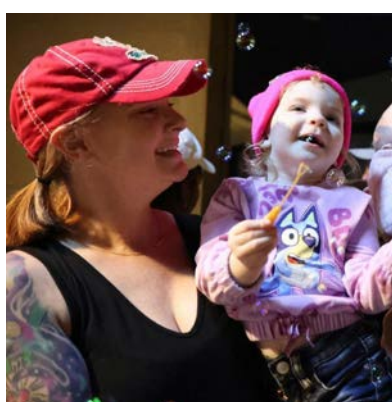
By Dale Rankin

The final piece in funding for the new \$8 million Briscoe King Pavilion was put in place by the Board of Directors of the Island Tax

Briscoe cont. on page A7

Whitecap NPI Holiday Lights

Whitecap NPI held a community celebration and tree lighting ceremony on December 3rd. It was a full house with Santa, the Children's Choir from Seashore and Hot Chocolate from Island Joe's. Photos By Debbie Noble



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Letters to the Editor

I AM WHEEL. HEAR ME SQUEAK.



Fifty years on the Laguna

The stories by Gene Seagert in the Moon remind me of some of my experiences commercial fishing in the Laguna Madre for about 50 years. One winter it got so cold that most of the Laguna froze with a thin layer of ice on top of the water. Most of the fish went to the Intracoastal Canal to stay warm but the first tugboat that went down the canal stirred up the water and all of the fish froze. I dipped up about 300 pounds of small frozen trout in Baffin Bay and never caught another trout or red fish in many months.

Sometimes I would catch one or two bull drum a day and every once in a while catch a bull red. So the next summer I decided to save up enough money to go to one of the islands in the Caribbean to spend the next winter. But lo and behold, it got so hot that summer I had to use the AC and drink a lot of beer to stay cool. It seemed like there was a heat wave all summer long. Therefore I only saved up enough money to have made it south to Port Isabel.

I am now 95 year old which makes me believe the old saying that days spent fishing do not count against your age. And don't forget, old fishermen never die, they just smell that way.

Bobbie Kimbrell

Around cont. from A1

Moon Live YouTube channel and elicited a response from the Texas Parks & Wildlife headquarters in Austin. The applicable regulations were written before drones were a thing and needed some attention. It may be something the outdoors organizations *Around The Island* might want to consider getting involved with for more clarity and even some revisions.

Speedy Stop

As we were going to press mid-week word came from the owners of Speedy Stop that they hope to begin work on the new store at their location next to American Bank on The Island in “early 2026.” The ground work has been in place there for some time and the new location will offer an in store restaurant, multiple gas pumps, and even a liquor store. We will keep you apprised as things progress.

Bob going OTB

We ran into Islander Bob Corbett this week who informed us he is moving OTB, way OTB in fact all the way to North Carolina. Bob has been a long-serving member of the Island Strategic Action Committee and was involved in seeking a solution to the drainage problems that have plagued us since the

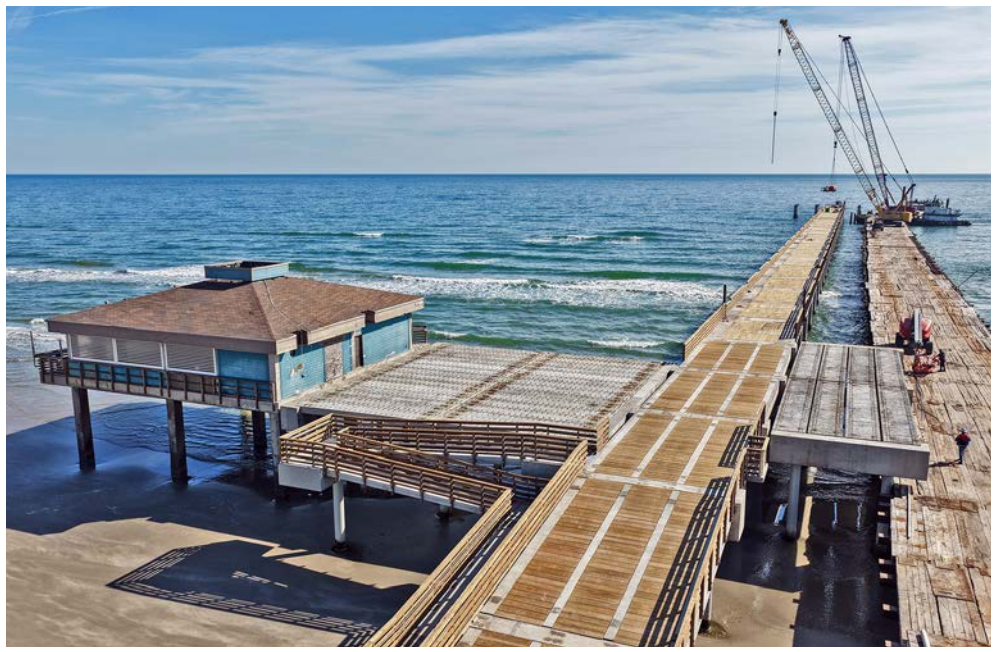


The Speedy Stop site at Park Road 22 and Hwy 361

Bob Hall cont. from A1

tive days of clear weather to be hoisted into place and could be placed by the end of this week, according to Callan Marine officials.

Still undetermined is when power to the lighting on the new pier will be in place. The power transmission boxes for the new pier will be located in the new 5000 square-foot restaurant facility where construction is not expected to be complete until at least mid-2026. County officials told the Island Strategic Action Committee last week that the power system for the pier will not be ready until that time, meaning that the new lights on the pier could remain dark until that structure is complete. They said Tuesday it may be possible to power the



Bob Hall construction continues

Base Flood Elevation was raised from nine to eleven feet a few years ago. We will miss having you *Around The Island* Bob and thank you for all you have done. Maybe we will see you at the Jackfish party next year!

*There may not be snow in San Antonio
But it's a Texas Christmas to me*

It's time to La Posada everybody, we'll see you at the parades and in the meantime say hello if you see us *Around The Island*.

On the Cover



This past week, Padre Island Madre was out for her morning beach stroll and noticed this gem chilling in the rocks. I was fortunately able to witness this rare find as well. He moved all around, accepted her shell gift then decided to give it back. What an experience!! She took some amazing video footage too. Hope you can share this with your readers! Such a rare find around here. Lisa Cook

Moon Monkeys

Mike Ellis, Founder



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Stuff I Heard on the Island



By Dale Rankin

When I began writing this column 25 years ago the idea from Mike Ellis was simple; wander around The Island and write down the Stuff You Heard and answer the questions that come up. So with that in mind all these years later here we go...

Commodores Bridge

The Commodores Bridge is now finished, bulkheads and all. As you can see when you drive by the water flow in the canal is blocked on the south side of the bridge by a sand dam. The most asked question on The Island is when that dam and the similar one east of the Don Patricio Bridge will be removed opening direct access between the Island canal system and the gulf. The answer right now is wrapped up in the vicissitudes of the permitting process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. What I can say based on the word of the parties involved is that both of the dams are likely to be removed at the same time. I think it is safe to say that the will of just about all of the residents on Padre Island is to have the canals open and sooner or later that will happen. There is some work behind the scenes going on that could resolve the issue fairly soon and we will report them here once facts are settled. Stay tuned.

POA lawsuit

There is a cryptic item on the agenda for the Board of Directors Meeting of the Padre Isles Property Owners Association scheduled for Tuesday, December 16 that reads:

II. NEW BUSINESS (with motions): a. POA Board Member Lawsuit Status

The item refers to a lawsuit filed with the Nueces County Clerk on October 20 by the owners of one of the homes where the bulkheads were damaged by Tropical Storm Alberto in June, 2024 against, among others, the PIPOA seeking unspecified damages. The case is in its early stages and having read it I will say I am not impressed with the way it is written nor most of the claims included. It reads like something that might have been written after a long happy hour. What remains to be seen is what exactly will be discussed regarding the case at the Tuesday meeting and also exactly how much of the members' money has been spent on defense attorneys and how much will be allocated moving forward. I will simply say that whatever is spent on legal defense is the business of the dues paying members and they need to know how much of their money is being used to defend the organization and its officers. Stay tuned.

Encantada water flow

The question of when the clogged-up culverts under Encantada Avenue will be replaced by box culverts to relieve pressure on Island bulkheads is simple. Not soon. There is a chicken and egg problem as the City of Corpus Christi, who for a decade denied responsibly for ownership and/or responsibility for the existing culverts which were maintained by the PIPOA, has now agreed to place box culverts there once the adjacent canals are dredged to prevent the new culverts from filling back up with sand. On the other hand the PIPOA leadership who is responsible for the dredging has said they will not dredge until the box culverts are in place; hence the chicken and egg problem. So when will the box culverts be installed? When the chicken hatches out of the egg and lays another egg. This project is as clogged up as the culverts which need to be replaced and the chicken that has to lay the egg. Don't bother staying tuned folks because there is no movement here.

JFK Causeway improvements

As regular readers of this space know I have had some amusement over the years poking fun at the lack of progress of improvements of the space under the JFK Bridge and the surrounding area naming the periodic mud holes that drain and fill there the Twin Lakes of Muddle and Puddle. I commend the staff at the city for staying with this project and I can say from firsthand experience that the alphabet soup made up of the various state, federal, and local agencies that have overlapping jurisdiction there creates a bureaucratic maze that has proven impossible to navigate for two decades in spite of the best efforts of the city staff and \$2.5 million in approved bond money. Exactly how much of that money remains in the coffers after a series of forgotten studies is a matter currently under discussion. Having said that it looks like there may be some progress. The Island Strategic Action Committee (ISAC) has put the work to improve things there at the top of their wish list for the 2026 bonds and there may also be some funding help from the State of Texas. City staffers told ISAC members this month that the design work for improvements there is expected to be at 60% in January, 2026 and "construction in expected to begin in May 2026." That may be tad ambitious but if the days of the Twin Lakes of Muddle and Puddle are coming to a close you will find no Islander more happy to toss them into the Dustbin of Island History than your humble scribe. Stay tuned.

Island meeting space

ISAC meetings have once again been moved from The Island to city hall. Since the ISAC was formed in 2010 it has been a constant struggle to find meeting space on The Island since there is no city budget to pay for it. Over the past fifteen years I have attended every meeting on The Island of the group because year in and year out it is the most important and direct way we Islanders have of communicating with a single voice with our city leaders. It has only been in the past six months that the meetings have not been held on The Island after all existing spots here have been exhausted. But there is some light at the end of the tunnel. First, work on the new hotel on the Michael J. Ellis Seawall is about to begin and it will include sufficient space – if the owners will provide it without cost. Second, as reported in this issue the final piece of the funding puzzle for the new Briscoe King Pavilion was put in place this week and it was clearly and emphatically stated at the meeting of the board of the Island Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #2 (TIRZ #2) this week that free space will be provided there for ISAC meetings. Stay tuned.

Things are looking up...

When you have lived on Padre Island for a while it is easy to become cynical. Not a week goes by that someone doesn't approach me to suggest that we de-annex from the City of Corpus Christi. Like the lawsuit mentioned above it sounds like a good idea at happy hour but forget it; it is not an option.

When I took over the Island Moon in 2007 I soon realized that Islanders, who numbered about 6000 in those days, were essentially powerless at city hall. We split our vote evenly between candidates for mayor and city council seats and as a result got nothing but static coming from OTB. But in the time since then things have changed largely because Islanders have volunteered their time to make things better. In 2010 we formed the Island United Political Action Committee to endorse and fund candidates for city offices and through that effort, with the help of then District 4 Council Member Chris Adler, that same year we formed the ISAC mentioned above which has had a long succession of great leadership starting with Gabi Hilpold for the first five years followed by Greg Smith, Libby Edwards, Brud Jones, Charles Duffley, and now Bryan Gulley. Our city council for the past fifteen years has relied on ISAC to sort through Island issues and come up with suggested solutions and that system has served us well. The ISAC is the only organization of its kind anywhere in the city.

A whole series of Island projects have come about after a push from ISAC. Not only the JFK Causeway work and the Don Patricio Bridge and the Commodores Bridge (both of which used TIRZ #2 funding), but new canals to connect them (that will be open someday), and a skatepark that is rolling our way, along with long-needed improvements to Commodores Park, and the Island Mobility Plan which is headed for approval at city hall and will release \$14.1 million in state money for Island sidewalks and cart paths.

The biggest item has been the attention paid to repairing weather damage to the Island seawall thanks to former City Councilman Dan Suckley who did the heavy lifting. The dust up this week regarding the \$15 million in funding for that project is a bump in the road and it will be worked out. The fact is that there is \$2 million in the TIRZ #2 budget for this year that has been used to fund the engineering work needed before that project can move forward and that work is already underway. The property owners along the seawall who raised the funding issue this week through their spokesman are right to keep it in the spotlight because it is important work and will happen. Stay tuned.

