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Nature Notes A11



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Beachcombing Report A5



Three Chords and the Truth A12

Issue 1147

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The Island Moon

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April 9, 2026

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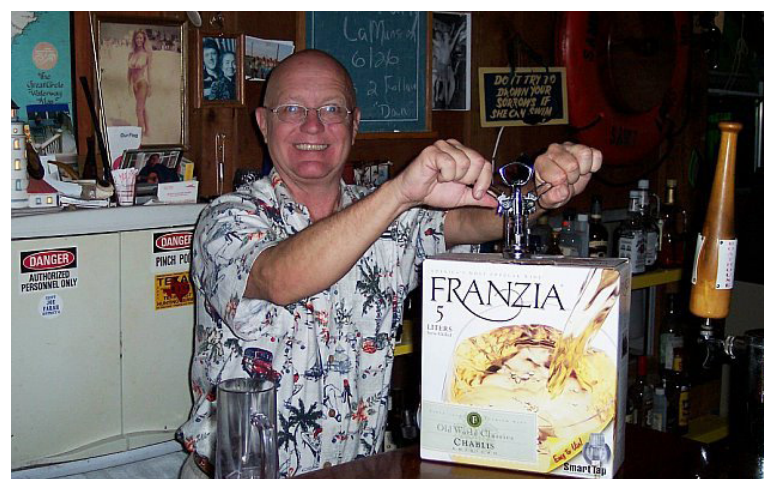
Island Moon Mission Statement

By Mike Ellis

1996

North Padre Island is a community with a distinct identity and whose citizens represent an amazing diversity of personalities, knowledge, talents, skills and backgrounds. With few exceptions, Padre Islanders are friendly and judge others more on how they treat people rather than by their occupation or net worth. They are generous, wave to

Moon cont. on page A3



The late Island Moon founder Mike Ellis in 2005

By the numbers

Rain! How much did we get?

Editor's note: The following numbers come from Moon reader Tom Cullinan and his network of weather watchers.

1.56 inches on Easter. The most rainfall on The Island since September 2025 when we got almost 3 inches.

1.47 inches from Christmas to Easter

95 consecutive days without rain

5.58 inches from Christmas to Easter 2024

4.67 inches from Christmas to Easter 2025

How Padre Island voted in the March Primaries

Island Vote

8429 registered voters on Padre Island
2784 (33% turnout) total ballots cast on Padre Island (both parties)
Island Republicans
2107 (25% of registered voters) Islanders voted in Republican Primary
Island Democrats
677 (8% of registered voters) Islanders voted in Democrat Primary
Countywide
216,659 registered voters in Nueces County
46,659 (10.5%) total votes cast in Nueces County
22376 (10%) voted in Republican Primary Nueces County
24283 (11%) voted in Democrat Primary in Nueces County

New Waterline would improve service to Padre Island Council set to vote

The Corpus Christi City Council is set to vote on Tuesday, April 14 on a \$4 million, 18-inch waterline improvement project designed to improve service to Padre Island.

A motion on the council agenda calls for the awarding of a construction contract to Gerke Excavating Inc., of Tomah, Wisconsin, for the Flour Bluff 18-Inch Water Line Extension project to "enhance system redundancy, increase

Waterline cont. on page A9

By Dale Rankin

What a week it's been here on our little sandbar as the wind blew the trees flat for a while then water came falling from the sky giving us all a free Island carwash and confusing the heck out of Island dogs who had forgotten what it looked like. But even with the rain we continue to be under water rationing for the foreseeable future and Nueces County officials this week extended the burn ban at least through the end of April.

Hurricane Season 2026 is just six weeks away but it is an El Nino year with low hurricane activity expected. But the old saw still applies – no matter the number of storms a weak hurricane season is when no storm finds us and a heavy hurricane season is when one hits us.

Whoop it Up!

This Saturday, April 11, is the time for the annual *Whoop it Up* fundraising event for Seashore Charter Schools at Marker 37. It starts at 6 p.m. and if you want to avoid parking just go by boat! With more than 400 kids attending Seashore Schools it will be a parental gathering of biblical proportions!

SandFest 2026

Action Around The Island is moving to Port Aransas for the next couple of weekends with the 80th anniversary of *Shorty's The Island's Oldest and Friendliest* this weekend including our old friends from San Antonio the Toman Brothers who are playing the Saturday party. Then next weekend, April 17-19, Texas SandFest takes to the sand and will pack the beaches south of the bollards. This event is arguably the biggest event on the Port A calendar and a must see even for locals who tend to show up Sunday afternoon to avoid the crowds. We will have a full schedule and map in the next issue.

Island reality...

An Island based reality show called *Coastal Cowboys* continues shooting *Around The Island* of late. They are focusing on local treasure hunting stories and have

Around cont. on A4

Property Tax Season is upon us Three Numbers on Your Appraisal Notice That Matter

By Brian McCabe

Taxpayer Liaison officer

Nueces County Appraisal District

When homeowners receive their Notice of Appraised Value, most focus on the top number: market value. However, there are actually three important numbers on the notice, and each serves a different purpose.

The first is market value. This is the appraisal district's estimate of what the property would have sold for on January 1. The district bases this figure on recent sales, neighborhood trends, property characteristics, and field observations. Market value is often the number homeowners protest because it becomes the starting point for future appraisals.

The second is net appraised value. This is the number after any value limitations, such as the 10 percent homestead cap, have been applied. A homeowner may see a sharp increase in market value but a much smaller increase in net appraised value because the cap limits how much the taxable portion can rise from year to year.

The third is taxable value. This is the final figure after exemptions are applied. Homestead, over-65, disability, and veteran exemptions can all reduce taxable value. This is the number cities, counties, school districts, and other taxing entities actually

Taxes cont. on page A3

Coastal Parks Patrolers Find First Sea Turtle Nest in Texas Second earliest start of nesting season in history



First Nest in Texas found by NCCP Turtle Patrolers

Sea turtle nesting season has officially begun in Texas with the discovery of the first Kemp's ridley sea turtle nest, the second earliest ever documented in the state, which was found on April 2 by turtle patrolers from Nueces County Coastal Parks. The nesting turtle came ashore before sunrise and successfully laid 75 eggs before returning to the gulf.

This is the second year Nueces County Coastal Parks (NCCP) has actively patrolled North Padre Island beaches and beachgoers are likely to see NCCP teams

Turtle cont. on page A4

A little Island history

Mansfield Channel How Padre Became Two Islands

By Dale Rankin

A \$15.9 million dredge project is currently underway in Mansfield Channel on Padre Island. The project was approved in 2025 and is scheduled for completion in July, 2026. The project will maintain dredge the channel to 17 feet, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The work is being done by Callan Marine Ltd. The last dredging of the channel

History cont. on A5



The dredging of Mansfield channel

It's time to Get Dirty and Play in the Sand at Port Aransas Sandfest.



For anyone who has never attended Sandfest in Port Aransas it's time to correct the problem. Sandfest the largest Beach Sand Sculpture Competition in the USA hits the beach in Port Aransas April 17th-19th. Sandfest 2026 features sand sculptures, food, shopping, and live music on the Port Aransas beach between markers 13 and 17. The general parking lot will be by the North gate at beach marker 9 with the exit at Avenue G (marker 0). The South end general parking entrance will be at marker 19 with the exit at 17.5. Sandcastle Dr. Gates open at 9am on Friday, on 7:30am on Saturday and at 9am on Sunday. The event closes at 7:30pm each day. The event includes an amateur sand sculpting category along with Master and Semi-Pro, sand sculpting lessons for children, a beer and wine tent, a music stage with Cruise Control from 3:30 to 5:00, Clay Hollis will play from 5:00 until 6:30 on Friday, and Kelo Mc Kane at 3 p.m. and John King taking the stage at 5 p.m. on Saturday. For the big finish on Sunday, Sergio Espinosa will play from 1 to 2:30, Nick Taylor from 3 to 4:30 and the final performance will be the Josh Abbott Band taking the stage from 5:45 until closing at 7:30. The awards ceremony for Masters & Semi-Pro Sand Sculptures will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday on the music stage. The Masters' gallery for sculptures opens at 9 a.m. on Sunday with celebrity sand sculpture demonstrations by the Amazin' Walter at 10 a.m. See you on the beach!

Packery Flats Spring Cleanup April 18

The annual Adopt A Beach Spring Cleanup is set for Saturday, April 18. Check-in opens at 8:30 AM. The cleanup begins at 9:00 AM and runs until 12 PM. Volunteers meet at the Packery Flats Parking Lot, about 1 mile north of Zahn Rd. on Hwy 361 on the BAY SIDE (NOT at the boat ramp). Volunteers are asked to wear closed-toe shoes, bring plenty of drinking water, hat, bug spray and sunscreen. The event happens rain or shine. Registration can be done online at the Texas General Land Office website. For questions: Cristal Guerrero, Project Manager: cristal@baysfoundation.org



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Muddle & Puddle



The areas under the JFK Causeway "Muddle and Puddle" filled up with water after our Easter rain last week. Plans to fill the low areas are in the works.

The Traveling Moon



Rod and Sallie Barta took the Island Moon to Lambeau Field.

"We've been wintering on the island for the past nine years and returned home a short time ago after a major blizzard buried northeast WI in 30+ inches of snow. Only a little is still showing in the pic after the Packers cleared out their parking area."



Elizabeth Clark-Elizondo and her mother Catherine brought along the Island Moon as they visited family in Georgia for some enjoyable hikes.

