



Nature Notes A5



Backwater Adventures B1



The Art of Island Life A6



Three Chords and the Truth B8



Farmer's Market A2

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By Dale Rankin

Well, it's the yuletide *Around The Island* as we settle down for a long winter's nap and the JFK Bridge stays hot with traffic both inbound and outbound as the second homes on The Island fill up with visitors for the holiday and the Winter Texans have begun to trickle in.

The daylight that disappeared when we went to Daylight Saving Time is starting to find its way back as Sunday, December 21, marked the Winter Solstice and the shortest day of the year and now Winter 2025 is officially here and the North Pole begins to reintroduce itself to the sun.

The ubiquitous song of the season *Around The Island* this year is a resurgence of George Strait's 1986 *When It's Christmas Time in Texas* as HEB has featured it in a commercial that has provided the soundtrack for this year and indeed it has felt like a summer day as we rolled on into Christmas this week.

Thank you Valero!

Just as the Island Blast Fourth of July Fireworks Show was gasping for air (funding) last week the folks over at Valero Energy came to the rescue with a \$5000 donation to get the show over the January hump when half of the funds must be sent to the fireworks shooters to reserve the popular Fourth of July date. Organizer Nick Colosi was on the Island Moon radio show last week and things were looking bleak when Nick said, "We don't know anyone at a corporate level who we can contact," and Bryan Gulley, who was on the show said, "Well, I'm meeting with Valero in an hour" and the next thing you know we got fire in the sky on the Fourth of July!

A big Island thank you to the folks over at Valero who accelerated the process to get us over the mid-fin line just in time. The next step

From the front lines in Ukraine to Port Aransas

*Texas Musician touring war zone to save lives**Headed to Port Aransas for New Year's Eve*

By Dale Rankin

For the past six months Austin-based musician Joe King Carrasco has been in the Ukraine entertaining troops and raising money to buy vehicles from Europe to use as ambulances in the war zone and to build shelters to save more than ten thousand dogs left homeless by the fighting there. We spoke to him this week about dodging Russian



Joe King with his wife Nicole in Ukraine on humanitarian missions.

drones, touring the country with Ukrainian rock bands and the mood of the citizens after almost three years of war. He is in the United States for a break and will play Port Aransas on New Year's Eve.

The non-descript cars his organization is able to purchase ferry wounded soldiers from the front

Joe King cont. on page A3

Zoning approved for 34-acre Development on Mustang Island

132 residential lots and new gulf beach access road

By Dale Rankin

The Corpus Christi Planning Commission has approved zoning for a 34-acre gulf front residential development on Mustang Island with 132 residential lots and which includes a new gulf beach access road. The site covers a total of 1486 square-feet and stretches from State Highway 361 to the gulf beach and was rezoned for Planned Unit Development Zoning (PUD),

Zoning cont. on page A4



The Property just to the South of the Seawall and Sandpiper

The SandBox Beach Bar set for January opening

The new SandBox Beach Bar on the Michael J. Ellis Seawall is set for an opening in January, according to owner Kunal Patel.

Patel said the new business will feature pickleball courts, a live music stage, playground, and food truck space. He said a General Manager has been hired and the business will be up and running by the end of January, 2026. It will be the first new construction on the seawall since 1983.

**A little Island history**

Yes Boys and Girls – We Had a White Christmas on The Island

By Dale Rankin

Everyone who lived on The Island in 2004 remembers where they were when it happened. For some people it was a phone call followed by a look out the front window, for others it was the first flakes that tickled their nose, or started the dog barking. But everyone remembers where they saw the first snow on The Island on Christmas Eve 2004. It had been 86 years since The Island had



Padre Island snowman by Miles Merwin

a White Christmas; in 1918 one inch of snow fell on Christmas Day. But this was a two-day event that put The Island into a winter wonderland with three inches.

It started in a perfectly Dickensian way when snow first began falling on cue on Christmas Eve. Cell phones on The Island lit up as friends called each other to look outside. If any Island kids were able to sleep that

History cont. on A8

An Island Christmas!

Aside from the mountain of toys collected for the Marine Reserve the La Posada Lighted Boat Parade raised money for local charities.



ACE Hardware on the Island held a raffle that collected \$1,100 and donated the proceeds to The La Posada Foundation.