We have a system that has evolved organically. ISAC members meet each month with city staff in open meetings and work out solutions to Island problems and set an agenda for things that need to get done and our city council listens. An ISAC subcommittee also has formed to monitor spending in the TIRZ #2 accounts, a much-needed development, then their recommendations go back to ISAC for a formal vote which then goes to the TIRZ #2 board (made up of elected officials) who make the spending decision. We have more than 8000 registered voters on Padre Island and we turn out for elections in which we can vote for five of the nine seats on our city council. So we now have a three-tiered system that channels our wants and needs to decision makers OTB and places us in a position to have a direct say in our affairs that is unique to The Island and is appreciated by our council members who have a lot on their collective plate. Being cynical is okay but it doesn't solve any problems folks... but we have a system. Stay tuned.

Drone Fishing cont. from page 1

Airborne Hunting Act (AHA), which was first enacted in 1956. Staff also sought guidance from the Office of Law Enforcement within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The result of that analysis and discussion is the determination that 50 CFR § 19.11 (b) (2) prohibits the use of aircraft, which includes UAS or drones, to take or attempt to take wildlife, or aid in the act of fishing. For more information about Texas' hunting and fishing regulations, visit tpwd.texas.gov.

Definitions as defined in 50 CFR§10.12 that apply to 50 CFR § 19.11:

Aircraft means any contrivance (device) used for flight in the air.

Fish or wildlife means any wild animal, whether alive or dead, including without limitation any wild mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, mollusk, crustacean, arthropod, coelenterate, or other invertebrate, whether or not bred, hatched, or born in captivity, and including any part, product, egg, or offspring thereof.

Take means to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect. (With reference to marine mammals, see Part 18 of this subchapter.) Wildlife means the same as fish or wildlife.

Does the AHA prohibit the use of UAS or drones by recreational, surf, or bank fishermen for deploying bait?

Yes. UAS or drones cannot be used to deploy bait according to 50 CFR § 19.11 (b) (2) as that is considered aiding in the take or attempt to take wildlife, which includes fish.

Does the AHA prohibit TPWD from issuing a permit authorizing the use of UAS or drones by recreational, surf, or bank fishermen for deploying bait?

Yes. 50 CFR § 19.31 (a) prohibits a state from issuing permits for the purpose of sport hunting, which includes recreational or sport fishing

Where do we go from here?

Although to my knowledge, there hasn't been a single ticket issued, and every interaction that I have heard of or seen has just ended up with the Game Wardens informing anglers. We aren't in the enforcement phase just yet, so that brings up more questions. Apparently, TPWD might possibly issue a "leniency period" in order to inform fishermen. They could also begin enforcing the law soon, relying on social media and press alerts to get the word out.

This could end up being not heavily, or not at all enforced, due to the non-invasive

nature of drone fishing. The federal law that TPWD is basing this off of is the Federal Airborne Hunting Act of 1956. This obviously predates drones, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. The TPWD Outdoor Annual, which informs the public yearly of changes in bag and size limits, previously included language about drones that we published in our last issue. That language is now missing from the latest release of the Outdoor Annual.

The law of unintended consequences

On the other hand, the problem that I am foreseeing with the repercussions of this interpretation of a law from the 50's, may be worse than we thought. Under strict interpretation of this rule, wildlife photography and video would be prohibited from drones, which are way less invasive than people trampling around in bird sanctuaries to get the latest numbers of migrating Great Egrets, Reddish Egrets, Tricolored Herons, Caspian Terns, and Black Skimmers. Would bird studies need special permission to perform studies of migrating birds on rookery islands, and is it now illegal to hunt pigs from a helicopter? What about using a drone to determine the depth of channels in the back bays and mangroves to make sure you can get your boat in and out without damaging your boat and disturbing wildlife?

Added to all of this, is a ban on the import of DJI drones into the US as of December 23rd. DJI is the most popular (and the most advanced in terms of quality and usability) drone in the US. They make recreational, professional, and industrial drones, and are the most widely used drones by a mile for police, fire, rescue, and recovery units in the US. Any DJI drone already in the US should continue working and be fine, but updates to firmware and software, as well as getting repair parts or batteries could be an issue in the near future. This has been a move from US drone manufacturers to curtail the amount of foreign drones coming into the country, and make people more reliant on US made drones. To sum it all up, if you are planning on getting a drone in the air, you may be in for a fight.



Padre Islanders Sarah and Jimmy Peña took the Island Moon to the Island on Curaçao.

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Male North Island brown kiwi bird, sitting in its nest.
Photo by Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, Public domain

You may wonder which came first, the Kiwi (fruit), the Kiwi (people), or the Kiwi (bird). Although a much-loved subtropical fruit and a colloquial term for New Zealanders, the Kiwi bird was the first! This bird, native to New Zealand, is not named after the fruit, but was named by the Maori people of New Zealand after the bird’s call, which they thought sounded like “kee-wee.” The informal “Kiwi”, used to describe the people of New Zealand, was inspired by this national symbol.

There are five species of Kiwi, all of which are flightless, nocturnal, and endemic to, or found only in, New Zealand. For being a smaller to medium-sized bird, the Kiwi can live for quite a long time- up to 50 years! As a result, it typically takes three to five years for individuals to reach their adult size after hatching. Individuals of different species range in size from two to eight pounds and in color from gray to brown. In all Kiwi species, females are the larger sex and have longer bills than males.

As if these birds weren’t interesting enough as is, the Kiwi holds the world record for producing the largest eggs relative to its body size, with females laying an egg weighing up to 25% of their body weight! During the few days leading up to egg laying, females are not able to eat, as the egg takes up too much of the body cavity. Instead, females rely on fat stores to finish producing their giant egg. Kiwi chicks are precocial, meaning they emerge from the egg fully feathered and with open eyes.

The most common species of Kiwi are the Brown kiwi, the Great spotted kiwi, and the Tokoeka, all of which have populations ranging from 15,000 to 26,000 individuals. Unfortunately, being a flightless bird has its disadvantages, as Kiwi adults and chicks are vulnerable to stoats, dogs, cats, ferrets, and vehicles. Despite their large population sizes, the Great spotted kiwi and the

Tokoeka are considered threatened. Similarly, two other species of Kiwi, the Little spotted Kiwi and the Rowi, are classified as threatened and have very small populations in the wild (500-1,800 individuals). Things are looking up, however, as populations of Kiwi are increasing in certain areas as a result of continual conservation and predator control efforts.

Kiwi hold great cultural significance and are national symbols of New Zealand, representing the uniqueness of New Zealand’s wildlife and the value of New Zealand’s national heritage. The Maori of New Zealand consider the Kiwi a taonga, or treasure, with which they have special spiritual and historical connections. Due to their cultural, spiritual, and historical significance, the Maori have become key stakeholders in Kiwi management and conservation.

I enjoyed watching videos of these birds in my Ornithology class, and every once in a while, a video of a Kiwi running around in the wild will pop up on my social media feed. These never fail to make me smile, as the birds have a very goofy run! If you are ever in need of a quick pick-me-up, I highly recommend looking up videos of Kiwis scurrying around.





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Jace Tunnell holding a lugworm on Mustang Island

If you’ve ever wandered across a quiet Texas bay at low tide and noticed little spirals of mud dotting the surface, you’ve seen the calling card of one of our most important — yet least noticed — estuary residents: the lugworm. These unassuming marine worms spend their lives hidden beneath our feet, quietly engineering the sediment and keeping our bays healthy.

Lugworms live in U-shaped burrows that reach six to 12 inches deep, with a vertical “chimney” at the surface that functions like a feeding shaft. From this muddy chimney they pull water and organic particles down into the burrow, feeding on microscopic material in the sediment. Their mealtime clean-up creates those familiar coiled castings on the surface, a sure sign that the mudflats are alive and well.

This time of year, a special bonus may turn up along the flats: gelatinous lugworm egg masses. Females attach these jelly-like blobs to the upper part of their burrows, sometimes packing hundreds, even thousands, of eggs into a single mass. The mother stays busy, pumping water through the burrow to keep the developing embryos oxygenated. After a few days, once the larvae hatch and disperse, the jelly sac dissolves completely, leaving only a sandy tube behind — a fleeting clue that reproduction took place.

Lugworms thrive in soft mud and sand throughout Texas bays, lagoons, and estuaries, favoring quiet, shallow areas with minimal wave action. They live three to five years, sometimes longer when left undisturbed, though life in the mud is far from danger-free. Fish, crabs, larger polychaete worms, shorebirds, and even stingrays consider them a nutritious treat. Bottom-feeding fish will excavate the sediment just to get a meal.

While rarely noticed by beachgoers, lugworms play an outsized ecological role. Their constant burrowing and feeding stir and aerate the sediment, a process scientists call bioturbation, bringing oxygen deeper into the mud and helping countless other organisms survive. Around the world they’re even prized as fishing bait, but here at home they serve as quiet custodians of our bays, recycling nutrients and keeping estuary systems running smoothly. So next time you spot those coiled castings — or a mysterious jelly blob — take a closer look. There’s a whole hidden world wriggling just below the surface. Jace Tunnell is the Director of Community Engagement for the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. His Beachcombing series appears on YouTube and you can follow Jace at harterresearch.org, or Facebook (facebook.com/harterresearch), Instagram (@harterresearch) and X (@HarteResearch) (the platform formerly known as Twitter).



Lugworm castings on Mustang Island



Lugworm egg mass on Mustang Island

The Art of Island Life

The Sweetest Kind of Holiday Tradition

By Melissa Mitchell

There’s a moment each December when the entire house smells like the holidays—warm spices drifting from the kitchen, the quiet hum of the mixer, and that first taste of dough that tells you Christmas is officially on its way. For me, that moment comes with gingerbread cookies. Soft, slightly spiced, rolled in sparkling sugar... and just nostalgic enough to make me slow down for a minute.

When I created my version of the gingerbread cookie with chewy centers, crisp edges, sparkling sugar on top—they quickly became my go-to holiday recipe and Claire Elizabeth’s favorite! They’re simple enough for weeknights, nostalgic enough for tradition, and delicious enough that you may want to double the batch right from the start.

And because recipes are meant to be shared, here’s mine—straight from my kitchen to yours.

Melissa’s Gingerbread Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened (Kerrygold is my kitchen staple)
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup molasses (I prefer Wholesome brand organic unsulfured blackstrap from Whole Foods)
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 1 large egg
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (I love Caputo 00 flour)
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- *• 1/1 tsp ground cloves
- *• 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp fresh ground nutmeg
- *• 1/4 tsp black pepper
- *• 1/4 cup sparkling sugar

*slightly heaping—because in true Southern fashion, and following my grandmothers’ rules, some things are measured more by feeling, scent, and memory than by level teaspoons.

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 375°F with racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven.

Beat butter and brown sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add molasses and vanilla; mix on low just until combined. Add the egg and beat until the mixture thickens slightly, about 30 seconds.

In a separate bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and spices.

Gradually add dry ingredients to wet ingredients, mixing on low just until combined. Place sparkling sugar in a shallow bowl.

Roll portions of dough into balls and lightly dip the tops in sugar.

Arrange on parchment-lined baking sheets, spacing 2 inches apart. Gently flatten each ball with the back of a wooden spatula.

Bake 8–10 minutes. All ovens have their own personalities, and some bake a little unevenly, so you may need to rotate your pan if you notice a few cookies coloring faster than others. These can brown on the

bottom in a hurry, so give them a peek at the 7-minute mark. In my oven, 8 minutes is the sweet spot.

Transfer to a wire rack and let them cool completely.

With a little salt, a little sweet, a bit of crunch, and a soft, chewy center, these just may be Santa’s favorite cookies this year!

Holiday traditions don’t always arrive wrapped in ribbon. Sometimes they show up as a simple recipe that becomes “the one,” a cookie everyone asks for, a moment in the kitchen that turns into a memory. Gingerbread is a gift all on its own—memories, traditions, and love packed into a little tin or box. Share a few with a friend or neighbor this season, and you might be surprised how far a simple cookie can travel in someone’s heart. However you celebrate this season, I hope you find sweetness in the small things... and maybe a little extra sugar on top.

A quick Evoke update

There are only a few shopping days left before Christmas at Evoke Studios & Gifts before I travel for the holidays!

Hours:

- Tuesday–Thursday: 11a–4p
- Friday & Saturday: 12p–4p
- Closed: December 23rd–27th

If you need something outside those hours, just reach out—I’ll do my very best to accommodate you.

Gift certificates are also available—one size fits all!

And we have beautiful new items arriving daily for men, women, and children.