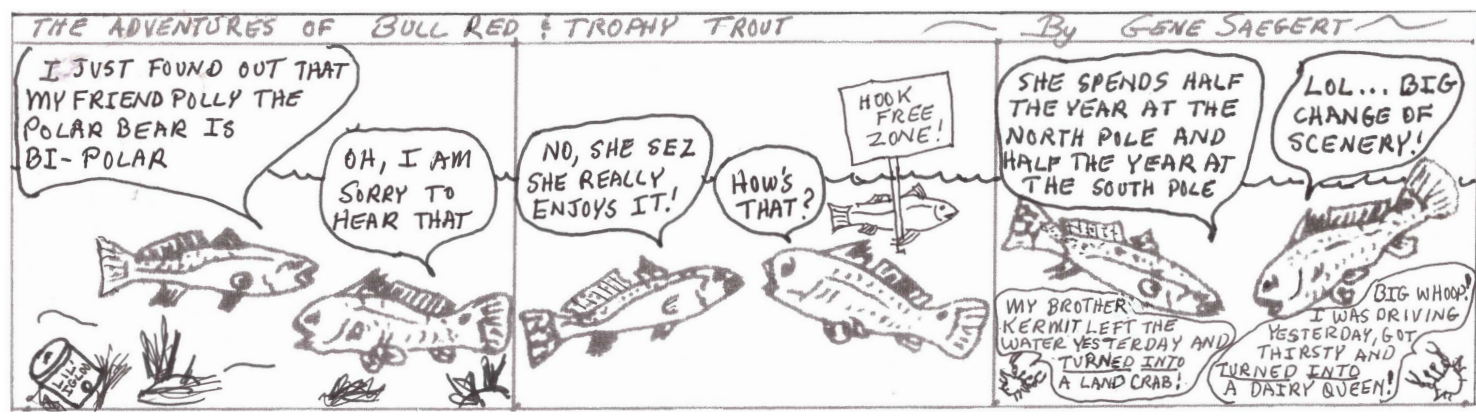


Tammy and Scott Graeme took the Moon on their spring vacation on the RCL Wonder of the Seas.



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Letters to the Editor



Jonathan's Story
Editor's note: You may have seen a guitar player busking at the corner of Whitecap Blvd. and SPID. His name is Jonathan and here is his story.

Hi Dale here's my story of how I got started doing music. It all started 10 years ago in 2015. I was a senior in high school and decided to walk away a winner not a loser. So a year and a half into learning to play I decided to use my skills to get out to the home football games in Flour Bluff and do what was right. And after I graduated in 2016 that was all I wanted to do. Play music and put smiles on people's faces. And throughout all the years at all the home games I gave it all I got.

I'm on the autism spectrum and I've used that with music to help improve my social skills. Intersections didn't start until 2021 at Waldron and SPID. Then we move into this year when I decided to be on The Island at Whitecap and SPID.

Now I'm a member of a nonprofit organization called the Texas Coastal Bend Blues Society as the autism liaison. And I've always have a saying. Autism is not a disability it's your superpower. So I'm still gonna keep on doing what I've been doing. Which is turning a bad day back into a good day.

Jonathan

Hi Dale,
 This is Craig Wooldridge. You put a few of my Letters in your paper recently and I just wanted to thank you. I hope we can survive the water issues there. I hope while I'm here on my farm in Missouri to put a plan together to force (read embarrass) our "leadership" to put their agenda aside and do what they're being paid to do with some kind of required weekly/monthly update with what they did that week and will do the next. It's juvenile, but what they need! Thanks again,
 Craig Wooldridge

Taxes cont. from A1

use to calculate the tax bill.
 For many homeowners, the most important point is that market value is not always the same as the number used to calculate taxes. A homeowner may see the market value increase by \$50,000 but experience only a modest change in taxable value because of the homestead cap and exemptions. Still, homeowners may want to protest the market value even if their taxes do not increase much this year. A high market value can create larger increases in future years once the cap catches up. Lowering the market value today can help limit future tax growth.

Bob Hall Fee

I am curious as to what appears to be an inequity between Bob Hall Pier and Cole Pier. Both were rendered unsafe and unusable by hurricanes. Yes, different hurricanes a few years apart. Both were rebuilt with what appears to be similar types of funding. Bob Hale Pier while have a fee to walk on, and fees per pole for fishing. Cole pier does not have fees for either. The question is WHY. Over several different social media sites people, including Islander's, say Bob Hale Pier has always had fees. "It's always been" doesn't seem like a good reason. Sounds like something parents tell their children. The question remains: WHY IS COLE PEIR FREE AND BOB HALL PEIR HAS FEES? Duane Storms

Editor's note: The short answer Duane is that the pier at Cole Park is owned and operated by the City of Corpus Christi and Bob Hall Pier is owned by the Nueces County Coastal Parks Department and funded through the Nueces County Commissioners Court. The city over the years has made the decision not to charge while Nueces County has charged. We are not aware of any legal requirement that the county pier must have an entry charge which means the Coastal Parks Board could presumably remove, or not re-initiate, the fee at Bob Hall Pier.

However, the money raised from Bob Hall Pier admissions goes to pay for the operations of county coastal parks which are self-funded largely through fees. If that fee were to disappear permanently the County Commission would then have a decision to make on whether to replace that funding through the county's General fund of simply reduce funding for the operations of the county coastal parks.

The Coastal Parks Board does not have taxing authority, any funds they raise go to the county's General Fund then are reallocated for their operations by Nueces County which does have taxing authority. It is an unusual setup created by state law under which the Parks Board (Department) is created through a state statute separate from that which created the county government at-large so while the parks department technically owns the pier without taxing authority the application of fees at the piers and campgrounds on Padre Island and at I.B. McGee Park and Horace Caldwell Pier in Port Aransas are their only self-generated source of income.

Moon cont. from A1

their neighbors and do not hesitate to help a friend or visitor in need. Best of all, Padre Islanders love to have fun.

The quality of life on this Island is very special and something we probably overlook and take for granted every day. There is something fascinating about a place where the decision of whether or not to go "OTB" over the bridge is of such great significance, even though that usually only means a trip to HEB, Walmart or the drug store about two miles across the Laguna Madre. And, there is something distinctive about giving directions to the Island to someone a thousand miles away by pointing to Interstate 37 and saying "Go down there, take a left and go south till the road ends." Or where you can tell a lost visitor "No, turn at the other light" and they know what you mean. There may be some social and economic differences among our Islanders, but on a day-to-day basis they usually end up blended together like a seven-layer bean dip half-way through a good party. That's a comfortable feeling to have in a community. Hopefully, the Padre Moon will grow into

Given the Nueces County Commissioners are currently looking to sell off county-owned land to increase their emergency reserve which currently has about \$15 million, the likelihood of getting additional funding from Nueces County seems small. Since the new pier has opened without a fee the county is already struggling to pay for security at the pier and trash pickup, etc., must also be funded in the long-term.

At one point in time the revenue from pier admissions was included in the bid for the operation of the restaurant on the pier; however, that practiced stopped about a decade ago and the revenue from the pier was separated from that of the restaurant which was split between the County Parks Department and the private operator of the restaurant while the revenue from the pier went to the county for operation of the pier.

If you look at your property tax statement you will notice that the Tax Rate of Nueces County is about the same as that of the Del Mar College District which explains why Nueces County is looking for additional funding sources (without having to raise taxes). On the whole we get much more benefit from the property taxes we pay to Nueces County than we get from the taxes we pay to the Del Mar College District. The General Fund budget of Nueces County is about \$130 million (with much of that going to operations of county services such as the courts and the county jail) while that of the City of Corpus Christi is \$344 million (with \$168 million of that going to police and fire).

Over the past decade the City of Corpus Christi has continually raised property taxes from year to year (usually between 6% and 7%) while Nueces County (with the exception of the current fiscal year when taxes were raised by 7.5%) has held its No New Taxes Rate steady. That discrepancy in taxes and subsequent funds is the reason the city can provide a free pier and Nueces County cannot.

If the pier fee was eliminated the devil's choice faced by the county would likely be to cut services or hours at the pier or raise property taxes. The fee from the pier helps to fund the pier operation (it did not pay for the rebuilding of the pier) and without it county leaders would have to choose between those two options.

Given that choice county leaders up to this point have opted to charge a user fee.

something that everyone looks forward to and in which many people participate. The news and the articles in the Padre Moon are intended to inform and entertain. Our Island is much like a boarding house with a big family who runs it and lives in it, but who has a constant stream of visitors at the dinner table and in the living room. Since much of our success depends on whether our guests enjoy themselves and want to come back, it's best they remember this as a pleasant and entertaining place. And, since a publication such as this is essentially on display in our Island living room and at our dinner table, we intend to emphasize news and features of a positive nature and to do our best to keep the Moon upbeat, informative, interesting and enjoyable. Be happy, life's too short not to smile!

It is our sincere hope that in some way, the Padre Moon can contribute to both the quality of life of those of us lucky enough to live on the Island, as well as to insure that when the many people who come to visit us must leave, they cross the bridge with a smile, a backward glance and a quiet promise to come back to visit new friends on the most beautiful island in Texas.

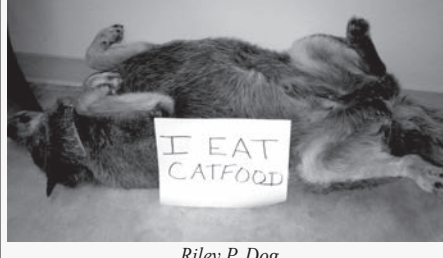
Moon Monkeys

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Stuff I Heard on the Island



By Dale Rankin

Over the past 19 years that I have scribbled in these pages there are two common questions that always come up. First, can The Island de-annex itself from the City of Corpus Christi; the short answer is no. The second question is how many people live here and who are we? I have made several stabs at this over the years by digging through data from the regular U.S. Census numbers which, as our Spanish speaking friends would say is a rompecabeza. For demographics the best source for demographics are periodic reports from the Economic Development Foundation (EDF) which are fairly consistent from year to year, matched with census data, and now help from artificial intelligence.

Population

A comparison of population between the city as a whole and The Island indicates that the rate of growth on The Island has been much faster than the city as a whole for two decades and is expected to continue to at least 2050, however, the population growth has slowed as The Island has simply run out of room. We saw solid population growth between the 2010 and 2020 census numbers but that has slowed since 2020 as the rate of new homes has dropped.

The historical growth rate over the last 20 years has been about 1% per year for the city while the growth rate for The Island has been about 10% per year. A quote from the 2011 EDF report was partially correct: "On North Padre Island over the next 20-30 years most of the vacant areas will fill in, such as the undeveloped portions of Padre Isles west of Schlitterbahn/Aquarius Drive, the Lake Padre area and land along the seawall. South of Padre Isles is the "Jones Tract" which contains about 1200 acres of private undeveloped land, nearly as large an area as Padre Isles. Over the next 20-30 years most of the vacant land on Mustang Island (north of Mustang Island State Park) is likely to fill."

The private tract has not developed nor has the area around the Ski Basin (Cape Summer), nor the area around the seawall nor Lake Padre. But the area between Dasmarrinas and the Laguna Madre has filled in as predicted then.