The Art of Island Life will return next week with more coastal stories and community inspiration. Have a holiday tradition or memory you’d like to share? I’d love to hear from you at contact@melissamitchellart.com



Melissa’s Gingerbread Cookies

Seawall cont. from A1

to \$30 million will be needed for seawall repair and the City of Corpus Christi in 2024 took over maintenance of the 50 year-old structure which was to be funded solely through TIRZ #2. However, a shortfall in estimated income into the fund has led to a search for new funding. Previously the multiple owners of the property along the seawall were each individually responsible for its maintenance and repair until they signed an agreement providing the city with an access easement to allow for repair work there. Presently \$2 million is in place to begin engineering studies to determine what work will be needed to restore the seawall and that work continues.

TIRZ #2 by the numbers...

The city staff last week provided the members of the Island Strategic Action Committee an update on funds in the TIRZ #2 as of December 1, 2025. The numbers reflect the amount of unencumbered funds after existing obligations, including Packery Channel maintenance, are met. They read as follows:

\$6 million income for 2025

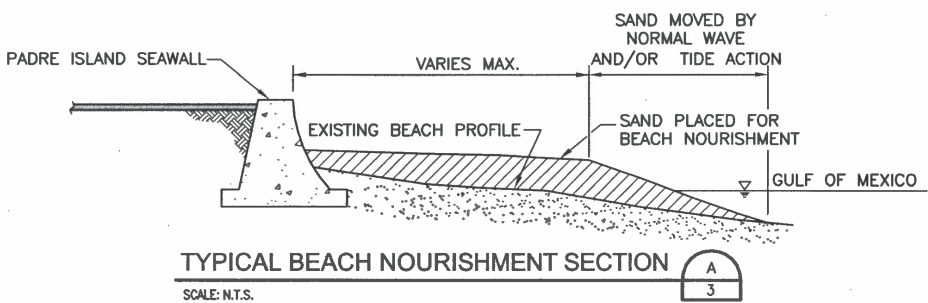
\$400,000 fund balance expected in January, 2026

\$3.5 million fund balance expected January, 2027

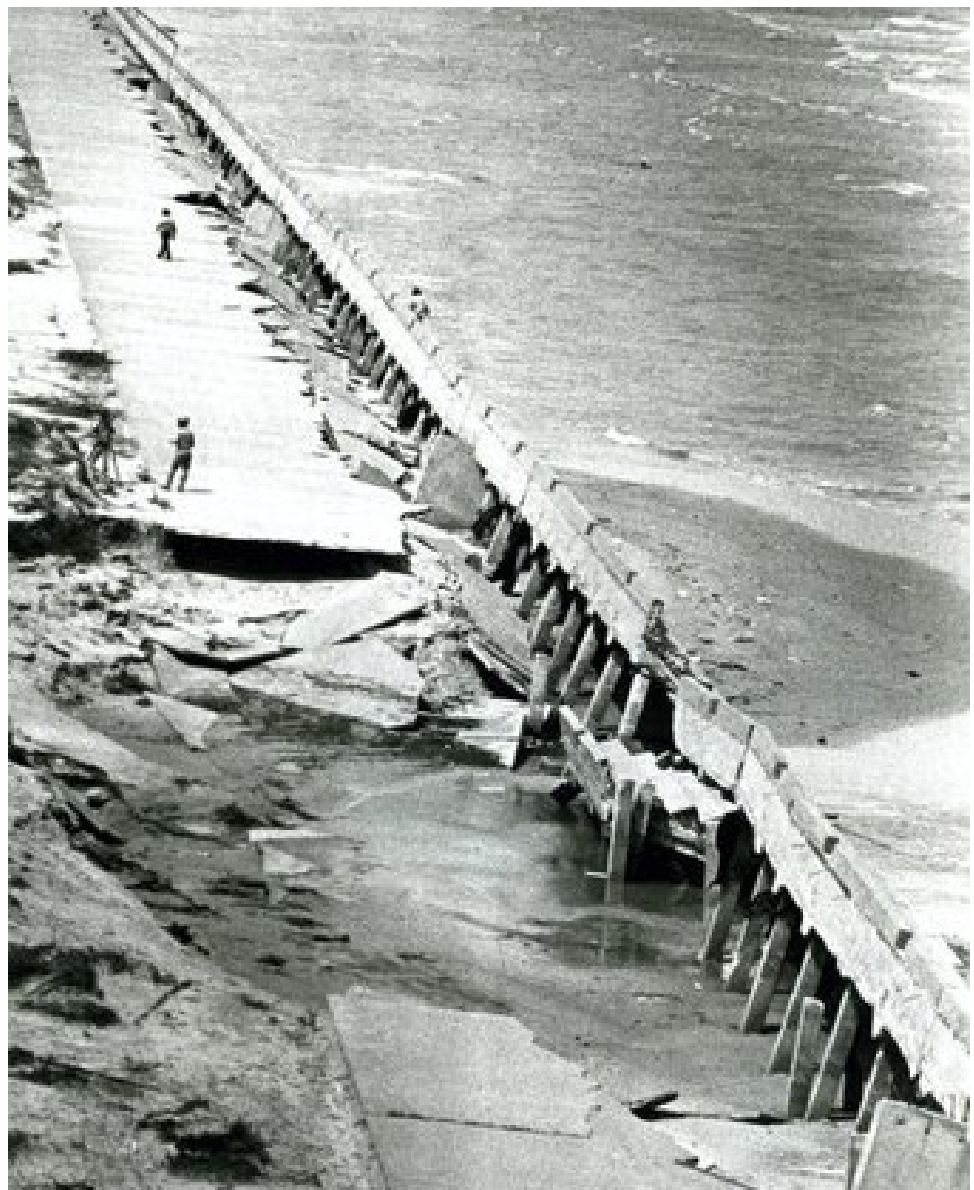
\$1.7 million fund balance expected January 2028



Seawall Repairs after Hurricane Allen damage



Maintenance dredging and beach nourishment plans from 2011



Hurricane Allen damage

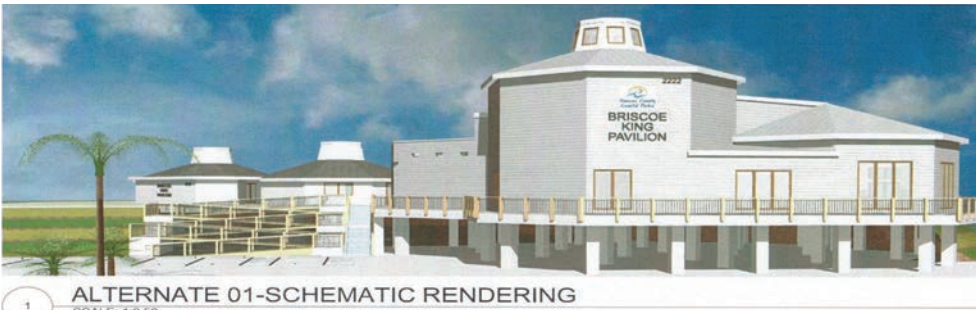
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Briscoe cont. from A1



Increment Reinvestment Zone #2 (TIRZ #2) this week making way for completion of the design phase and moving forward toward the solicitation of bids for construction.

The cost of the 7100 square-foot facility increased from a \$5.9 million estimate in October 2024 to \$8 million as design work moved from 60% in July to the current 90% prompting the 24% increase.

“It is just a fact that anything you build on The Island will cost 10%-15% more due to engineering and design required to build there,” Precinct 4 Brent Chesney told the TIRZ #2 board.

Engineers to design the Briscoe King Pavilion, which will be a new and separate structure located adjacent to the current building, were hired in April and discovered several unexpected design problems primarily due to the location of the structure near the gulf beach at Padre Balli Park.

The first was that the original plan to use a retaining wall around the new building to incase fill sand that would raise the elevation to the eleven feet required by the City of Corpus Christi Building Code would be cost prohibitive and would not provide sufficient underpinning for the new structure, according to city staff this week. The new build will require the sinking of as many as

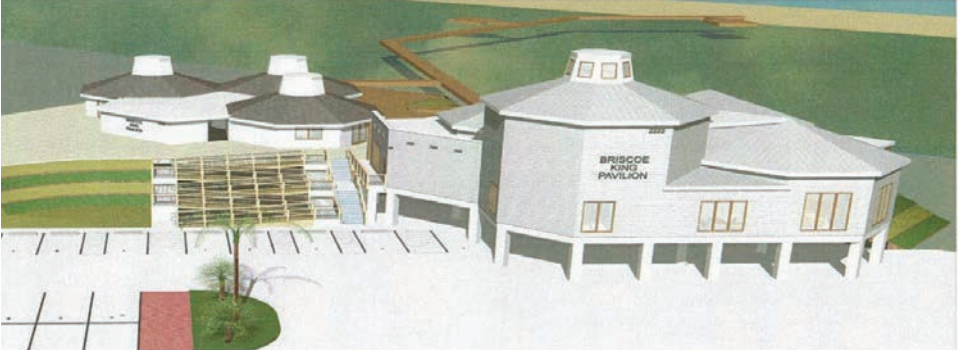
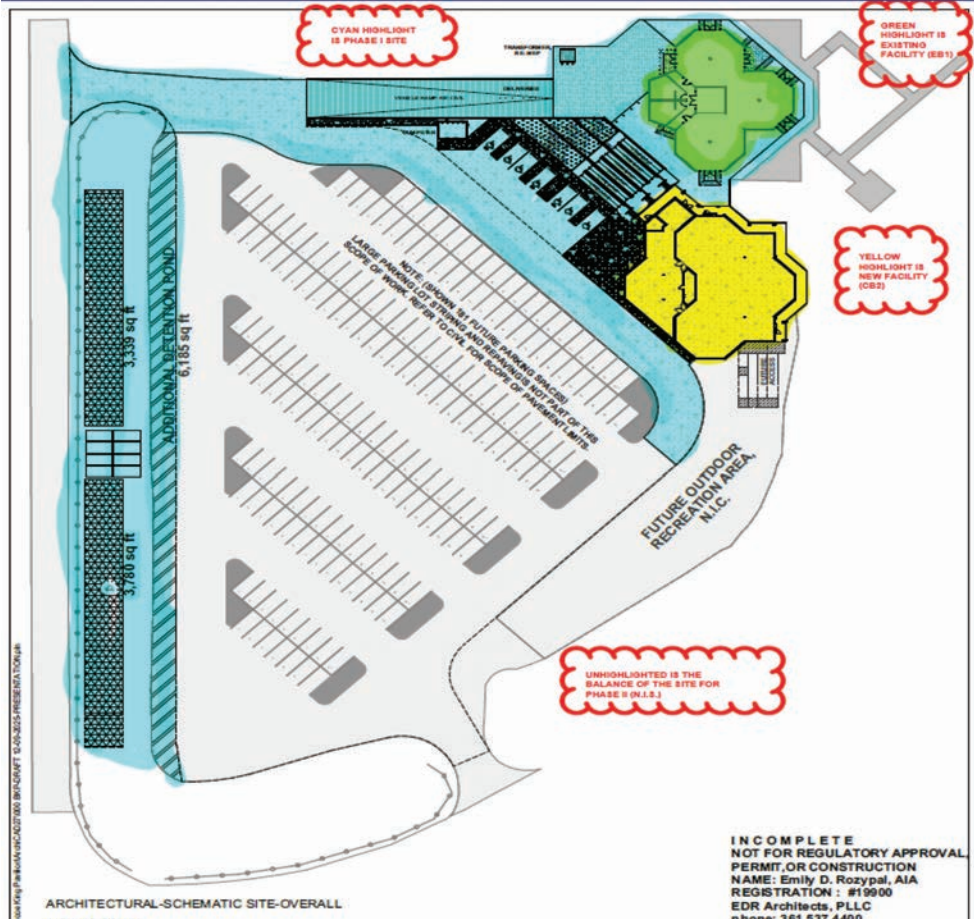
forty vertical pilings to thirty-five feet below grade to support the structure. Similar pilings support the current Briscoe King Pavilion foundation. Another added expense was the installation of a new septic system to avoid having to bury 3000 feet of a new sewer line to hook into the city wastewater system. The cost of those changes pushed the cost of the new building to \$617 per square foot. The new structure will include much-needed air conditioned meeting space for up to 300 people and a prep kitchen.

Funds for the Island TIRZ #2 are derived from property tax on new construction inside the boundaries of the zone since its establishment in 2002. The board consists of all of the members of the Corpus Christi City Council and four members of the Nueces County Commissioners Court. Funds to cover the original cost estimate of the Briscoe King project were transferred from TIRZ #2 accounts to Nueces County in mid-2025.