Demographics

The reports from the EDF over the past two decades can be summed up by this portion from a recent report.

"The demographic makeup of the Mustang-Padre Island Area is not consistent with that of Corpus Christi. Within the area (Padre and Mustang Islands inside the Corpus Christi City Limits), about 70% of the population is in the 21-64 year age group. Meanwhile, the City has about 60% of the population in the same age group. The 0-20 year age groups make up about 15% of the Mustang-Padre population, as compared to about 29% for Corpus Christi's population. This is indicative of the area's status as a resort community. The bulk of the population is working age adults, with fewer children than the remainder of the City. Also, there is a slightly higher rate of retirement age (65-plus) individuals within the area (17% than the rest of the city (12%). The proportion of households with children citywide is about 36%. Meanwhile, within the area (the islands), only about 17% of the households have children."

Education

"Educational attainment for individuals aged 25 and over differs greatly between the area (Island) and Corpus Christi Citywide, about 15% lack a high school diploma or equivalent. That statistic is about 5% for (The Island). About 54% of Mustang-Padre residents have a bachelor's degree or higher.

In contrast only about 21% of Corpus Christi residents have a bachelor's degree of higher."

Income

"Median household income in the area (The Island) is significantly higher and the poverty is significantly lower than the remainder of the City. The median household income in Mustang-Padre is about \$95,000, while that of Corpus Christi is about \$50,000. Also, less than 5% of the households in the area (The Island) live below the poverty level, as compared to the City's 13%."

Land Use 2004-2016

"The total study area on Padre Island contains 27,751 acres. The Low Density Residential uses experienced an increase of over 50% between 2004 and 2016. The Medium Density Residential use category expanded due to a reclassification of High Density uses (about 13 acres) to Medium Density since 2004."

"Clearly, the Park category is far and away the biggest use of land on The Island with over 16,000 acres reserved for park or recreation uses. The reduction in Park land of several hundred acres since 2004 is the conversion of the Padre Isles Golf Course to the commercial use category. As expected the vacant land use was reduced slightly due to new development but still contains almost 20% of the total land in the study area."

The numbers show that 57.9% of the total land on The Island (27,751 acres) is park land, followed by 19.3% which is vacant, and 14.8% which is beach, water, or wetlands.

So how many of us are there?

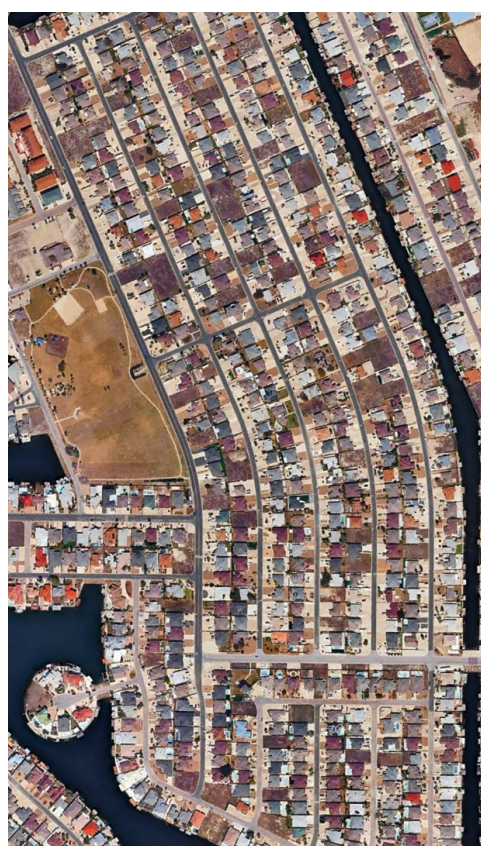
So back to the original question of the population on Padre Island? A good indication of changes in Island population is the number of registered voters which has increased steadily from 2384 in 1992, to 5639 by 2000, and now stands at 8429. Based on that last number it is safe to say, and AI agrees for what that is worth, that the number of permanent Island residents is holding steady at about 10,000 people. That does not include permanent residents who live between Packery Channel and the Port Aransas City Limits which have held steady over the years at about 400.

The simple fact is that we are running out of space to build homes for permanent residents until some large tracts of privately-owned land are developed and the large tracts now in development or planning will likely be mostly Short Term Rental properties which don't add to the permanent population. The last bit of land that is likely to be developed as single-family dwellings is the area around the Ski Basin which currently lacks any infrastructure and shows no sign of happening any time soon. But it is worth noting that the number of lots and fingertips in that area are about equal to the rest of Padre Island combined. There are more than 5000 lots listed there by the Nueces County Appraisal District. If that area is ever developed it will be a game changer no matter what type of homes or structures are built there.

In talking to those in the real estate profession our market trends for homebuyers are tending toward those buying second or even third homes and not toward buyers who intend to live here fulltime. Looking at Port Aransas since Hurricane Harvey it seems likely that the population of permanent residents on Padre Island has peaked, at least for now, and in fact is more likely to drop slightly moving forward than to grow. As things now stand our island is full.



Empty lots in 2012



Empty lots in 2025

Around cont. from A1

been exploring the search for the Money Hill left behind by John Singer, the brother of the sewing machine czar Isaac, when the Civil War broke out. Due to his abolitionist leanings he beat a hasty retreat out of the south and on his return was never able to find the location of his Money Hill with what is now estimated at \$3 million worth of gold, jewelry, and coins after a hurricane wiped out the palm tree he used as a landmark. We have featured that story several times in our history section and will post it this week on our Facebook page. The production crew was in town last week and has finished shooting the first episode but has not yet decided on an outlet for broadcast.

Thirty years of The Moon

The issue of the Moon you hold in your hand marks thirty years for this publication. What Mike Ellis began as a tabloid-sized paper in his apartment in 1996 has grown to a broadsheet, added color, and gone from a fortnightly to a weekly over the years and is now moving slowly but surely into the digital age as we expand the scope of our website, Facebook page theislandmoon-newspaper, and YouTube *Island Moon Live*. The common themes that run through the history of the Island Moon are fun (we are

after all on The Island), and accuracy in reporting which has gotten to be even more important in the age of non-fact-checked content on social media in recent years. We thank our advertisers for sticking with us and we look forward to bigger and better things moving forward.

That's all for now, it's time to *Whoop It Up* and in the meantime say hello if you see us *Around The Island*.



Turtle cont. from A1

working during this period from the south Packery Channel Jetty to the boundary of Padre Island National Seashore. Patrollers monitor the beach for sea turtle activities, collect data from the nesting turtles, and relocate nests to protected areas to improve survival. Kemp's ridley sea turtles are critically endangered, so it's important that the public know how they can help protect them and their nesting habitats:

- Drive slowly (15 mph) and stay alert—nesting turtles are small, camouflaged, and won't move out of the way.

- Keeping your distance and staying out of a turtle's line of sight—disturbance may cause her to abandon nesting.

- Help protect turtles from vehicles by guiding traffic around them. If you see a sea turtle nesting, please call 1-866-TURTLE-5 (1-866-887-8535), report the location, and send photos if possible. Do not approach or touch sea turtles as they are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Protecting sea turtles is a community effort, and we appreciate the public's help in keeping our beaches—and these incredible animals—safe.



Nesting Kemp's ridley Sea Turtle

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Kate's Hole area of Packery Flats Living Shoreline to get habitat restoration



By Quinn Hendrick

Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program Communication Manager

Quantity Christi, Texas - The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP) is planning a new habitat restoration initiative at the Kate's Hole Parking Area of the Packery Flats Coastal Habitat on the bayside of Mustang Island. The Kate's Hole Living Shoreline Project will address shoreline erosion near the popular public access point and parking area, while enhancing wildlife habitat and providing opportunities for community involvement.

Packery Flats is a 1,000-acre protected habitat known for its extensive intertidal habitats and accessibility for outdoor recreation. The site provides important habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife while serving as a valued destination for anglers, birdwatchers, and nature enthusiasts. Previous improvement efforts by CBBEP at Packery Flats have included debris and trash removal, installation of interpretive signage, road and parking area improvements, and the installation of a bollard system to help protect sensitive areas. Despite these improvements, the shoreline adjacent to the Kate's Hole Parking Area remains vulnerable to erosion caused by strong north winds and wave action. To address this issue, CBBEP is installing a living shoreline designed to reduce wave energy while supporting natural coastal habitats.

Volunteers will play a key role in the project, assisting with placement of oyster shell materials during a community event on Saturday, June 6th, 2026. Through this hands-on restoration effort, community members will have the opportunity to participate directly in protecting and restoring coastal habitats. To find more information and register as a volunteer for the Kate's Hole Oyster Restoration Event visit <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/cbbepi/event/katesholevolunteerevent/>. The first 100 volunteers to check in will receive a gift from Poncho Outdoors, along with event swag and lunch after the volunteer event.

The project will utilize bagged oyster shell to construct more than 300 linear feet of low-profile breakwater structure around the eroding shoreline. This natural barrier

History cont. from A1

was done in 2021. Mansfield Channel and Port Mansfield have a rich history and the opening of the channel cut Padre Island into the two pieces we now call South Padre and North Padre.

Redfish Landing

In 1933 a hurricane hit just north of the mouth of the Rio Grande River and sent a twenty-five foot tidal surge into South Texas for more than twenty-four hours. Fifteen to twenty foot waves crashed into the shore at what was then called Redfish Landing (now Port Mansfield) which was named for giant redfish in Baffin Bay, said to be over four feet long. The road to Redfish Bay from the land side was washed out and the tiny village was only accessible by water. In 1933 the Civil Works Administration was formed to build public projects and in 1934 Congress appropriated \$7,000 for construction of a good road to the landlocked village. During the war years the Army Air Corps used the Laguna Madre and what is now North Padre Island for a bombing range for pilot trainees and for trainees at the gunnery school in Harlingen. Even in recent decades beachcombers looking behind the dunes on North Padre have found the three-foot long wooden training bombs dropped from the airplanes. A 10-gauge shotgun shell detonated a powder-filled magazine in the nose of the wooden "bomb" to show the pilot where the bomb had hit. It was said by cowboys on the Dunn Ranch at the time that when the cows heard the droning of overhead engines they would move away from the targets which were stretched on top of the ground and after the "bombs" fell would move back to the newly churned area to forage.

Port Mansfield

In the years right after the war the federal government condemned 1760 acres around Redfish Landing and the Navigation District paid the American Legion three dollars per acre for the land and renamed the village

will help dissipate wave energy and protect the parking lot. The tidal area between the structure and the shoreline will later be planted with smooth cordgrass, a native marsh plant, to help further stabilize sediment and provide important habitat for coastal wildlife.

CBBEP is excited to be partnering with Sink Your Shucks, an oyster shell recycling initiative led by the Coastal Conservation and Restoration Lab at the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, to complete this project.

The Kate's Hole Living Shoreline Project will improve habitat for fish and wildlife and increase the long-term sustainability of this popular public access site. By combining nature-based shoreline stabilization techniques with community engagement, the project represents a sustainable approach to managing and protecting the Texas Coastal Bend's coastal resources.

Funding for this project comes from our valued partners at Citgo and the Coastal Conservation Association, with continued support for oyster restoration efforts in the Coastal Bend by Poncho Outdoors. The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program is a local non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to protecting and restoring bays and estuaries in the 12-county region known as the Texas Coastal Bend. The mission of the program is the implementation of the Coastal Bend Bays Plan, which is to protect and restore the health and productivity of the bays and estuaries while supporting continued economic growth and public use of the bays.



Kate's Hole Location

Port Mansfield in honor of State Senator Mansfield from Columbus, Texas who headed the commission that moved the necessary legislation through the U.S. Congress that extended the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway from Corpus Christi south to Port Isabel. A new harbor was built at Port Mansfield and completed in 1956. The next step was to build the channel from the Laguna to the Gulf and dredging began. Contemporary reports said that the dredge ran its hoses straight through an old Spanish galleon, the Santa Maria de Yicar, that was one of the Spanish Treasure ships which wrecked on the Texas Coast in 1554. As the hoses did their work Spanish silver sparkled in the bright sunlight and work was stopped while workers left their posts on the dredged to become temporary treasure seekers. The first manmade cut through the island was completed in September, 1957, but it was not to last.

Shifting sands

The local engineers who built the jetties ignored the advice of the Army Corps of Engineers and built their south jetty with tetra pods which are shaped like childrens' jacks which were placed with three legs resting on the sand below and one leg sticking straight up with the massive jetty rocks placed atop the structure. The north jetty was built atop the remains the old Spanish ship with no other support structure. When several storms hit the area later that year the engineers learned a valuable Biblical lesson about building on shifting sand and the jetties sank right out of sight and the channel was filled in. The Army Corps of Engineers re-dredged the channel which was finished in summer 1962 and lined on both sides with the granite boulders seen there today. Today, the Port Mansfield Gulf Channel, also known as the East Cut, is the dividing line between the Padres - North and South. And that's how Padre became two islands.

Beachcombing Report



By Jace Tunnell

Fish Aggregating Device What happens far offshore eventually washes up at our feet



Jace with a FAD on the beach



A fish aggregating device with a satellite beacon

Along the high tide line this week, nestled among tangles of sargassum, I came across something far more industrial than the usual driftwood and shells, a fish aggregating device, or FAD, washed ashore.

At first glance, it looked like a large, flat plastic tabletop, weathered by months at sea. Flip it over, and the purpose becomes clear. Ropes, netting, and trailing lines hang beneath it, designed to create structure in the open ocean where fish gather. Nearby, still tethered by a thick rope, was a satellite beacon etched with letters and numbers. These identifiers often trace the device back to distant fleets, many originating off West Africa.

This wasn't my first encounter. I find four or five of these each year along our beaches. Not all are high-tech. Some are homemade,

PVC pipes, metal frames rigged with water jugs for flotation, even bamboo lashed together like something out of Gilligan's Island. Whether improvised or industrial, they all serve the same purpose: attracting fish in otherwise empty water.

FADs are widely used by the global tuna industry. Large vessels deploy thousands of them, using satellite-linked buoys to track fish that gather below. While effective, the method comes with a cost. These devices attract more than tuna, but also sharks, sea turtles, and other species that become unintended catch.

This FAD had clearly traveled far before washing ashore, carried by currents until it joined the wrack line. A group in Florida is now documenting these strandings, working toward restrictions or bans due to their impact. Locally, we've found a small silver lining. In years past, we collected the beacons and auctioned them to support sea turtle rehabilitation. People would buy them for a few dollars and mount them on posts as coastal décor.

Still, each one is a reminder: what happens far offshore eventually washes up at our feet. 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 (@HarteResearch), Facebook (facebook.com/harteresearch), and Instagram (@harteresearch).

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Senior moments Special to the Island Moon

How the Downed F-15 US Airman Was Rescued Inside Iran

By Dotson Lewis

Dotson's Note: The US has rescued the missing crew member of the US F-15 fighter jet which was shot down on Friday, April 3, 2026 over southern Iran. President Donald Trump confirmed the rescue on social media that Sunday morning after the US military "pulled off one of the most daring Search and Rescue Operations" in its history. The officer is "now SAFE and SOUND!" he added, though in a later post Trump said he had been "seriously wounded". Thanks to..... Gabriela Pomeroy, Grace Eliza Goodwin, Ghoncheh Habibiadzad and Chris Partridge, BBC News weapons analyst.

Two crew members were on board the jet, and both ejected from the plane. One of them had already been rescued by US forces. Iranian officials said the warplane was shot down by its air defense system.



Details around the rescue operation and how it unfolded are still emerging. Here is what we know so far.

How was the officer rescued? The US and Iran were in a race to locate the missing crew member after the jet was downed over southern Iran. The exact circumstances of the US rescue remain unclear, but one person familiar with the operation described it as a "huge" combat search and rescue mission in southern Iran.

Trump paused a number of other operations in Iran to focus on the rescue, directing dozens of special operations forces personnel to the effort, the BBC's US partner CBS reported. "This type of raid is seldom attempted because of the danger to 'man and equipment.' It just doesn't happen!" the president said on social media.

The rescue of crew members of a downed jet is one of the most complex and time-sensitive operations - known as combat search and rescue (CSAR) - that the US military and its allies prepare for. The missions are often conducted by helicopters, which fly low over enemy territory, alongside other military aircraft that conduct strikes and patrol the area. William Fallon, a retired US Navy admiral, told the BBC that time of day probably worked in the mission's favor. "Darkness is better for our people because they're used to operating at night," he said.

In his social media post, Trump said the airman - a colonel - "was behind enemy lines in the treacherous mountains of Iran, being hunted down by our enemies, who were getting closer and closer by the hour".

Mikey Kay, military analyst and host of the Security Brief on BBC News, said ejection from an aircraft is "a brutal process" that "can produce massive forces on the body". Kay said that as soon as he was on the ground he is likely to have gathered the parachute and concealed it. He would be trained to get the beacon signal on, get to high ground, conceal himself and establish communications. Officials told US media that the crew member spent more than 24 hours on his own, hiding in the mountains and hiked up a 7,000ft (2,000m) ridge line.

The president added the airman's location was monitored "24 hours a day" by officials who were planning the rescue operation.

After he was rescued, he was flown to Kuwait to receive treatment for his injuries, CBS said quoting US officials. Media reports said the CIA played a crucial role in the rescue by tracking the airman and passing his exact location to the Pentagon. The agency engaged in a deception campaign inside Iran, reports said. While the rescue attempt was taking place, it spread word the airman had already been found and was being extracted.

Trump said the US military sent dozens of aircraft into Iran and claimed the operation was carried out without any casualties. Two transport planes that were intended to fly out rescue crews were unable to take off from a remote base inside Iran, and were then destroyed to keep them out of enemy hands, US media said. Commandos then flew out after three extra aircraft were sent. Earlier, Iran offered a reward to citizens for help in finding them.

The crew of a downed jet are highly trained for such situations. "Their number-one priority is to stay alive and to avoid capture," Jennifer Kavanagh, director of military analysis at think tank Defense Priorities, told the BBC. "They're trained to... try to get away from the ejection site as quickly as possible, and to conceal themselves so that they are safe." They're also trained on survival techniques so that they can go without food or water, or find resources from the local terrain, for as long as possible, Kavanagh said.

Where and when was the jet shot down?

Iranian state media first claimed on Friday that the country's forces shot down a US jet over its southern region. The exact location where the F-15 was reportedly downed was unconfirmed, but two possible provinces were mentioned in Iran's state media - Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, and Khuzestan. Two crew members were on board. The pilot was recovered in an earlier operation. That operation reportedly included an A-10 Warthog aircraft which was hit over the Gulf, with its pilot ejecting before being rescued.

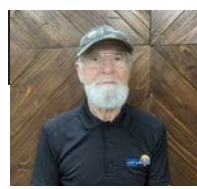
One helicopter carrying the rescued pilot from the F-15E jet was hit by small arms fire, injuring crew members on board - but it landed safely, US media reported. Iran's top joint military command has credited new Iranian air defense systems with the downing of both US warplanes, according to Iran's state-affiliated IRNA news agency.

What do we know about the jet's purpose?

The F-15E is designed for both air-to-ground and air-to-air missions. In Iran, they are most likely to have been involved in defensive roles to shoot down Iranian drones and cruise missiles. In its air-to-ground strike role, the jet is capable of dropping laser and GPS guided precision munitions, as well as other bombs. The aircraft has two crew: the pilot and a weapons systems officer in the back seat. The weapons officer, known as a "Wizzo", is responsible for selecting targets and making sure the weapons are programmed for the appropriate attack.

Dotson's Other Note: It is not known what specifically brought down this US jet, but if it was taken down by the Iranians, the most likely reason is a surface-to-air missile (SAM).

Thanks For Reading



By Gene Saegert

Gene's Corner

Looking back to the days of Rotary Phones and Phone Operators

Most everyone has a story about how they met their spouse. Most are very interesting. I will touch on that subject today on how I met mine. Not that it is any more or less interesting than any other stories but it centers on something that would be almost impossible to duplicate today even if I wanted to. The reason is because it centers on a long time past that only us old seniors experienced, and youngsters know nothing or very little about. So here is the story.

My job back in the day was to call people and collect past due payments on their loans. Most of the calls were long distance calls. At that time you had to use the operator to make long distance calls you could not just dial them like we do now. I used a rotary dial telephone, dialed 0 for the operator and they would make the call for you. It would be what they called a person to person call and the operator would ask for the person you wanted to speak to.