Previous allocations of funds from the TIRZ #2 accounts, including the Briscoe King project, dropped the available fund balance to \$400,000 according to figures present this month to the Island Strategic Action Committee. The \$2.1 million in new funding for the Briscoe King project instead came from a \$2.5 million reimbursement to the fund from the \$22 million in work

required to repair the Packery Channel Jetties after damage from Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The money for the repairs was taken from the TIRZ #2 funds and the \$2.5 million in total Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement was not expected by city officials according to City Manager Peter Zanonni this week, freeing it to be used for the final funding gap in the Briscoe King project.

After the vote to approve funding Chesney said the next step is final approval by the Corpus Christi City Council, who members all voted in favor of the funding with the exception of District 2 council member Sylvia Campos. Following that the design drawings will be presented to the city staff for final review before going out for construction bids. No timeline has been announced for that process and the subsequent start of construction.



Rendering of the new Briscoe King Pavillion presented to the TIRZ #2 Board this week

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History cont. from A1

In the early part of the 19th Century Spain was sending millions of dollars each year from South America back to Spain. The gold and silver from the rich mines in Mexico was shipped in slow, bulky vessels – cargo ships – and it was not unusual for a single ship to have in excess of \$100,000 in its hold.

It didn’t take long for the Pirate captain Jean Lafitte to figure out that if he used small, fast, shallow draft ships he could hide in spots along Padre Island until he saw a mast on the horizon and pounce for his plunder. One of his favorite places to hide and wait was behind Padre Island near the mouth of Baffin Bay. A cut at or near the spot where the Mansfield Channel now cuts through The Island gave him a way to quickly get out to open water and pursue his prey. He also used a small reef island in Corpus Christi Bay that over time became known as Lafitte Island. He would return to his hide-out behind The Island after his attack and if he took on too much gold or silver to carry on his next voyage to sea he would bury it on The Island. It would remain there until it was time for him to return to his base which was originally New Orleans, then Galveston, then Campeche and later the town he founded just below the mouth of the Rio Grande called Bagdad.

Some of these caches of Spanish silver and gold were left behind for various reasons and later on were found buried in the sand near the mouth of the pass to Baffin Bay by a treasure hunter. While it is known that Lafitte buried and left some treasure on Padre Island the exact location is the stuff of lore. One persistent story is that he buried one treasure under a huge millstone on which is inscribed “Dig Deeper.” So if you see a millstone on the Island with the words “Dig Deeper” on it whatever you do, don’t dig there. Call the Moon and let us do the dirty work.

A town full of smugglers just below the Rio Grande

Part of the Lafitte myth surrounds the founding of Bagdad, Mexico on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande and Clarksville on the U.S. side which were small ports known mostly for their lawlessness and citizenry of low moral quality. Dubbed the Sodom and Gomorrah of the New World by

a local priest, it was said that every house was a saloon and whiskey was cheaper than water. How Bagdad was formed and who formed it has been lost to the mist of time but there are a few tantalizing facts that tie the story of Bagdad to Lafitte.

First a little background on Mr. Lafitte. What is known is that Lafitte favored Islands located along national borders to locate his pirate colonies. His first colony located on Grand Isle just south of the mouth of the Mississippi River was called Barataria. He made his first fortune there by smuggling slaves through the swamp to the markets in New Orleans raiding ships under the charter of various governments who used privateers to raid the shipping of rival nations. When the various nations made peace the privateers went rogue and the profession of pirating along the gulf coast was born. With the profits from his raiding and slave trading Lafitte bought a “plantation” with the future Texas legend and famed knife fighter Jim Bowie, which they sold for \$90,000 and Bowie used his half to move to Texas.

On to Galveston

Lafitte stayed on for a time and his aid to Andrew Jackson which lead to the defeat of the British in the final battle of the War of 1812 made him a folk hero to the people of New Orleans but to the U.S. government he was still a pirate. He eventually left Barataria under pressure from the U.S. government and set up shop on Galveston Island which was abandoned at the time.

He named his settlement Campeche and what history has recorded is that in late 1820 the *USS Enterprise* docked in Campeche Bay and on board was a designated naval diplomat, Lieutenant Larry Kearney, who, in speaking for President Madison, ordered Lafitte to abandon Galveston Island. For months, Lafitte stalled. But in the end, it was Lafitte’s pirating activity that brought about his undoing. Continuing to harass Spanish ships bound for Mexico, he insisted he had a letter of marque bestowed by a patron that allowed him to plunder Spanish ships. But the U.S. and Spain were entering a period of peace and the only thing that stood in the way of developing a friendship with Spain was the constant harassment of Spanish ships by buccaneers anchored off the American coast. President Madison issued an all-out war on piracy.

Lafitte knew he had to go but pirating was profitable and he continued to stall until May Day 1821 when a U.S. war fleet off Galveston produced a single command: Get off the island now or be blown to smithereens. „That night,“ writes author Robert Tallant, „Lafitte set fire to Campeche and men aboard the *USS Enterprise* wathched as it burst into flames...When they went to shore at dawn they found only ashes and rubble. The ships of Lafitte were gone...”

So, as the story goes, when he was forced to leave Galveston Island as the American border effectively moved from the Sabine River to the Rio Grande he headed south to the next border and took up residence on the south bank of that river just inside Mexico and that is how Bagdad, Mexico was born. As was the case with Galveston there were no Indians to fight and fresh water available from the river, and the only threatening authority was across a river and national boundry.

What is known is that immediately after leaving Galveston Island he travelled to the Yucatan where he met Mexican General Lopez de Santa Anna who was looking for a way to smuggle arms into Mexico in a bid to take over that country. They met again at Magna de Clavo, Santa Ana’s family estate near Veracruz, and over the next several years the struggle for control of Mexico continued with Santa Anna becoming President in 1831. It is during these years that Lafitte most likely created Bagdad. He is said to have married a women from Baghdad and continued his raiding in the gulf, visiting the estate of Santa Anna at least six times. The tiny town would have been valuable to the Mexican President and he was in a position to see that it was not bothered by Mexican powers as over the years he faded in and out of the Presidency six times.

The first official known appearance of Bagdad is on a map entitled „*Map of the Country Adjacent to the Left Bank of the Rio Grande Below Matamoros, 1847.*“ How long before that it was actually established has been lost to history. Only recently discovered in the Spanish records in Seville is the intriguing fact that the Lafitte brothers were in Texas between November 1815 and June 1816, acting as spies for the Spanish government against the Mexican revolutionaries so it is probable that as an accomplished seaman Lafitte had explored the coast around the lower Rio Grande during that time.

Stormy Bagdad

Strong hurricanes raked that area in 1831, 1834, 1835, and 1837. Fed up with the storms, oral history says that Lafitte left Baghdad in 1839 after three years of storms and disappeared entirely from history. But the town he founded lived on and in 1848 The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between the U.S. and Mexico provided for free navigation of the river.

Article VII of the Treaty read, „The river Gila, and the part of the Rio Bravo del Norte laying below the southern boundary of New Mexico, being, agreeably to the fifth article, divided in the middle between the two republics, the navigation of the Gila and of the Bravo below said boundary shall be free and common to the vessels and citizens of both countries; and neither shall without the consent of the other, construct any work that may impede or interrupt, in whole or in part, the exercise of this right; not even for the purpose of favoring new methods of navigation.“ Bagdad was set to prosper and in 1849 Clarksville was founded on the northern American shore and commerce began in earnest as gold seekers headed for California landed on their way west.

Back in the news

Bagdad was back in the news recently after it was repoted that new signs sprung up warning against trespassing but Bagdad is now mostly known as a popular viewing spot for launches from the nearby SpaceX Starbase. closing the 200 year-old circle linking a waterborne pirate and travel to other planets.

To borrow from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, „This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend“



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Island Outdoors



On the Rocks

By Jay Gardner

Adrien Hilmy of the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) did a really good presentation of the water influences, historical and present, of the Nueces River and Nueces Delta the other night at the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation Coastal Issues Forum. He described the Agreed Order, which is to ensure that environmental flows into the Delta and Nueces River are continued to promote the health of our bays and estuaries. Of course, the Agreed Order goes out the window when our reservoirs are less than 70%, which they have been for quite some time.

Back when we had water, there was a committee called the Nueces Estuary Advisory Council (NEAC) that was meeting regularly to provide advice regarding the effectiveness of the water management strategies of the Agreed Order. This was a group of local governments, citizens, researchers, conservation groups, water suppliers, and fishing interests. I looked back, and the last meeting I went to was in 2016. There were some really good discussions regarding timing of inflows, water reuse, etc.

I started combing through the old files (that are still up on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)) website and realized that all this has been discussed over the years. There are some really good presentations still on the page if anyone is interested in learning more about water and the Nueces River Delta. Interestingly, one of the studies by Dr. Montagna and our buddy Terry Palmer showed that the Nueces Delta doesn't need a deluge all the time. What is actually needed is a steady stream of a "small bit of water will that decrease salinity and increase estuary structure and function." This is the exact thing that Adrien was saying the other night, and that we all know is needed. A small, consistent trickle that will do the system the best.

The Allison wastewater treatment plant (wwtp) is the best candidate for the job, as it currently dumps around 5 million gallons a day (mgd) straight into the Nueces River in that area. Up to about a decade ago, the Allison wwtp had a bypass pipe into several ponds in the South Lake portion of the Nueces Delta, close to the Demonstration cells. This provided some measure of inflows and actually made a nice estuarine gradient. Way back in the day, I monitored

the water quality in South Lake (independently from the Natural Resources Center (Sambo and Erin), and would have to go change out the data sonde every month or so to download the data and recalibrate the equipment. I also did some of the SALT stations, and would notice that when the water was flowing, there were fish around.

The project was very successful, and the area was usually teeming with shrimp, crabs, and of course redfish following them. The area was a great place to fish for many years, and the waterfowl also loved it in the wintertime. For some reason a few years back, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) decided that the water quality parameters weren't meeting the standards and that the reuse water couldn't go into the delta. I don't remember if it was chlorides (salts), or low dissolved oxygen or what, but they shut the diversion project down. Now, the water from the plant just goes in the river, which doesn't make sense to me. If it's ok to go in the river, why not in the delta?

Back to NEAC; although we don't have the water coming down the river, I think there are other sources of water that should be discussed. Right now, the city is only getting "credit" for 500-acre feet per year for the wastewater that is released back into the bays. That needs to be re-worked, as the Oso Plant is treating over 12 million gallons a day, which comes up to almost 2,000-acre feet a year. We should be getting a lot more credit and doing more with our wastewater. In addition, as more wells come online in the vicinity of the delta, so I'm lobbying that one of those wells needs to be pumped straight down the Rincon bayou in the Delta. Those two items alone, plus the new idea of desal, should be enough for the TCEQ and Texas Water Commission to get people meeting at NEAC again. That's my story, and I know that others are attempting to breathe life back into the committee, including Adrien, our buddy Sam, and our friend Rocky.

Well folks, with all the talk about water needs, and it seems even the self-proclaimed "environmentalists" down at city council aren't talking about water in the right way. Bring on Harbor Island. Drop me a line at jaygardner1032@gmail.com and we'll see you next week On the Rocks.

Coastal Issues Forum

Tracking the Water Releases:
"How freshwater inflows to Nueces Bay are managed"

Monday, December 8, 2025
5:30pm - 7:00 pm



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Presented by:
Adrien Hilmy, Project Manager, Quality Assurance Officer at Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program



Networking ~ Free Food ~ Open to the Public ~ Interactive




Adrien Hilmy, Project Manager and Quality Assurance Officer for the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP). He started with the CBBEP in 2018 as the Education Coordinator at the Nueces Delta Preserve, before moving into project management in 2019. Adrien manages a variety of projects which involve environmental monitoring, improving hydrologic connectivity, habitat restoration, shoreline protection, green stormwater infrastructure, and education and outreach.



Backwater Adventures

By Joey Farah

Bang Bang!




This massive flounder came along the banks of a deep channel during our last cold snap. Flounder season starts back up on Dec 14th!! Slow retrieve along the bottom. Farah

Many of you have been sleeping in each morning but will once again be woken up by the sound of shot guns blasting at ducks. Don't freak out and call the cops, the pellets only travel a hundred yards or so, and the sound can make you think that they are right outside your house! It's really a calling to each of you to enjoy the great outdoors during the winter months, being a hunter or not. The cold wind will wake up your senses, make your heart beat a bit harder, and make you want to beat your chest. We are so lucky here on this small Island to have a few cold days, but then it always turns right around and warms up.