Well I made so many of these calls every night that after a while I got to recognize the operators by their voices. Most were very nice, but there was one voice that was very pleasant and also interesting and maybe a little enticing to me. Well, it seems she began to recognize me also when I called and sometimes we would make a few remarks while we were waiting for the person to be called to the phone. We got to where we started to make a few interesting remarks back and forth with maybe a little bit of flirting going on here and there which was frowned on by the night supervisor so things became a little risky on her part.

As things progressed if I dialed the operator and she did not answer I would hang up and redial until she answered. The other operators finally caught on to this and I would hear them say, "It your boyfriend, you take the call. This was great news for me! This went on for around a year. My office was only a block away from the telephone office and I told her I walked by your office today with my assistant. She said "I think I may have seen you were you the fat one or the

other one. " I said "the other one". I said I would like to meet you sometime. She said "I would like to meet you also, but I do have a boyfriend" Well that didn't bother me; I just saw that as a challenge... In those days you couldn't just call someone and get a hold of them. If you called someone and they weren't home there was no answering machines, No blinking red light that notified you that you missed a call.... You just missed it.

There was another factor that played in this scenario. If you knew what a person's car looked like you would leave a note to them under their windshield wiper. On a call, I asked her what kind of car she drove and she told me. Ok, this was exciting news that I was poised to take advantage of. So it began!

I would leave a note on her car asking her to meet me. Well the next day I intended to leave her a note with when and where to meet. With note in hand I headed for her car and in what involved a stroke of luck I saw that there was already a note under her windshield wiper and lifted the wiper to put my note under it and somehow the other note (it was from her boyfriend) fell out and onto the ground. I picked it up and decided there really was only room for one note. The other note somehow got lost in the shuffle..... Well it is too late to say to make a long story short, so the note snitching went on for a couple of months and things progressed after a couple of dates and strangely enough she never received any more notes from that boyfriend again. We ended up falling for each other and got married just a couple of months later. When I tell my friends this story they usually say, "Wow you were a stalker" I just say "Call it what you want, but it worked" When I told my wife about it at a later date she just said "I knew about it. " You just can't hide things from them, it they always know somehow.

Thought for the day: When I see lovers names carved on trees, I think it strange how many people bring sharp knives on dates.



Blowin in the wind By Lu Ann Kingsbury



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Sudoku

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Going Easy On You...

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

Knuckle-Cracker

				4	7	3		
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1	6	4						

Mind-Numbing Frustration

			1			3		
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			4			5		
			4	9		6		
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	7			9				

Brain-Buster

		8	4	7				
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				1				
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5							6	3
		3	9	4				

Island Crossword

Crossword Solution on classifieds page

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
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				46				47	48					
49	50	51				52	53				54	55		
56						57					58			59
60						61					62			
63						64					65			

Across

- British nanny's four-wheeler
- Scarf or race track
- Feel the heat
- Corn holder, perhaps
- Hourglass, e.g.
- "Adieu!"
- Read at the supermarket?
- Melodic
- Thicke or King
- Accomplish a baseball feat
- Have coming
- Alphabet trio
- Blue or red ribbon
- Suspicious quality
- Kind of old story
- Goethe and Schiller died here
- Cologne complaint
- Seek compassion
- Evil Amin
- Hedge word
- Name of six popes
- Allows as true
- In a fitting way
- Mellow, in a way
- Fleetwood Mac hit
- Take it on the lam
- One of a kind?
- Sister of Euterpe
- Dissembled
- Sicilian bubbler
- Pass along
- Lasting starter?
- Momentarily
- Three-time French Open queen
- Just say no

Down

- Letter add-ons (Abbr.)
- Like cream puffs
- Jai ___
- California's capital, once
- Mary of "The Maltese Falcon"
- Clipped, like Samson
- Defeatist's word
- Colorful fish
- Message carriers
- Call a raise
- It's lowest on the Mohs scale
- List-finishing abbreviation, perhaps
- Lose power
- Beanie Babies, e.g.
- Bird's attempt at communication
- Savory garnish
- "Where's ___?" (Kid's book title)
- At full speed
- ___ up (gets smart)
- Irving and Tan
- "___ Joe's"
- Synagogue
- In a demure manner
- Questioning folks
- Lawyer/writer Gardner
- Tierra del ___
- Horror-stricken
- Lounging robe
- Jackie's second
- Bristly hairs
- Salts' salutes
- Wishes otherwise
- "Do ___ others ..."
- Muchacho
- It has bark but no bite
- Word with dance or mess
- Breathe partner
- Witnessed
- Washday word



Thoughts from Reverend Ken

Fear vs Faith

By Rev. Dr. Ken

There is a corny preacher story about the little boy called in for supper back in the days when children freely roamed the neighborhood. As he approached the table, mom asked to see his hands. He rubbed them on his jeans and showed her. Mom scolded the boy for not washing his hands before the meal. She reminded him that dirty hands have germs and germs make us sick.

After the blessing, she told him to go into the bathroom and wash his hands. As he walked down the hallway he was heard to say, "Jesus and germs, Jesus and germs. I haven't seen one of them."

The stories of the disciples of Jesus seeing the risen Jesus are numerous, and mysterious. One of the disciples, Thomas, who had not yet seen Jesus was having none of it. He wanted his own experience of the risen Christ. I connect easily to Thomas, and his doubt.

It is often implied that we should not be like Thomas. However, Thomas' questions were very rational. Dead people don't return to life. What if we are actually to be like Thomas?

The biggest enemy of faith is not doubt. The biggest enemy of faith is fear. Fear boxes us in with insecurities and anxieties. These give rise to fear of the enemy outside, the enemy within, the enemy above and enemy below.

Fear leads us to demonize and dehumanize others. Fear isolates, rejects, divides, and

lashes out. Fear reigns in the world today.

This is why fear is mentioned so many times in the Bible. Doubt, on the other hand, is rarely mentioned. When Jesus told Thomas to not doubt, the literal phrase is, "do not have unbelief."

I find doubt helpful. Doubt keeps us grounded and centered. Doubt leads us to question, to wonder, to seek, to knock, to ask. We need to make room for doubt in our faith communities.

Thomas is someone who yearned for a living encounter with Jesus. He would not settle for someone else's experience of resurrection. I actually admire that Thomas stuck around in hopes of having his own experience. He dared to confess uncertainty amid those who were certain. Even more surprising to me, the other disciples let him express his doubts and his desires. They weren't threatened.

Many of us wrestle with hidden doubts. We need safe spaces to be honest about these doubts. Doubts to faith arise when addictions raise their ugly heads. Doubts arise when we receive a diagnosis. Doubts arise when forgiveness and reconciliation seem elusive. Doubts arise when loved ones suffer. Doubts arise when barbaric apocalyptic threats are made against an entire civilization.

As a teen and young adult, I loved to body surf in California. The waves could get

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fairly big and imposing. They could be powerful and rough. Like all coastlines, occasionally a rogue wave would come rolling in and you knew you were not able to catch it. If you did nothing you would find yourself tumbling to shore. The other option was to move towards the wave and dive under it. It might still rock you. However, you will come out on the other side, ready to ride the next wave.

Doubt can be like that rogue wave. If we do nothing it will send us tumbling. Or we lean into our doubts, trusting that on the other side Jesus will show up alive to give the peace that surpasses all understanding. We trust that Jesus will bring a peace that brings healing and wholeness into our scar-filled lives. We trust that Jesus will give a peace that brings hope and joy into the midst of

struggle and anxiety. The promise of Easter is that God's love triumphs over evil. Death does not win. Life wins. Love enables faith. Beach worship services begin again on May 3. 8 am on Whitecap Beach at the end of Whitecap Blvd. Bring a chair! There is a place for you!

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, on our Facebook page.

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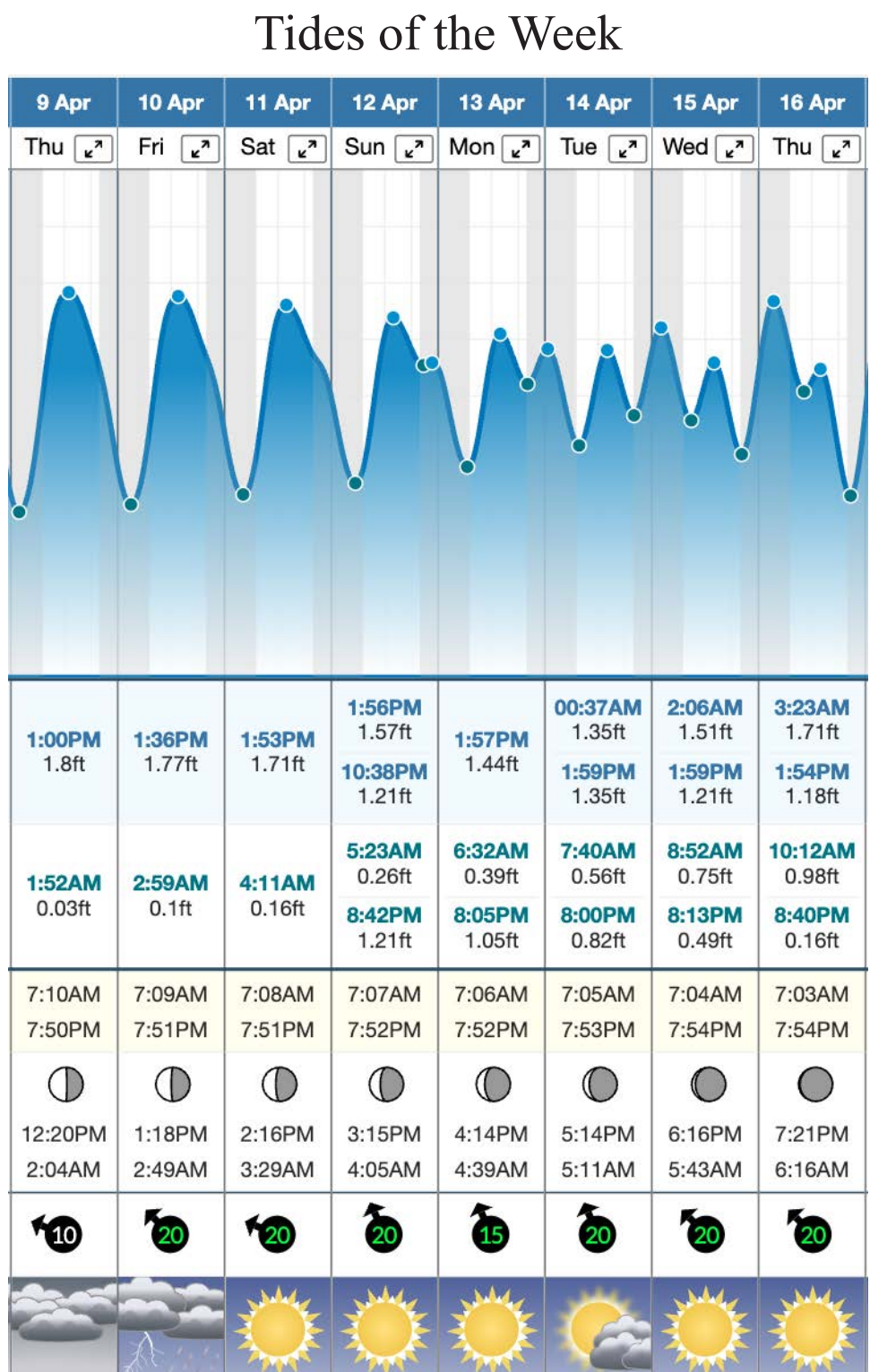
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The Art of Island Life

Places That Instantly Calm Us

By Melissa Mitchell

There are places that instantly calm us—the kind that quiet everything the moment you step into them. No effort. No overthinking. Just... calm. For me, it's usually outside.