Gamefish are moving towards deep water pretty quick when we get a cold snap because they are not used to it, water temps in the 60's later in the winter is nothing, but right now it can be cold. Look for redfish and drum to be diving into deep water hides only because that's where the bait is moving to. Out in the flats redfish and drum are not affected as much as trout to the cold because of their thicker skin and scales. Reds are still tailing up in the extreme shallows during those south east wind mornings. Make casts along the drop offs along the ICW Canal in the mornings with light winds, and drift out into the flats adjacent to the canal when the winds are up. Selecting gaps in the spoil islands for your drifts will also put you in position to slide through water containing shallow grass and sand mix, soft mud, and deep water channels, good for both reds and trout.


I closed my eyes when the sun hit my face, I could see, feel, and hear all the wonderful love of summer. Her golden hair dancing upon the waves, and her warmth smiling all over my shoulders, she seems so far away. We have only just opened the closet for Old Man Winter, but our Golden Summer will return. I have been trying to enjoy the sun, even if she is only there a few days here and there, maybe making me appreciate her a bit more.




The Drum Queen pulled this 7lber up on the first chilly cast of the day along a side channel to the ICW. Fish are falling into deep water as our water temps are now into the 60's. Farah

There is a wealth of fishing opportunities in the winter that anglers can just walk into here on Padre Island. Pier fishing is best, jetties are consistent, and side channels, bridges, and the beach front can all give up the best fishing of the year in Dec and Jan. When the surf is small, head to the beach for pompano and whiting! The first two guys on high tide are full of them. Small hooks and small bait is key. When it's windy head towards the back of the island and fish the back marshes when it's warm, and the canals and bridges when temps drop.

Hold your breath Christmas will pass by quickly and you will have plenty of time to grab your pole and go for a walk with a hand full of lures here on the Island. Let's plan your adventure with friends and family and get you some confidence in fishing here in your own backyard. Follow all of our fishing on Facebook, ticktok and Instagram at JOEY FARAHS BACKWATER FISHING! 361-442-8145



This beautiful trout came from the deeper flats south of Pita Island on a Magic Grass DOWN SOUTH LURES SUPER MODEL with a qtr oz jog head. Farah






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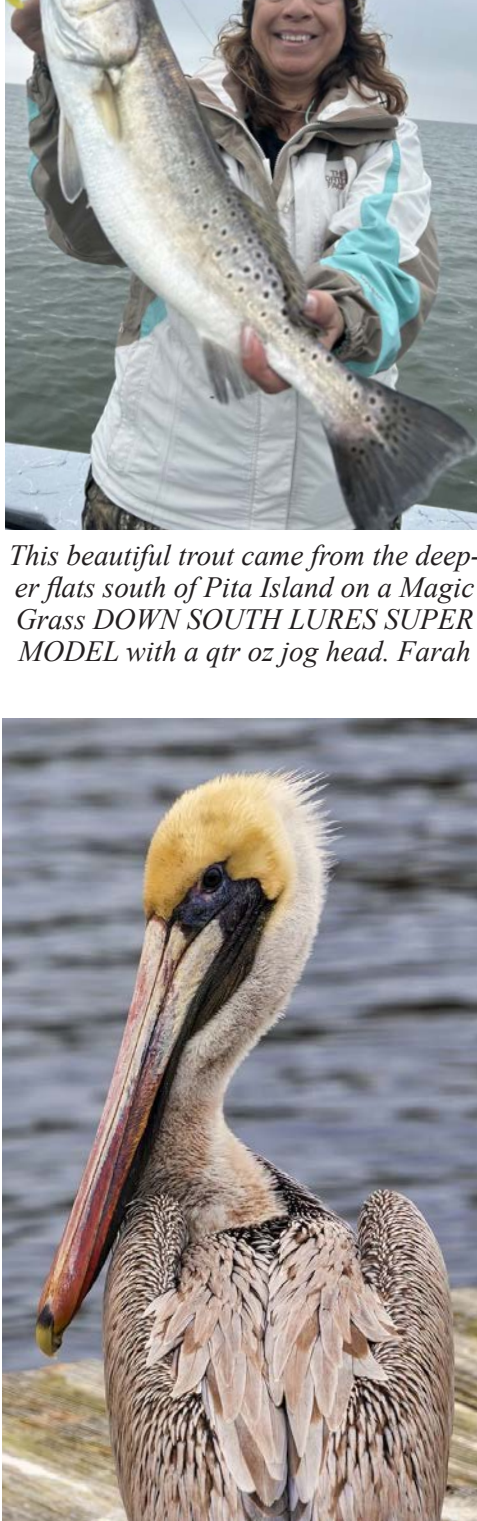
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The

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Cookbook

The Chef Imposter

By Chris Jordan

Most of the key methods of cooking can be found on the internet. Still, some remain relatively secret; locked away in reference books, cookbooks, kitchens, and even the minds of the secrets’ practitioners.

I started cooking when I was very young. As a toddler, I was notoriously unfettered in accessing breast milk at the source. My grandmother told my mom it was probably time to ease me into a bottle. Soon after — when it was discovered I had been opening the refrigerator and refilling the bottle myself — it was suggested that I be weaned off that as well. And so began my cooking journey.

When I was four, my nanny Maria and I fought about many things but mostly about whether we were going to watch her favorite soap operas or my favorite kids’ shows. It was The Edge of Night, Another World, and Somerset versus Lost in Space, Gilligan’s Island, and Star Trek. There was definitely only one television in the house, but at least Mom and Dad had recently upgraded to a giant 19-inch color TV. My parents both worked in San Antonio. The commute to and from New Braunfels put them coming home rather late so I had to fend for myself. I couldn’t even phone them for back-up: long distance calls weren’t cheap! Maria definitely had the upper hand physically so I had to rely on guile and charm.

The other thing Maria and I fought over was cooking — and specifically whether I was allowed to do it or not. She was Tejana as you can get — and a fine cook of the Tex-Mex canon — but was not well-versed in preparing the ubiquitous, bolillo-tinged, everyday food of our household. Mom had taught me how to cook my favored lunch: a patty melt with canned spinach and box-borne mac n’ cheese — but she had failed to inform Maria of my abilities. I lost the fight and Maria cooked lunch but — and I kid you not — the woman poached my hamburger patty in a pan of water. I now consider this an act of revenge for her having missed a soap episode wherein a beloved character came back from the dead — solely to accommodate my fanatical desire to watch Star Trek.

Soon after, I got a baby sister, Claudia. We chose her out of a catalog and went to pick her up at will-call. I’m not kidding — but that’s a whole ‘nother story. When I was old enough to stay home alone after school, my folks offered me a job for that couple of hours before they got home from work: watch your sister and keep the house clean. The pay was pretty good at a dollar a day. Plus, I inferred from this arrangement that Claudia and I could wreak unlimited havoc as long as the house was clean by 6 PM. So we did. But I also got into baking pies. At first, the only things I actually made were the crusts. I’d fill them with instant pudding and call it a day. But before long, I was making scratch lemon meringue pies from a recipe in my mom’s Farm Journal Cookbook.



The author and sister enjoying his scratch lemonade shaken into existence in baby food jars, 1974

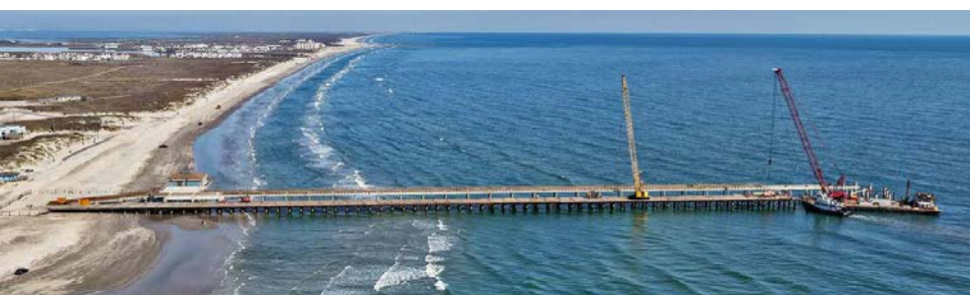
I guess the point — no matter how circuitously arrived at — is that I’ve been cooking ever since and it’s been over fifty years. In that time I have been blessed to observe great chefs in action: Randy at The Grey Moss Inn, Felix at El Jarro de Arturo, Sterling at Meri’s Malibu, Guy at Beulah’s, Dave at Pelican’s Landing, Allan at Henry J’s Cafe, Toshi at Bar Hayama, Blake at River’s Edge, and Tiana at The Phoenix. It’s astonishing that one can learn so much just by watching, tasting, and eventually replicating.

The idea that it takes 10,000 hours to master an advanced art, craft, or sport was put forth by Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers*. But there’s more to it than meets the eye: those hours must be spent with the intention of advancement. Getting better at cooking — refining ingredients and techniques — has always been my bag. I’ve been doing it at home all this time — and often professionally: I opened my first restaurant, Tacorama, in my twenties and operate a catering and private chef business with my partner, Andrea, now. But I’m still not 100% comfortable being called a chef.

People who wonder if they have imposter syndrome have it by definition: the wondering is the syndrome. Actual imposters never think about it. So if you have imposter syndrome, relax — you’re not an imposter.



The author is still goofy, 2025



Bob Hall Pier progress as of this week. Aerial by Augs

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Senior Moments

Special to the Island Moon



By Dotson Lewis

Dotson’s Note: Survivors of the 1941 Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor have long been the center of a remembrance ceremony held each year, on the military base’s waterfront. But today only 12 are still alive, all centenarians. This year, the 84th anniversary, none attended. Thanks to John Gap and Mengshin Lin for many of the facts and photo s contained in this report.



Above, American ships burn during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, December 7, 1941.

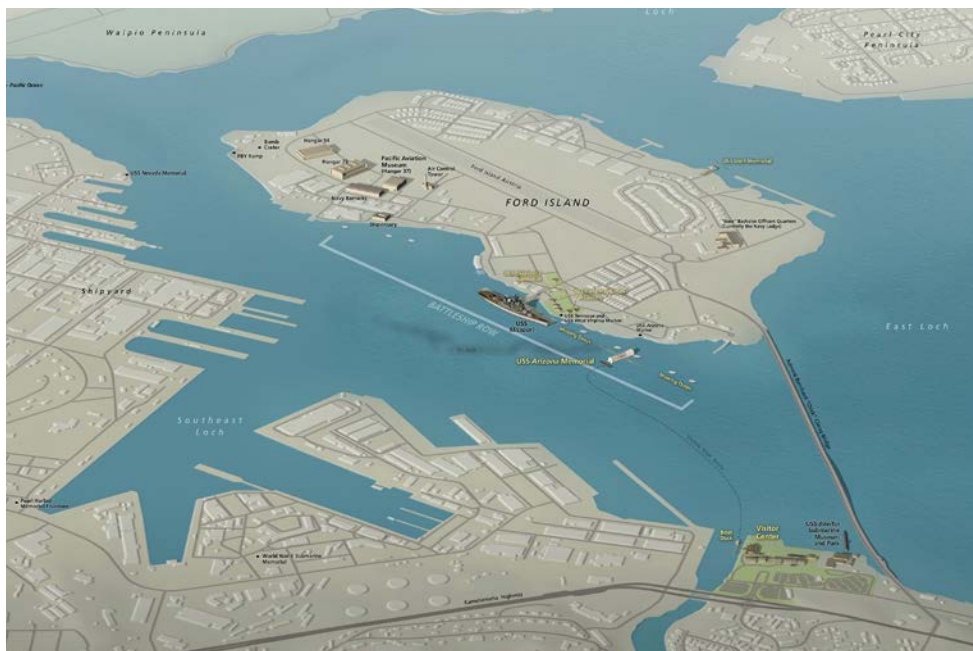
No one attending had firsthand memories of serving during the attack, which killed more than 2,300 troops and catapulted the United States into World War 2. The development is not a surprise and is an evolution of an ongoing trend. As survivors fade, their descendants and the public are increasingly turning to other ways of learning about the bombing.

“The idea of not having a survivor there for the first time — I just, I don’t know — it hurt my heart in a way I can’t describe,” said Kimberlee Heinrichs, whose 105-year-old father Ira “Ike” Schab had to cancel plans to fly in from Oregon after falling ill. Survivors have been present every year in recent memory except for 2020, when the Navy and the National Park Service closed the observance to the general public because of coronavirus pandemic health risks. The ceremony begins with a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., the same time the attack began on December 7, 1941. Solemn rituals follow. Fighter jets fly overhead in “missing man formation,” in which one jet peels off to symbolize those lost. Survivors present wreaths to honor the dead, though active duty troops have assumed this job in recent years. Those present rise to salute active duty sailors who themselves salute as their ship passes the USS Arizona Memorial, which sits above the submerged hull of the battleship sunk in the attack. About 2,000 survivors attended the 50th anniversary event in 1991. A few dozen have showed in recent decades. Last year, only two made it. That is out of an estimated 87,000 troops stationed on Oahu that day.