Open space has a way of settling things—it makes you exhale, like there's finally room to breathe. In springtime, that feeling pulls me outdoors. Not in a big, dramatic way—just little nudges. A reason to step out longer, notice what's growing, or finally take care of something that's been sitting on the list. I've always loved planting—spring planting, fall planting... really, any planting. There's a rhythm to it. Something steady. Something hopeful.

After a long season of green, the flurry of butterflies and honeybees—and those fresh bursts of color popping up across the yard—are a welcome sight.

Making Space for What Matters

Recently, I looked at my outdoor fire pit—the one that rarely gets used here—and realized it was taking up valuable space that I could use otherwise. So I turned it into a raised herb garden. What once held ash and stone—and the very rare flame—now holds fresh soil and new growth: herbs I'll actually use every day, right outside my door. It completely changed the way I use that space. And here, that matters.

Every choice counts

After a long stretch of dry weather, the rain we received over Easter was a welcome gift—my rain barrels are now filled to overflowing and ready to keep things going. Because we're under Stage 3 water restrictions, every choice counts. So I've leaned into drought-resistant plants and hand-water from my rain collection barrels. When they run low, I run my large-capacity dehumidifier out on the patio for a short cycle to collect water from the air—it's surprising how quickly it fills. It's not about having a perfect garden. It's about creating something that works here... and something I'll actually enjoy.

A few years ago, after my sweet Bella—my toy poodle—passed, I was given a packet of mixed wildflower seeds. Every year since, I plant a small portion of those in a few scattered pots around my patio. Watching those first tiny leaves pushing up through the soil never fails to stop me for a moment. It's small, but it's meaningful. I think of Bella—her sweetness, her joy, the way she made everything feel a little lighter. I'm grateful—and I look forward to discovering what will bloom. This is the last year of those original seeds, but it won't be the last year of what they represent. It's something I plan to carry forward—passing along seeds that can be given, planted, and remembered.



A Different Kind of Luxury

We sometimes tend to think of luxury as something bigger—something grander.

But for me, it often looks like this—Stepping outside and breathing in the fresh air.

Clipping fresh herbs for dinner, tasting a fresh mint leaf from my little patch. Pressing a rosemary leaf between my fingers and pausing for a moment to take it all in. Letting the day unfold instead of rushing through it. Small things... but they add up.

They slow you down—and remind you that the little things matter. I've thought more than once about what makes certain places feel different the moment you step into them. I've noticed it's often something that touches all of our senses at once.

Light plays a role

It's softer in the morning. Warmer toward the evening. It can change everything.

Sound matters too. Waves in the distance. The rustle of wind moving through the leaves. My favorite birdsong—the little wren. Even the quiet feels intentional. And then there's scent—salt air and that rare moment when it finally rains. A kind of everyday aromatherapy—lavender in the yard, herbs in the garden, those familiar scents woven into daily life. My little garden didn't just change the space—it has become a joyful part of my daily routine. And maybe that's what this season is really about. Making space for what brings you peace.

Because sometimes, the places that calm us most... are the ones we create ourselves.

The Art of Island Life will return next week with more stories and coastal reflections.

Have a story to share or a cause close to your heart? I'd love to hear from you at contact@melissamitchellart.com



Waterline cont. from A1

capacity, and improve service to the Island." Funding from the project comes the Water Capital Fund.

According to backup information in the council agenda only two water transmission mains service the North Padre Island area. The first is an 18-inch line constructed in 2015, the second is a 24-inch line constructed in 1970.

The 18-inch water line currently operates at approximately 50% capacity and installation of a new water transmission main will provide water flows necessary to operate the 18-inch transmission main at full capacity, and provide a reliable redundant water supply to North Padre Island if the 24-inch water line were out of service for maintenance or repairs

If approved the new 18-inch water transmission main will be installed to connect the termination point of the existing 18-inch

water line serving North Padre Island through approximately 11,722 linear feet of PVC water line from the intersection of Flour Bluff Drive and Don Patricio Road to Laguna Shores Drive.

The project will connect the new 18-inch water line to the existing water distribution system at two locations, the existing 10-inch water line at the intersection of Don Patricio and Flour Bluff Drive, and the existing 18-inch water line at the intersection of the O' Neill Ditch and Laguna Shores Drive

Construction duration is planned for 9 months from issuance of the Notice to Proceed to begin construction in May 2026, with anticipated completion by February 2027

The project is included in the FY26 Adopted Capital Budget and was approved by City Council in September of 2025.

Island Real Estate Roundup

Apryl Noles



Low maintenance and affordable condos driving the market

The Padre Island real estate market experienced a slight slowdown this week, which is not unexpected as we move into the beginning of a new month. This type of pause is very typical and often gives us a moment to reset before activity begins to pick back up—especially as we head into the spring season, which is historically one of our busiest times of the year.

In the detached home sector, we are still seeing movement with two homes currently under option ranging between \$500,000 and \$700,000. We also have one home pending in the \$300,000 range and one home that successfully closed in the \$400,000 range. Even with fewer transactions this week, buyers are still actively making moves across multiple price points.

The townhome market continues to show steady demand. This week, two townhomes

sold between \$260,000 and \$470,000, along with one property currently under option in the \$300,000 range. This indicates consistent interest in more affordable and low-maintenance options on the island.

In the condo sector, we saw one condo sell in the \$200,000 range, along with another going under option under \$100,000. These lower price points continue to attract both investors and buyers looking for vacation properties or income-producing opportunities.

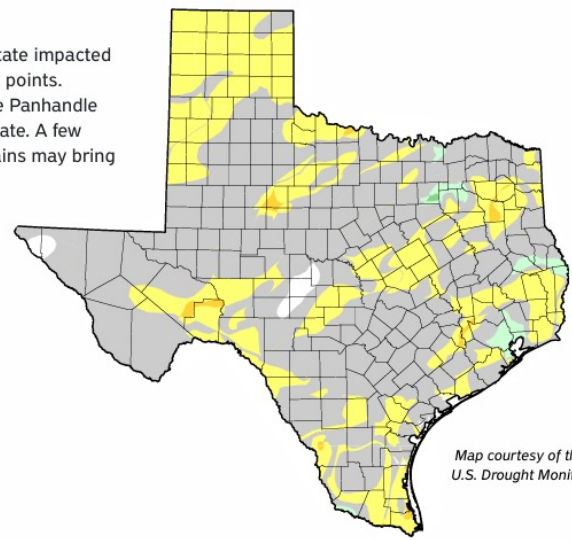
Overall, while activity slowed slightly, the market remains stable, and all sectors are still seeing movement. With spring right around the corner, we typically expect to see an increase in both inventory and buyer activity, setting the stage for a strong season ahead.

Stay tuned for next week's update as we continue to track the trends on Padre Island!

Drought Update

Drought change in March

In the last four weeks, the area of the state impacted by drought increased seven percentage points. Conditions degraded across most of the Panhandle and scattered areas in the rest of the state. A few areas in East Texas improved. Recent rains may bring more improvements in early April.



Map courtesy of the U.S. Drought Monitor

By Dr. Mark Wentzel, Hydrologist, Office of Water Science and Conservation

www.twdb.texas.gov

Island Moon Live

Our Thursday radio show is now on 1440 KEYS and 98.7 fm as well as streamed live on YouTube and Facebook! We record the show on Thursdays live at Doc's from 11 am to 1 pm. We have an enormous amount of different friends and guests, telling stories about how the Island used to be, and where we are heading. All of the videos are free to watch, and can be found on YouTube at Island Moon Live via this link.



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Island Outdoors

On the Rocks

By Jay Gardner

This week's article is brought to you by the number "8". I'm writing this gripping tale for you loyal readers here on April 8th. I don't know if there's anything mystical about the number 8 except that I'm behind the 8-ball getting this article in as I'm sure the Moon editors are waiting for me to finish this. But, when I was walking into work, I noticed a possum in the tree outside, and it had 8 kits (joey's) hanging off of it.



Social media will sometimes bring up some bittersweet memories. Recently, a memory popped up from 8 years ago when Bizzy and Brian and I sailed the *S/V Balance* back from Grand Cayman to Texas and landed on Padre Island. I was between shops and decided to bomb out for a bit and help the boys get the big sailing cat home. As we cleared the Port A jetties after 8 days between the Caribbean and the Gulf and home, we threw the vegetables out before clearing the jetties because we didn't know if we were able to have them, lol. Immigration actually came out to Bizzy's house and went through the boat, checked us in, and we were good to go. We actually got back on the boat because land felt weird after 8 days on the water. That was an adventure that I will tell later.



The number 8 also correlates to a life event, as I started working at the engineering shop that I work at now this coming Monday eight years ago this week. The decision to move wasn't an easy one, and I am happy to say that I am back doing some sub consulting work with my old teammates today, and Craig and I just got the permit authorization for repairing the seawall the other day. Roadkill Willie and I still hang around as well, so there's that.

One of the bad things about "8", however, is that we learned that Capt. Billy Sandifer passed away the day we left Grand Cayman. So, that means we lost Billy 8 years and 8 days ago. That was a tough one and still makes me misty. Capt Billy would be proud of the legacy that he instilled as a mentor and friend to many, many people however. The Friends of Padre has picked up the ball on the Big Shell Clean Up, now headed towards its 32nd year (I think). The event gets bigger and better every year, with more people volunteering and more trash picked up than the past years.

Billy was also instrumental in perpetuating the ideas of catch-and-release, especially when it comes to sharks. His enlightened attitude made many of the shark killing tournaments fade into the past and made way for the conservation efforts and research that is being completed yearly through the Texas Shark Rodeo and Sharkathon with data collection and tagging assistance from HRI's Center for Sportsfish Science and Conservation (CSSC). Texas Shark Rodeo boasts almost 11,000 sharks that have been caught, tagged and released since 2014. Those are sharks that would typically have been killed in the past. Capt. Billy has left a heck of a legacy and many of us miss him, and he might have had something to say about that 8-foot shark that was caught and killed off Bob Hall the other day.

Unfortunately, "eight" is not purveying through the rest of my day today, my tax appraisal came in and it is the customary 9% up again this year, my lab work bill is overdue for \$15.45, and I only have 6 bags of popcorn stashed in the box in my office. But the rain this past weekend was amazing, and every container and bucket I own is full of water. Get those hummingbird feeders up, and the front actually dropped a few exciting migrants out and they can be found at the usual places. Drop me a line at jaygardner1032@gmail.com and we'll see you next week On the Rocks.



Returning from Grand Cayman. Aerial by Jacob Augs 2018

Backwater Adventures

By Joey Farah



The souls that I see sometimes catch me by surprise, watching my life from above. The sky marbled with reds, blue, purple and rays of yellow and orange breaking the new day. He stands proud and watches most every morning, mostly when my thoughts are calling. My dad watches me roll past the island with those tall trees, sometimes there are two, I imagine it's my Indian Uncle, maybe someone else. In our tiny part of the Universe, we struggle to imagine divine destiny, higher power, heaven. In nature, it is clear. Our energy is real, transfers, and continues. We all lose our troubles and stress when we focus on fishing. Peering into the Sea we imagine what is happening in a world below, that we do not understand. Lose yourself outdoors and feel yourself move farther away from the pull of mankind and closer to your soul. This is a beautiful and exciting time of year to be along the Sea. It is always a great chance to connect with our thoughts and reset our souls. If you keep your mind and eyes open, those special souls will come to visit, along with great catches.

Unplug

Leave the screen time madness on land and watch closely for keys to better fishing. I watch the flags, palms, ripples on the water to tell me the direction of the wind, the beaches and structures for tide levels. Find your marks every day, observe those changes even on the days you don't get to fish. Keeping up with conditions is a great way to stay connected to your passion, and to stay ready for quick trips out on the water. It's also better than worrying about work, school, money, or broken hearts while you're driving to work! Download and watch our daily lunar feeding times as well, you will learn how the weather, wind, and tides are all wrapped together with these moon times, changing each day to the minute of predicted periods. Instead of staring at your phone, get some fishing maps and run your finger across the bay, dream and imagine your next outing. Gather weather forecasts and conditions to stir your inspiration to explore new areas. Map in hand is much different than I get many folks tell me they wish they could stay connected to fishing as much as I do, that it would make them catch more fish, there are so many ways to stay connected to what's going on in fishing without casting a line. All of them bring some peace to heart while your on your daily paths.

We have jumped into late Spring, high fresh tides, and sunny warm days. Green water flowing from the south end of the Land Cut into the Baffin Bay complex. Bait and gamefish are all migrating in, spawning, and hatching. This is a incredible birth of life that will mature over the next six months and then migrate out into the open bays and gulf. The Laguna Madre truly feeds the entire Texas Gulf Coast with life. For us manglers here on Padre' this means our flow from the south is congregating some of the best fishing in the world along the Rockpiles of Baffin Bay. These petrified sea worm colonies are jagged rocks that are like fish hotels. Small microorganisms, shrimp, crabs and small baitfish hold tight to them, attracting game species. Shadows, covers, and food all in the same place! Many of these rock structures are marked but nowhere near all of them. Often when you see a rock marked on maps and gps it's a group of them. Drifting over the larger rock piles right now with shrimp and popping corks is outstanding! Be careful and leave your motor down, this will keep the bottom of your boat from hitting rock. When the motor touches, lift and float or troll off of them. Leaning these areas by drifting over them will allow you to burn the spot into your memory and catch incredible action. The practice of anchoring up on the deeper rock piles and throwing popping corks has become popular and can really one effective. Black drums are swarming the rocks for crabs, live shrimp with a longer drop under a popping cork will bring drum and trout to the boat. I like to make small moves looking for pods of fish, staying out for up to 30min at a time. Sandbars and shorelines are also hit right now for redfish while anchoring up with live shrimp. Long casts away from boat noise is essential.

Walking anywhere on Padre Island will find you in some of the best fishing around. Grabbing a bait bucket of live shrimp armed with a popping cork is a recipe for success along the JFK Causeway, the backside of Mustang Island, or inside the national seashore at Bird Island. If carrying live shrimp is too much, use soft plastic under that cork



This angler caught these two nice redfish in the flats across from Marker 37 Marina on a stiff North Wind! I hope he took the last cold front home with him back to Michigan!

or when you run out of shrimp! The sound of the cork imitates a gamefish slashing at a shrimp on the surface, others come in to steal the meal!

We have been able to catch limits of trout on lures most every single trip out. I follow the fresh tidal flow, fish zones where baitfish are present, and put us in the right place during those lunar feed time. We are using jig heads 1/8-1/4 from the boat focusing on the areas of the Laguna Madre that you can find marbled bottoms of sand and grass. A swimming presentation with a controlled decent has worked best with paddle tails. Strait tailed baits have been good as well with more flutter up and fall technique. Natural or dark colors with chartreuse tails have been most consistent, but when the fish are hungry it seems they will hit most any color of the action is realistic. With lures I would like to explain that you are using your imagination from the moment it touches the water until you pull it free from the ocean. Watch and dance your bait at the same speed as a wounded baitfish. Present opportunity to the predator for an easy attack. It's easy to start talking, get excited, and just find yourself casting and reeling. When you focus on each cast, every stroke of the rod, that's when you lose yourself in the art of fishing and leave the negative energy behind you.

Souls that guide us

The Fish Eagles stood against that eastern sky; I called out to them as I passed and raised my hand. I could see them both turn their heads and watch me go by. I pulled the boat to a flat in Nighthawk, set adrift and started landing fish under that blessed morning sky. Later that morning as the lunar feed times rose and bait clicked the surface with the touch of golden sun, a lone cry of the Osprey called to us. His wings fluttered as he aimed at his dive, fell into a crash of scattered bait. He sat on the water for a moment and stared at us, gloating a little Perhaps. Then his mighty wings thrust him up and out of the water with a big horse mullet in his talons. He too lives by the moon and sun. Those souls will follow you and appear to guide and comfort you along the way. We just must learn how to unplug, and connect with nature to see the signs. Sitting on the beach with your feet in the sand, it's a marvel that the shorebirds are oblivious to us. Sometimes even making eye contact. When your thoughts are of our loved ones past and that special fish comes to hand, it might not be just luck. I walk into Dads Old Bar and see smiling faces of the past, Mr. Dick under his Golf hat, Bob with a pool stick in his hand smiling and giving me a nod. Mike Ellis sitting by the glass rack invisible but seeing all. Those souls, that energy doesn't just disappear, they circle back, comes to visit, holds us on the line. Comment with nature here on this Island and you will connect with your past and present. When your energy is relaxed and positive, fishing will be catching. I must be looking into the sun a bit too much lately but dang it feels great! I'm looking forward to having YOU out on the water this May and June! Pick up the phone and find Your Day! Follow all of your fishing on Facebook and ticktok at Capt Joey Farahs Backwater Fishing! 361-442-8145. Get wet

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Nature Notes

Swallows and Martins: Masters of the Open Sky

By Kayla Pringle



A Cliff Swallow hunting for insects. Photo by Mike Williams

Few birds are as instantly recognizable as the swallows and martins of the family Hirundinidae. With scythe-shaped wings, streamlined bodies, and forked tails that are easily spotted in the air, these birds are masters of aerodynamic evolution. Swallows and martins occupy many habitats, from open prairies to coastal wetlands to city skylines. They have adapted to life almost everywhere that aerial insects are present. Birds of this family are found everywhere around the world, except Antarctica.

Swallows and martins are aerial insectivores, feeding almost exclusively on flying insects captured on the wing. Their wide gapes, bristled mouths, and agile flight allow them to harvest swarms of mosquitoes, flies, and agricultural pests. In doing so, they provide an often-unseen ecological service; linking insect populations, freshwater systems, and open landscapes through their daily movements.

Their global success is rooted in adaptability. While many species nest on cliffs or in earthen banks, others have readily embraced human structures. Barn Swallows plaster mud cups beneath bridges and eaves (you may even have barn swallow visitors this spring in the Brazoria area, they like to make nests on balconies as well); Purple Martins form dense colonies in cavities, and are reliant on human-provided housing in eastern North America.

Breeding strategies among swallows and martins are as varied as the landscapes they occupy. Many species are highly site-faithful, returning year after year to the same nesting locations, sometimes traveling thousands of miles to do so. Timing is critical: breeding is closely synchronized with seasonal peaks in flying insects, ensuring that newly hatched chicks are met with an abundance of food. Most species raise one to two broods per season, with both parents sharing the demanding

work of feeding rapidly growing young—often delivering hundreds of insect meals per day.

Nest architecture within the family reflects remarkable specialization. Bank Swallows excavate horizontal tunnels in sandy riverbanks, offering protection from predators and temperature extremes. Cliff and Cave Swallows construct intricate gourd or cup-shaped nests from mud pellets, each carefully collected and molded during flight. Martins and some swallows rely on cavities—natural or artificial—where colonial nesting provides safety in numbers. These diverse strategies reduce competition within the family and allow multiple species to breed successfully in close proximity.