Above, Pearl Harbor survivor Archie Odom, of Federal Way, Wash., salutes during a moment of silence in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1991. Many survivors were jovial despite the occasion, happy to catch up with old friends and pose for photographs. Even so, harrowing recollections were seldom far from their minds.

In 2023, Harry Chandler gazed across the water while telling an Associated Press reporter how he was raising the flag at a mobile hospital in the hills above the base when he saw Japanese planes fly in and drop bombs. Chandler and his fellow Navy hospital corpsmen jumped in trucks to help the injured.



Pearl Harbor map

He spoke of seeing the Arizona explode, and of hearing sailors trapped on the cap-sized USS Oklahoma desperately tapping on their ship’s hull to summon rescue. He helped care for Oklahoma sailors after crews cut holes in the battleship. “I can still see what was happening,” Chandler said. He died the next year at a senior living center in Tequesta, Florida. The bombing has long held different meanings for different people; the historian Emily S. Rosenberg wrote in her book “A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory.”

Some say it highlights the need for a well-prepared military and a vigilant foreign policy. To some it evokes then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt administration’s “ineptitude or deceit” and the unfair scapegoating of the military. Others focus on the “treachery” of Japan or the heroic acts of individual troops, she wrote. Asked what he wanted Americans to know about Pearl Harbor, Chandler said: “Be prepared.” “We should have known that was going to happen. The intelligence has to be better,” he said.

Lou Conter, who was the Arizona’s last living survivor when he died last year at 102, told the AP in 2019 he liked to attend to remember those who lost their lives. “It’s always good to come back and pay respect to them and give them the top honors that they deserve,” Conter said. Heinrichs’ father has been six times since 2016. The former tuba player on the USS Dobbin likes to go not only to remember those killed but also in place of his late band mates; his three brothers who fought in World War II; and the now-deceased Pearl Harbor survivors he has met. Retired National Park Service Pearl Harbor historian Daniel Martinez said the circumstances resemble the early 20th century when Civil War veterans were dying in increasing numbers. Awareness grew that soon they wouldn’t be able to share their stories of Gettysburg and other battles, he said.

Martinez knew something similar could happen with Pearl Harbor survivors and recorded their oral histories. During a 1998 convention, he conducted interviews 12 hours a day for three days. The Park Service today has nearly 800 interviews, most on video.

“They remain as a part of the national memory of a day that changed America and changed the world,” Martinez said. The Park Service shows some in its Pearl Harbor museum and aims to include more after renovations, said David Kilton, the agency’s Pearl Harbor interpretation, education, and visitor services lead.

The Library of Congress has collections from 535 Pearl Harbor survivors, including interviews, letters, photos, and diaries. Over 80% are online. They are part of the library’s Veterans History Project of firsthand recollections of veterans who served in World War I onward. Many were recorded by relatives, Eagle Scouts and other amateurs interested in documenting history. The Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors give presentations in schools and marches in parades to share the stories of their families. The California chapter has added six new members this year, including two great-grandchildren of survivors.

“When they’re all gone, we’re still going to be here,” said Deidre Kelley, the group’s president. “And it’s our intent to keep the memory alive as long as we’re alive.” **REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR!**



Gene’s Corner

Back in the Day

By Gene Saegert

Once in my freedom years (before marriage) I had a new girlfriend. We had been going out for a while. One day I was at a loss as to where to take her next. Then I came up with a plan that I would regret. I told her I would give her some choices as to what we might do. Maybe go bowling, or fishing or to the beach or we can do whatever tickles her fancy. Well maybe that was my big mistake, because she said well, I think we should break up! Looking back I don’t know if she didn’t have a fancy or if that just didn’t tickle it. I guess I will never know because that was the last I would see of her. But in retrospect I decided to never use that approach again. I just wrote that off as another of life’s many lessons.

The days of the 50s and 60s were interesting time to live. One interesting thing that seemed to happen often in those days was the fact that it was a common thing that girls and women in general it was a big thing to wear miniskirts, short shorts and wigs quite often. I found this scenario to be common place. I would be walking with a girlfriend and she would be wearing a wig. A friend would come up and say “Are you wearing a wig” she would say yes and then always came the same reply, “you can’t tell”. Those were interesting carefree days. Ok Enough from the past, and back to the present.

You have to take a number!


I recall an incident not too long ago about a trip to the driver’s license bureau. I went to renew my driver’s license and as I was the only one waiting. There was a machine

to take a number. Well as there was no one else there, I did not take a number, I did not think it would be necessary. A lady came out looked at me and asked if I needed something. I said “Yes, I was there to renew my driver’s license.” She said, “Well did you take a number”. I said “no I did not think it would be necessary since I was the only one there”. My bad. “She said you have to take a number.” So I took a number and said “ok I have a number.” She then said “ok you have to wait until I call your number.” I realized at this point it was going to be a long day.

Another thing I have to get off of my chest and I am sure this has probably happened to you also. Ok, you go to the Doctor and they start the diagnosis with “This is normal for your age but...” I never like that approach. I don’t want to be normal for my age. I run and walk almost every day, I eat my fruit and veggies, I stay fit physically and mentally, well for sure physically, one out of two is not bad. I want to be better than normal for my age! And one Doctor actually told me this after I questioned her about my PSA. I quote “I am not worried about a raise in you PSA, you will be more likely to die from something else before that becomes a problem” How comforting.

I will leave you with this as something I hope you never hear this when your surgeon or doctor are doing a procedure on you. “Opps, nurse can you take care of that”

Thought for the day: An expert is someone who has made all the mistakes that can be made in his field.



Thoughts from Reverend Ken

By Rev. Dr. Ken

Those who celebrate Advent will be lighting the candle of joy this weekend. In a world that can seem very dark with an absence of joy a little bit of light can dispel a lot of darkness.

The late Michael Gerson, a Washington Post columnist and former speech writer for President George W. Bush, talked about a choice before humans. By all appearances the universe is cold, empty, and indifferent. Our choice is between despair and hope, hopelessness and joy. Both poles are actually reasonable responses to the darkness.

The pathos of misery is all too real. Bitterness, grief, apathy, anger, envy, aging and disease, depression, suffering. It can be hard to break out of the prisons of darkness. Prisons of disillusionment have cell blocks all over our land. We can convince ourselves that there is no hope. We might even ask the question John the Baptist asked Jesus while in prison, “Are you the one or should we wait for another?”

Why is our world still marked by exploitation, inequity, polarization, violence, disease, death? Why are we still waiting?

Joy does not deny the darkness. Joy chooses to not live in it. There’s a spiritual concept, particularly in Orthodox Christianity, called bright sadness. It’s a spiritual paradox. It describes a state of joyful mourning or bittersweet grief where sorrow for sin or suffering coexists with hope and joy in God’s love. It is the profound experience of holding loss and hope together, acknowledging human brokenness while sensing divine presence. It is rooted in hope. Suffering isn’t the end. God is present in sorrow, offering transformation and deliverance.

Advent is a time to sit with this paradox. We hold the bad and the good together, recognizing that both have something to say to us. Yet, we also look for the dawn when the light of the world will shine through this present darkness. We look for the star dancing in the night. We listen for the song high above the trees, as big as the sea. The child shivers in the cold who will bring us goodness and light.

Christianity is an advent faith. We find ourselves on a cleft where promise and fulfillment don’t quite yet meet. We wait, we watch, we expect with a hopeful narrative. We believe that God hasn’t left the world

to its own malignant and violent devices. Despite what we see, we never stop expecting new life to break onto the scene.

Jesus responded to John the Baptist’s question not with a theological treatise about his identity as the Son of God. Instead, Jesus responded by naming his actions and the impacts they had on community. Community members regained sight, mobility, hearing, health, etc. There are not only healings of physical ailments. They were opportunities for healing of those who had been ostracized by society. Those folks were reintegrated into community.

Jesus, like John the Baptist faced prison and execution by the state as a common criminal. A dark day indeed. There is no place we go where Messiah is not present. Yet, Easter is the good

news that the dark does not and cannot win. The joy of Christmas is founded on the victory of life over death.

Joy does not arise from the glittering fantasy of advertising, the false promise of materialism and consumerism or the idol of a perfect family. Joy is actually found in our disappointments and doubts, our loneliness and longing. It is the surprise of joy.

It is also found in our embodying the actions of Jesus. We share his life through actions of love with those who are most vulnerable. More than offering words and platitudes, we embody hope and joy, love and mercy, peace and equity. We care for and reintegrate those cast out or overlooked by communities.

Like small candles in the nighttime landscape, we can choose joy and hope.

Each Sunday a bunch of humans gather to worship God in community at Island Presbyterian Church, giving thanks for grace, love, healing, and hope, working for peace, justice, and reconciliation. There is always room at the table for you! Join us on Sundays at 10 a.m., 14030 Fortuna Bay Drive, or on our Facebook page.

Choose kindness, compassion, and love; do justice and make peace; welcome the stranger. pastor@islandpresby.com

Turtle Count

By Donna J. Shaver, Ph.D.

Chief, [The Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery](#), Padre Island National Seashore, National Park Service

Texas Coordinator, Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network

Report Nesting & Stranded Sea Turtles in Texas to 1-866-TURTLE5. Direct report Padre Island

At about 11:00am on 2 December, beach visitors found and reported green turtle hatchlings emerging from a previously unidentified nest site, in situ on North Padre Island at Padre Island National Seashore. This is the latest emergence date recorded in Texas.

Including this, the total numbers of sea turtle nests found in Texas this year, by species and area, are updated below.

KEMP’S RIDLEY TURTLE

This year, **449** nests were confirmed on the Texas coast, setting a new record for the annual number of Kemp’s ridley nests documented in Texas. The 449 included (north to south in state):

- 2 Galveston Island
- 4 Surfside Beach
- 1 Quintana Beach
- 1 Bryan Beach
- 2 Brazoria County, N. of Sargent Beach
- 1 Matagorda Peninsula
- 21 San Jose Island
- 29 Mustang Island
- 250 North Padre Island, including 236 at Padre Island National Seashore
- 122 South Padre Island
- 16 Boca Chica Beach

LOGGERHEAD TURTLE


This year, **7** nests were confirmed on the Texas coast, including (north to south in state):

- 1 Mustang Island
- 6 North Padre Island, including 6 at Padre Island National Seashore

GREEN TURTLE

This year, **34** nests were confirmed on the Texas coast, including (north to south in state):

- 1 San Jose Island
- 23 North Padre Island, including 21 at Padre Island National Seashore
- 10 South Padre Island



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Sports Talk Special to the Island Moon



Top quarterbacks of all time- Part 4

By Dotson Lewis



Dotson's Note: Who is the greatest quarterback of all time? It's a question that has been posed countless times. You might have a good idea on who is No. 1. But what about Nos. 2-25? Now those are the spots in the football universe where the QB debate gets pretty interesting. Makes for good conversation, too. I thought it would be a good time to discuss the game's most exalted position, and to contrast the most celebrated players that played it. It's always best when composing a list like this to allow some time to have passed since the most recent triumphs and victories. Otherwise, those achievements may seem greater than they will be after the passage of time. Therefore, we are going to only going to look at the quarterbacks who were playing through 2019. We're not considering anything that has happened in the 2020s. Patrick Mahomes won his first Super Bowl in 2019 so he, and all the newest "crop" of quarterbacks, can't enter the conversation at this point. Thanks to the late Bill Morgan and to Elliot Harrison for many of the facts contained in this report and to the late Bill Morgan.

Here we go: 12-Brett Favre-Atlanta Falcons, 1991; Green Bay Packers, 1992-2007; New York Jets, 2008; Minnesota Vikings, 2009-2010. Similar to his Hall of Fame forebearer in Green Bay, Favre is often remembered for one aspect of his career: the ironman streak of 297 consecutive starts. It zooms far past being impressive, no doubt. So did the man's lasers. However, if there is one thing not mentioned quite enough, it's the fact that Favre won three straight MVPs. Sure, fans and analysts are aware of the hardware. But think about what it takes for a league to say, *"OK, you are the most important player in highest level of football for the THIRD year in a row."* Without overstating the accomplishment, that might never happen again. Tom Brady wasn't able to do it. Brady won the NFL's MVP only 3 times total despite 7 Super Bowl wins. Peyton Manning couldn't get it done, and he won five of those things. Aaron Rodgers has won four, but only two in a row. It's consistency at its highest level. (And yes, I know Favre shared the award with Barry Sanders in 1997. Doesn't take away from the achievement.) Favre would go on to set many career records, some of which have fallen, but his true impact on the game was measured by his toughness and his stature as the best player in the sport for multiple seasons. He darn near won the award again in 2009, when he led the Vikings to the NFC title game at age 40. Favre's ability to improvise was up there with that of John Elway, and in some ways, akin to the derring-do of Patrick Mahomes or Steve McNair. He is one of the best pure throwers of the football ever, a la Warren Moon or Norm Van Brocklin. The only thing keeping him out of the top 10? Some of those late-game postseason errors, which frankly, have probably been *too* underlined over the years.