Yet this closeness to human environments has come at a cost. Across much of the world, swallows and martins' populations are declining. Long-term monitoring has shown troubling decline in aerial insectivores (driven by pesticide use), wetland degradation, and changes to building practices that remove traditional nesting sites. Climate change further complicates their lives, disrupting the timing of insect emergences and exposing long-distance migrants to increasingly unpredictable weather.

The life of a swallow is one of constant motion. Many species migrate thousands of miles between breeding and wintering grounds, crossing oceans, deserts, and mountain ranges. These journeys depend on intact stopover habitats and abundant food along the way - resources that are becoming harder to find in a rapidly altered world. Despite increasing environmental pressures, swallows and martins remain resilient migrants. Their long-distance movements connect distant ecosystems, making population trends within the family valuable indicators of broad environmental change.

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By Ronnie Narmour
ronnienarmour@gmail.com

Shorty's 80th B-Day this Saturday...



The Toman Bros will play Shorty's 80th B-Day on Saturday.

Shorty's was named after the late Gladys "Shorty" Fowler who was murdered at the location in 1977. Shorty's daughter, Miss Rose Smithey, ran the bar until her death in 2011 when her daughter, Joy George and grandson J.W. George took over the business. In 2012 Edwin Myers bought the lease and ran the business at the original location. That's when I took on duties as the band wrangler. At the same time Meyers also owned and operated Giggity's, a successful bar and restaurant only one block down from Shorty's. By 2020 the flats area had taken on new ownership and when leases changed in the flats area, Meyers moved Shorty's to the new location in 2023 to where she resides today. And by "moved Shorty's" I mean they literally picked up the rickety old dive bar from its home for 77 years and carried it on the back of a big trailer four blocks down the main street of town and planted it right on the corner of Beach and Alister. So as you can see, Shorty's has been a fixture in Port Aransas for 80 years and is drenched in local lore. It is more than deserving of its moniker, Port A's Oldest and Friendliest. So come this Saturday the 11th, we're going to throw her one hum dinger of a birthday party. We've put together a big show that ought to get your tail feathers shaking for about 12 hours. San Francisco artist Mitch Polzak will headline the event along with San Antonio legends The Toman Brothers and local singer-songwriter Ty Dietz. BTW having Mitch play this party is a very big deal. Polzak performs Rockabilly, Honky Tonk, Surf, Bluegrass, Western Swing, and Cajun music. The Toman Brothers perform country and classic rock and used to be Gary Stewart backing band in the 80's. Ty Dietz needs no introduction around here. There will be lots of BBQ around 5:00ish and there is NO COVER CHARGE. Come early, stay late and be a part of history. Also, I heard a rumor that there's a huge new deck and stage over there so be sure to bring everybody you know.

SandFest 2026 is in one week...



SandFest 2026 will be here April 17

The rites of spring are upon us and it's now time for SandFest 2026 April 17-19. This will be the 29th year for our wonderful home spun event which came online in 1997. The exact number of sand sculptors varies from year to year and are in Master, Amateur and Kid's divisions. There was a time when I volunteered many hours each year at SandFest. This was back when Eleece Calvert and Arnold Govella were running things back before the corporate sponsors showed up. I worked the music tent with Janet Planet and would stay out there for three days straight. I was there in 2012, the year the music tent blew down in a storm and we had to clear the beach because of lightning. This year the musical lineup will feature local and regional musicians which represent a variety of genres and artists including Cruise Control, Clay Hollis, VHS, Kelo McKane, John King, Sergio Espinosa, Nick Taylor and Josh Abbott. And if you happen

to be out there on Sunday, be sure to look up me and my Mermaid Gal at the Nurdle Patrol booth. We'll be next to **Jace Tunnel** in his Beachcomber booth. Also, close to 100 vendors will showcase a wide variety of arts, crafts, food and wares. This event raises many thousands of dollars each year for nonprofits, first responders and Port Aransas schools. Last year the proud folks at SandFest raised nearly a half million dollars.

Human Peace sign Apr 22nd...



April 22nd is Earth Day and Port A peaceniks will celebrate by forming a Human Peace Sign on the beach at 4 PM.

One of the coolest things Port A has to offer every year is on Earth Day when all the local hippies and peaceniks gather at Caldwell Pier, hold hands and form one heck of a big human peace sign right on the beach. This was originally the idea of a local school teacher and children's book author, Dianna Aston in 2016 and is supported by the folks with the Keep Her Wild and Port A Conservancy organizations. So make it out to the pier at 4:00 and get your Greenie on. Oh, and tie dye is the accepted wardrobe of choice.

Scattered shots...



The John Elijah Band will play every Monday at Shorty's starting on the 20th.

I caught another great weekend of live music here on our little island last week. I caught Funk Rock Stereo at Shorty's on Friday and the John Elijah Band played an amazing set on Saturday. Speaking of which, Mr. Elijah will begin his Monday night residency at Shorty's on April 20th. Also last week I caught Cruise Control and John Cortez at the Sip Yard and San Antonio guitar god Ruben V at Bron's. Also I want to congratulate Clay Williams on winning the Deviled Egg Cook-off for the second time at Red's on Easter Sunday.

Coming this week...



The AhhfugYeahs will play the Sip Yard this Friday.

We have a big weekend in store for you. Of course the big 80th Anniversary at Shorty's is the big show on Saturday and I want to remind you that the headliner, Mitch Polzak from San Francisco will also perform on Friday night. Coming this Friday the 10th the most excellent reggae/ska band from Corpus, the Ahhfugyeahs will play the Sip Yard, the variety band Harmonx led by Lucy Ramirez on keys and vocals will play Bron's, young Carson Miller will play the VFW, Rasta Cowboy Billy Snipes will play the Gaff and the Tex-Mex batos from Hebbroville, Palacios Brothers will play Treasure Island. Coming this Saturday the 11th look for the big ten piece horn band, Cruise Control will play Bron's, the Profile Band is at the VFW, Lucky Dogz will play Treasure Island, the wacky jam band Triptonite is at the Sip Yard and Coach Big Jim Dugan will play the Gaff. And finally the John Elijah Band will commence his Monday night residency at Shorty's on April 20th.

♪♪♪ And, that's the truth ♪♪♪



Mitch Polzak will headline Shorty's 80th B-Day this Saturday.



Clay Williams won the Devil Egg Contest two years in a row at Red's on Easter.

LIVE MUSIC TONIGHT

Thursday, April 9

Johnson All Starz @ Shorty's
Billy Snipes @ Gaff
Carson Miller Duo @ Rockit's
Brad Brown @ Blackbeard's on the Beach
Aaron Jacob @ Brewster Island
Peter Salas @ Brewster Southside
Ruben Limas @ Perrin's on the Water
Lady Cat & Mattman @ Executive Surf Club
Eric Graham @ Fifth & Elm
Portland
Kelly Kenning @ Sandbox
Brad Brown @ Blackbeard's on the Beach

Friday, April 10

Mitch Polzak @ Shorty's
Brooke Graham Meet & Greet 5:00 @ Sip Yard
AhhFugYeahs @ Sip Yard
Harmonx @ Bron's
Carson Miller @ VFW Port A
Palacios Bros @ Treasure Island
Billy Snipes @ Gaff
Dickie Delight @ Salty Dog
Cathouse @ Pelican Lounge
Eric Graham @ Brewster Island
Michael Burts @ Brewster Southside
Spazmatics @ Brewster Downtown
Asleep at the Wheel @ Harbor Tent
Ruben Limas @ Blackbeards on the Beach
Groove 2.0 @ Rockit's
Cruise Control @ Surf Club
Jon Mikael MREZ @ Fifth & Elm

THE GAFF
BELTSANDER RACES EVERY 2ND & 4TH SAT
OPEN MIC EVERY WED WITH BRAD E.
BIG TIME JUKE BOX APR 9
BILLY SNIPES APR 10
JIM DUGAN APR 11
BRAD ETHRIDGE APR 12

SHORTY'S
JIM DUGAN & TY DIETZ EVERY SUN
THE ALL STARS EVERY THUR 8-12
SHORTY'S 80TH ANNIV. APRIL 11
MITCH POLZAK, TOMAN BROS, TY DIETZ
MITCH POLZAK APR 10
PALACIOS BROS APR 17

Treasure Island
PALACIOS BROS APR 10
LUCKY DOGZ APR 11
NATIONAL NOBODYZ APR 17
SPLENDIFEROUS APR 18
CARSON MILLER APR 24
BACK PEW REVIVAL APR 25

MOORE-MCDONALD VFW POST 8967
CARSON MILLER APR 10
PROFILE BAND APR 11
BRAD ETHRIDGE APR 14
COASTAL BENDERS APR 15
LISA SULLIVAN APR 17
THE GROOVE 2.0 APR 18

Sip Yard
AHHFUGYEAHS APR 10
TRIPTONITE APR 11
TON OF BRASS APR 16
B-FLAT DUELING PIANOS APR 17
DIAMOND'S EDGE APR 18
YOUNG KLASICS APR 24

Bron's BACKYARD
HARMONX APR 10
CRUISE CONTROL APR 11
DREAMING IN COLOR APR 17
NATIONAL NOBODYZ APR 18
BRANDON MICHAEL APR 24
TIMOTHY NOEL APR 25

Portland
Randy Rogers @ Post OG
Mantle Jennings Duo @ Dorado's
Ruben & Emily @ Blackbeard's on the Beach

Saturday, April 11
SHORTY'S 80th B-DAY
Mitch Polzak, Toman Bros, Ty Dietz @ Shorty's
Cruise Control @ Bron's
Profile Band @ VFW Port A
Triptonite @ Sip Yard
Lucky Dogz @ Treasure Island

Jim Dugan @ Gaff
Dreaming in Color @ Pelican Lounge
Texas Bloodline @ Rockit's
Nathan Allen @ Brewster Island
Trisum @ Brewster Southside
Barracuda: Heart Tribute @ Brewster Downtown
Gary Allan @ Concrete Street
Sight of Impact, Kate Angel + 3 @ House of Rock
Ruben Limas @ Blackbeards Too
Mike Guerra @ Blackbeard's on the Beach

The Drive, David Martinez @ Executive Surf Club
Scarecrow People @ Fifth & Elm Portland
Chadwich Lee
Hunter @ Hideout
35 RP

Sunday, April 12
Jim Dugan, Ty Dietz @ Shorty's
Brad Ethridge @ Gaff
Emma James @ Executive Surf Club
Masters on the Lawn @ Fifth & Elm

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