11-Sammy Baugh-Washington Redskins, 1937-1952. Too high, right? Sammy Baugh, a guy who came into the league in 1937, shouldn't sniff this rarefied air, right? Whatever. Yes, Baugh played in some of the NFL's prehistoric days, back when throwing for over 100 yards in a game was a solid outing. Except he threw for 335 and three touchdowns in the 1937 NFL Championship Game, winning the title as a rookie. Guessing 32 starting quarterbacks in the NFL would take that line. Baugh revolutionized the passing game, catapulting off the strides made by the Packers' Arnie Herber to make throwing the football more than just an idle threat. As a tailback his first few years (the tailback did most of the passing chores in 1930s offenses), Baugh was hamstrung by a scheme that resembled nothing of today's spread attacks. But as more teams went to the T-formation in the '40s, and Baugh got under center, the air game took off. "Slingin' Sammy," as he came to be known, was feared around the league for how quickly he could push Washington down the field. After World War II, offenses really opened up, with Baugh at the forefront. In 1945 he completed 70.3 percent of his passes. The

league average that year: 45.6. In 1947, he nearly threw for 3,000 yards. That was in a 12-game season when the top 10 was rounded out by a guy who managed 1,004. Baugh was highly accurate, leading the NFL in completion percentage eight times! Lastly, if this were a ranking of the greatest *football players* and not quarterbacks, Baugh would leapfrog near the top of the pack. Want proof? OK. **Stat you need to know:** Baugh recorded so many out-of-this-world numbers that it's impossible to pick one. For example, in 1943, Baugh boasted the NFL's highest passer rating, *intercepted the most passes* and led the NFL in punting average. As if that weren't enough, Slingin' Sammy's '45 campaign defies all odds. Despite the fact that you could whack quarterbacks upside the head, chuck their receivers all the way down the field and offensive linemen couldn't extend their arms to pass protect, Baugh produced a 109.9 passer rating. The rest of the league's average passer rating: 43.0. Please crosscheck those figures yourself to make sure I'm not crazy.

* * * * *

So, those are Nos. 11-20. The next 10, the elite of the elite, have been scrutinized through every possible metric, consideration, and of course, subjective reasoning. Only one member of the top 10 never won a title. Meanwhile, four of the signal-callers below played the bulk of their careers over the last 20 years, which is indicative of the improved play at the position as a whole. Rule changes aren't the only explanation for the improvement, though. With ever-evolving high school and college offenses, and quarterback camps starting in middle school, today's passers have honed their skills from youth, putting in thousands of hours perfecting their craft before they reach the NFL. That said, leaving an old-timer like Baugh out of the 10th spot was the toughest decision of the entire lot.

10) Aaron Rodgers

Green Bay Packers 2005-2022, New York Jets 2023-2024, Pittsburgh Steelers 2025-present

There will be those in the peanut gallery who would expect to see Rodgers higher than 10th, and those that would be just fine putting him behind Favre. (And even a few cheeseheads would slot Rodgers behind Starr.) Frankly, putting Rodgers at 10 was the hardest selection, particularly since it placed him over Baugh, who was the top quarterback of his era. Can we say that definitively about Rodgers? Stats-wise, yes. His 4.3:1 TD-INT ratio defies logic. His career passer rating is in the over-100 stratosphere. Rodgers also boasts four MVPs despite competing with Peyton Manning, Tom Brady, Drew Brees and Patrick Mahomes for those accolades.

What Rodgers doesn't own is multiple Super Bowl rings, which brings us to the conundrum. Rodgers has only one ring, and hasn't pushed his team to any more Super Bowl appearances. Starr started in two Super Bowls, plus four NFL title games before the Ultimate Game was invented. Favre started back-to-back Super Bowls, and led his teams to five conference championship games. See an inherent problem in the logic of labeling Rodgers numero uno from that group? He sits where he does in this rundown because I don't think the position should be solely judged on winning. There are 22 guys on the field determining the outcome at all times, not 10, like in the NBA. More often than not, Rodgers is better than the other 21. That's what matters. That, and as long as he doesn't fold in the clutch, which Rodgers doesn't. Time and again he has pulled out wins from desperate situations. Lastly, the eyeball test says so much about this player. Similar to Dan Marino, Rodgers wows us with incredible throws that he makes look routine. All things considered, including his regular season record (153-87-1), the back end of the top 10 feels right for Aaron Rogers.

Stat you need to know: When Rodgers entered the league in 2005, Steve Young was the NFL's all-time best in terms of TD-INT ratio. His 232 touchdowns to 107 interceptions represented a 2.17:1 ratio. Fourteen seasons later, Rodgers had nearly doubled that mark, throwing 338 touchdown passes to 80 interceptions for a 4.23:1 ratio.

TO BE CONTINUED

State News

Wreaths Across America

State Representative Todd Hunter, District 32

Recognition of the service and sacrifice of our veterans, and their families, is especially important during the traditional holiday season. The Wreaths Across America program is an annual tradition that serves to honor and remember men and women of the armed forces who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country. Founded in 1992, the Wreaths Across America program was first initiated by a donation from the Harrington, Maine-based Worcester Wreath Company of 5,000 holiday wreaths to be placed on the headstones of our nation's fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery. Wreaths Across America has grown from a local, community-based outreach program to national nonprofit organization with a mission dedicated to remember, honor, and teach by celebrating the lives of fallen armed service men and women.

Today, Wreaths Across America has grown to include state and federal cemeteries across the country as well as 24 veteran's cemeteries located on foreign soil. The organization works with local partners and trucking companies to carry out its mission. During previous events trucking companies have helped deliver over 300 loads of wreaths to over 1,000 sites across the country.

In 2008, the annual tradition received an official designation from the United States Congress, which proclaimed that one Saturday each December be known as National Wreaths Across America Day. This important event is to be held on Saturday, December 13th. A Wreaths Across America event will take place in Corpus Christi at the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery which is located at 9974 IH 37 Access Road Corpus Christi, TX 78410. This

ceremony begins at 12:00 p.m. In Port Aransas, a Wreaths Across America ceremony will take place at the Royal Palm Cemetery at 11:00 a.m. The address for the Royal Palm Cemetery is 2342 South 11th Street, Port Aransas, TX, 78373. Additionally, the Wreaths Across America ceremony for Aransas County will be at Veterans Memorial Park which is located at Veterans Memorial Drive, Rockport, TX 78382. This event will also start at 11:00 a.m. It is important to remember and celebrate the lives of our fallen soldiers.



An important component of the Wreaths Across America program is to teach younger generations the value of our country's freedoms and the importance of honoring the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform in the name of protecting those freedoms. As a way to fulfill this mission, Wreaths Across America's touches the lives of thousands of schools, scout, civic and religious groups across the country through fundraising for wreath sponsorships. In addition, Wreaths Across America offers many downloadable teaching materials.

There are several ways for those looking to get involved with Wreaths Across America during this year's event, including sponsoring a wreath or volunteering at local wreath-laying events across the Coastal Bend. In addition to its wreath-laying program, the organization also has other initiatives to pay homage to veterans throughout the year. To learn more visit <https://www.wreathsassamerica.org/pages/17162/overview/?relatedId=0>.

If you have questions regarding any of the information mentioned in this week's article, please do not hesitate to call my Capitol or District Office. Please always feel free to contact my office if you have any questions or issues regarding a Texas state agency, or if you would like to contact my office regarding constituent services. As always, my offices are available at any time to assist with questions, concerns, or comments (Capitol Office, 512-463-0672; District Office, 361-949-4603).

- State Representative Todd Hunter,

District 32

Rep. Hunter represents Aransas County and Nueces County (Part). He can be contacted at todd.hunter@house.texas.gov or at 512-463-0672.



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Going Easy On You...

5	2			7		4	6	9
						8		
6	9		5		4	7		
8			7				4	
			9	4	5			
	4				2			7
		7	2		8		3	1
		9						
3	8	5		1			9	4

Knuckle-Cracker

2	7		4	5		3		
	8			7			2	
					8			6
				9			3	
	9	7	8	3	1	2	6	
	3			6				
8			5					
	6			1			5	
		2		8	3		7	1

Mind-Numbing Frustration

		9		2			6	
		6			8		7	
				6	1	4		3
	6					1		
	3	5				7	2	
		2					8	
4		1	8	7				
	5		1			2		
	7			5		9		

Brain-Buster

3	6		8	5				
					3	8	4	
	4				2		3	
	2							
		4	3		8	1		
							9	
	9		6				8	
	7	3	2					
				4	7		1	2

Island Crossword

Crossword Solution on classifieds page

Across

1. Dog holder
4. Partner of alas
9. "Nonsense!"
14. Game whose name is shouted when a player has one card
15. Haul
16. Speedy Northeast train
17. Mail svc.
18. Experiment
19. Upscale watch
20. Heart
23. Viaduct feature
24. Rockies roamer
25. Nissan sedan
28. The 34 in a 16/34 shirt
30. Storm center
31. '60s conflict site
32. Register
35. Terrier type
36. Ears
41. Presidencies, to historians
42. Island north of Java
43. Beachball filler
44. Some 45s, briefly
46. Become fond of
50. Mustard family root
52. CBS hit series
54. Environmental activist Brockovich
55. Thumbs
58. Big name in talk
60. Seat of Marion County, Florida
61. Grammar bestseller "Woe __"
62. Lyons lady
63. Career military person
64. Hanna-Barbera collectible
65. Shocking weapon
66. Give the slip
67. Clue word missing from 20-, 36-, and 55-Across

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
14				15						16					
17				18						19					
20				21						22					
23					24					25				26	27
28				29				30					31		
				32			33	34				35			
36	37	38								39	40				
41							42								
43					44	45				46			47	48	49
50				51				52	53				54		
				55				56				57			
58	59							60					61		
62								63					64		
65								66					67		

Down

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Muslim women's garments: Var. | 21. Master piece? | 40. Cultural prog. funder |
| 2. Roll out | 22. Beam | 44. Artist known for spatial illusions |
| 3. "Ain't gonna happen!" | 26. Diner spread | 45. Key letter |
| 4. See 30-Down | 27. "Yes!" | 47. Beethoven's Third |
| 5. Double-yolker | 29. It may be rouge or blanc | 48. Sparkly strand |
| 6. Israel's Sharon | 30. With 4-Down, intermission music | 49. "Mourning Becomes Electra" playwright |
| 7. Vintage auto starter | 33. Catches red-handed | 51. Part of Caesar's boast |
| 8. '50s NFLer Rote | 34. Skater Midori | 52. Agnes's uncle |
| 9. Reward for good behavior, sometimes | 35. Boiler room worker | 53. Jumble |
| 10. Troop's information gatherer | 36. Nectar flavor | 56. Loser to Clinton |
| 11. Capital on the Gulf of Finland | 37. Soprano's showpiece | 57. Whittle |
| 12. Flagon filler | 38. Sail supports | 58. "...the apparel __ proclaims the man": "Hamlet" |
| 13. Surfboard coat | 39. Privileged | 59. Stew morsel |

P.I.E. Home Tour

Islanders opened their homes on Sunday, December 7th for the Padre Island Enrichment Clubs Holiday Home Tour. Funds raised from the event will go to sponsor scholarships given out by PIE.



Moon Classifieds #1130

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BEFORE PUBLICATION
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Sunset 7 AA Group
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Monday, Wednesday & Friday
7 pm at Island
Presbyterian Church,
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Sunday 8 am at Padre Balli RV
Park Open Pavilion
15820 Park Rd 22.
(In bad weather, the Sunday
meetings will
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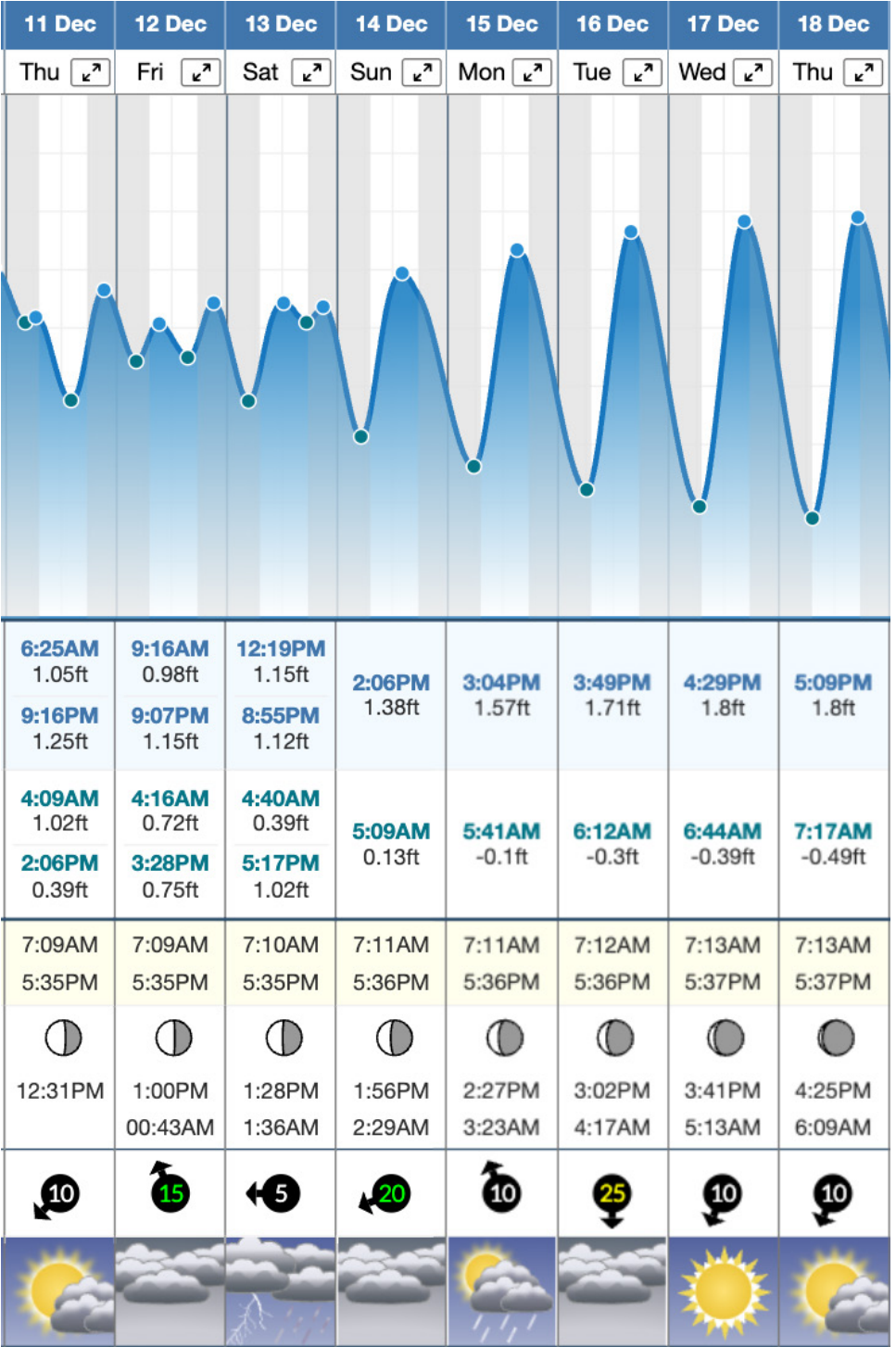
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for more info or to see

Tides of the Week



Crossword Solution

B	U	N		A	L	A	C	K		P	S	H	A	W
U	N	O		C	A	R	R	Y		A	C	E	L	A
R	F	D		T	R	I	A	L		R	O	L	E	X
Q	U	I	T	E	G	E	N	E	R	O	U	S		
A	R	C	H		E	L	K		A	L	T	I	M	A
S	L	E	E	V	E			E	Y	E		N	A	M
			S	I	G	N	I	N			S	K	Y	E
P	A	Y	I	N	G	A	T	T	E	N	T	I	O	N
E	R	A	S			B	O	R	N	E	O			
A	I	R		E	P	S			T	A	K	E	T	O
R	A	D	I	S	H		C	S	I		E	R	I	N
		A	C	C	I	D	E	N	T	P	R	O	N	E
O	P	R	A	H		O	C	A	L	A		I	S	I
F	E	M	M	E		L	I	F	E	R		C	E	L
T	A	S	E	R		E	L	U	D	E		A	L	L

Three Chords and the Truth



By Ronnie Narmour
ronnienarmour@gmail.com

Tis' the season...



Port A Christmas Parade photo by Neesy Thompkins

Man oh man. Here we are smack dab in the middle of the holiday season and with the rest of the country under blizzards, we remain at a balmy 60°. Although, it has been dipping down to the 50's at night when the bands are supposed to going to work. I've said it many times... outdoor music venues will be the death of me. And second, guessing **Mother Nature** is a losing proposition. We did have some weather related cancellations last week with **Ruben V** at the *Sip Yard* and the **Drive** at *Shorty's* leaving us to our own devices. The *Port A Christmas Parade* last Saturday was nothing short of fantastic and one the longest line of floats I've ever seen here on our little island. I stood on the side of *Shorty's* on Alister and could literally see nothing but Christmas floats the entire length of our main street. I know it's no competition for all the big city parades but it sure was a lot of fun. And there were many quite creative entrees. And I always love the decorations the city puts up on the light poles with mermaids and sea horses. Yes sir, we are smack dab in the middle of it. Plus, me and my **Mermaid Gal** have been invited to go along with **Rockin' Dale Rankin** on the lead boat in the *La Posada Lighted Boat Parade* on NPI this weekend. Dale will be leading the pack as the *Grand Marshall* this year. The **PORT A LIGHTED BOAT PARADE** is also this Saturday the 13th and you don't want to miss that.

On the local front...



Port A Lighted Boat Parade 2015

Check this out... **Becky** the booker at the *Sip Yard* just called and had some really GREAT news. She has finalized all the details and our unequivocal *King of Tex Mex*, **Joe King Carrasco**, will play the yard on New Year's Eve! Yee haw! Also, **John Cortez** will be performing his **Stevie Ray Vaughan** and **Jimi Hendrix** tribute show at *Shorty's* and **Brad Ethridge** will play the *Gaff*. Sounds like a great start to 2026 to me. We don't have many venues doing shows right now due to that pesky weather thing and I commend the ones still hanging in there. I also commend the *Gaff* for all the entertaining events they are hosting in December. Also **CHICKEN POOP BINGO** is back on the scene this Saturday the 20th and the **CHRISTMAS EVE EVE PAJAMA PARTY** on the 23rd. Plus the **WORLD FAMOUS BELT SANDER RACES** will be held on the 13th and 27th this month. And all of this will come to a head on **NEW YEAR'S DAY** with their annual **BLACK EYE PEA OFF**. I also want to mention the *Gaff* has challenged **Bernie's Beach House** to a "CHRISTMAS CUP" competition to see who has the best decorated club to be announced on **CHRISTMAS EVE**. And of course the *Gaff* will be celebrating Christmas all day on the 25th. Yay *Gaff*!!! I want to also mention that the boss lady at *Red's Riviera*, **KK Knapp**, came up with a "Stolen Grinch Christmas" game where only island bartenders could participate in stealing a bent over Christmas tree from one bar and racing it back to the bar they work at. It was goofy but fun. And have you seen the wild and hilarious decorations at *Red's*?



KK and her bent over stolen Grinch Christmas Tree

Coming this weekend...



John Cortez will play Shorty's this Saturday.

Along with all the Christmas events, we do actually have some upcoming live music shows to talk about. Coming this Thursday the **Johnson All Starz** residency at *Shorty's* will highlight some familiar faces, **Mike O'Neil**, **Reno Perez**, **Ray Summy** and **Richie Segura**. Also this Thursday **Tyler Jordan** will play the *Gaff* and in town *Concrete Street* has a big show with **Chiodos**, **Holy Water** and **Big Ass Truck**. On Friday the 12th, master looper **Brad Ethridge** will play *Shorty's*, the always hilarious **Jim Bush** will tackle the *Gaff* and young **Adysen Malek**, an 18 year old country singer-songwriter from Edna, Texas, will play the *Sip Yard*. Coming this Saturday the 13th we have blues veteran **John Cortez** playing *Shorty's*. I've noticed that John is becoming more and more popular at some of the A-list bars around the Bend. He is all business on stage and plays that guitar just like ringing a bell. Also on Saturday **Coach Big Jim Dugan** will play the *Gaff* and the big ten piece horn band featuring the lovely and talented **Lisa Lehman**, **Cruise Control** will play the *Sip Yard*. And in town this weekend we have **Eclipse** at *Rockit's*, **Rip Tide Cowboy** at *Marker 37*, the **National Nobodyz** at the *Pelican Lounge* and **Irie Rebels** at the *Whale Bone* all on Friday. And elsewhere on Saturday, we have **Debra Scott Brown** and **Dreaming in Color** at the *Pelican Lounge*, **Groove Chili** at the *Annex* and **Ruben Limas** at *Blackbeard's Too*. Y'all be safe out there.

♪♪♪ And, that's the truth ♪♪♪



Jim Bush will play the Gaff on Friday.



Joe King Carrasco, the King of TexMex, will play the Sip Yard on New Year's



Adysen Malek will play the Sip Yard this Friday.

LIVE MUSIC TONIGHT

Thursday.

December 11

Johnson All Starz @
Shortys @ Shortys
Tyler Jordan @ Gaff
Chiodos, Holy Water,
Big Ass Truck @
Concrete Street
Jim Ward @ House of
Rock
Sonny Salinas @ The
Slip
Latin Talk @ Port of
CC
Eric Graham @ Surf
Club

Friday.

December 12

LA POSADA BOAT
PARADE @ NPI
Brad Ethridge @
Shorty's
Adysen Malek @ Sip
Yard
Jim Bush @ Gaff
Eclipse @ Rockit's
Irie Rebels @ Whale
Bone
Rip Tide Cowboy @
Marker 37
National Nobodyz @
Pelican Lounge
Dreaming in Color @
La Posada
Death Angel, Lions at
the Gate +2 @ House
of Rock
Cruise Control @ Surf
Club
The Groove @
Gaslight

Saturday.

December 13

LIGHTED BOAT
PARADE @ Port
Aransas
LA POSADA BOAT
PARADE @ NPI
BELT SANDER
RACES @ Gaff
Jim Dugan @ Gaff
John Cortez @
Shorty's
Cruise Control @ Sip
Yard
The Groove @
Rockit's
Dreaming in Color @
Pelican
XIT @ Pauly's Beer
Garden
Alley Catz @ Rabbit
Hole
Groove Chili @
Annex
The Drive @ Surf
Club



Sip Yard
PORT ARANSAS, TEXAS

ADYSEN MALEK	DEC 12
CRUISE CONTROL	DEC 13
JASON SUTHERN	DEC 19
BUSHBULLIT	DEC 20
CATHOUSE	DEC 26
JOE KING CARRASCO	DEC 31



BELTSANDER RACES EVERY 2ND & 4TH SAT
OPEN MIC EVERY WED WITH BRAD E.

TYLER JORDAN	DEC 11
JIM BUSH	DEC 12
JIM DUGAN	DEC 13
BRAD ETHRIDGE	DEC 14
BOUDREAUX & POUSSON	DEC 19

SHORTY'S

JIM DUGAN & TY DIETZ EVERY SUN
THE ALL STARS EVERY THUR 8-12

BRAD ETHRIDGE	DEC 12
JOHN CORTEZ BLUES	DEC 13
DARREN MCGILL	DEC 19
SAN JUAN UNDERGROUND	DEC 20
ART BARRERA	DEC 26

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**GOLF CARTS
FOR RENT**

Ruben Limas @
Blackbeard's Too

Sunday.

December 14

Jim Dugan, Ty Dietz @
Shorty's
Brad Ethridge @ Gaff
Emma James @ Surf
Club
Riptide Cowboy Open
Mic @ Mikel May's
Too

Monday.

December 15

UGLY CHRISTMAS
SWEATER @ Gaff
Melissa Ann @ Pelican
Lounge

Tuesday.

December 16

Brad Ethridge @ VFW
Cleartones @ Palm
Republic
Carl Hayes Open Mic
@ Salty Dolphin
Rich Lockhart @
Packery Bar
Los Locals @ Palm
Republic
Scarecrow People @
Surf Club

Wednesday.

December 17

Open Mic w/ Brad
Ethridge @ Gaff
Cleartones @ VFW
Jerry Ward @ Pelican
Lounge
Michael Anthony Perez
@ Tannin's South

Thursday.

December 18

Johnson All Starz @
Shortys
Joseph Martinez @
The Slip
Michael Anthony Perez
@ Pep's Portland
Navarro & the
Creatures @ Surf Club

Friday.

December 19

Darren McGill @
Shorty's
Jason Suthern @ Sip
Yard
Dreaming in Color @
Retro
Boudreaux & Pousson
@ Gaff

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THE GAFF

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LIVE MUSIC

HOT PIZZA