The La Posada Foundation donated 10k to the Police Officer's Christmas Angel's program. This will help POCA deliver food and toys to the children of the Corpus Christi.

Beachcombing Report

By Jace Tunnell

In Service of Something Bigger: The Best of 2025



If Beachcombing had a highlight reel, 2025 would be the year the editors quit trying to narrow it down and just hit "play." From bizarre sea life to mystery objects that broke the internet, this year delivered some of the most exciting beach finds I've ever seen along the Texas coast.

Beachcombing cont. on page A5

Around cont. on A4

Event space in progress

Photos by Jacob Augs



Work on the new event space at Whitecap NPI is well underway. The Island Farmers Market and other gatherings will have a new spot to call home.



© Michelle Walters

Port A's resident pink flamingo By Michelle Walters

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Holiday Farmer's Market draws big Yuletide crowd

Photos by Debbie Noble



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Letters to the Editor

I AM WHEEL. HEAR ME SQUEAK.



Dale,

Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoy your Stuff I Heard on the Island column. It's the first thing I read. Your Katrina story was so intense. I was spellbound when picturing the devastation you described. What a nightmare time that must have been in the terrible aftermath. It was a chilling reminder of the power of wind and water. Your experiences could even become a book.

Another one I really liked was your childhood Thanksgiving story in Oklahoma and the horse race. Loved the "man with the tiny hat and the chubby fingers" image!! What a good storyteller you are.

I am behind in reading the Moons so there are a couple yet to get to that I expect to also appreciate. Keep up the good work. You are appreciated.

Maureen Harlow

PS The crossword puzzles have all been printed with intact clues - so good work there too!

Joe King cont. from A1

lines and each typically saves about forty lives each before being targeted by Russian drones. So far they have driven more than 350 cars into the country with his French-born wife Nicole organizing the effort.

"If they have any kind of official marking on them they come under drone attack," he said this week. "After several trips the satellites start to identify them and they will send drones after them and we can't use them anymore." The musicians in Carrasco's traveling troupe use burner phones to avoid being identified as foreigners by satellites.

"We were touring with a band from Britain and they were using their own phones," he said. "A drone hit their engine block but over there you don't wear seatbelts in case you have to bail out and they were able to run into the woods before the second drone destroyed their car and they were safe."

He has been touring with three Ukrainian bands made up of musicians under 24 years old and female players from Kharkiv.

"Once you turn 24 over there you get drafted into the Army," he said. "I lost a sax player that way and one of our opening



Joe King Carrasco in Ukraine recently.

Officials in Kleberg County are attempting to get funding for Baffin Bay

Kleberg and Kenedy Counties' Baffin Bay MOU

Whereas the prospects for reversing the declining health of Baffin Bay are more promising now than at any previous time due to the availability of Deepwater Horizon restoration funding on water quality projects to restore Baffin Bay; and

Whereas Kleberg and Kenedy counties have jurisdiction over 100% of the State of Texas' Baffin Bay shoreline; and

Whereas the present and future prosperity of the Kleberg and Kenedy counties' regional economy, our citizens' livelihoods and well-being depend upon a fully recovered Baffin Bay; and

Whereas most of the nutrient loading harming Baffin Bay comes from outside Kleberg and Kenedy counties, our two county commissioners' courts are dedicated to zeroing out all harmful nutrient loading that our counties contribute to Baffin Bay, and

Whereas grants from the Deepwater Horizon settlement can be awarded for wastewater treatment, stormwater prevention as well as other means for achieving measurable harmful nutrient reduction, and

Whereas water was the most injured natural resource from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill it is entirely appropriate to use oil spill restoration funds to restore bays and estuaries as has been a pattern in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi restoration funding.

bands is all women, and most of the crowds we play to are women until we get close to the front lines."

He said the crowds are enthusiastic and remind him of crowds that gathered in punk music clubs in Austin in the early 1980's.

"They don't want to fight, they want to rock," he said. "But they don't have any choice with a war on. We give 'em New Wave stuff and 96 Tears and Wooly Bully and they go crazy. Who wouldn't want to play gigs like that?!"

He began touring Ukraine through contacts with the English band Hardwicke Circus as the first western bands to tour the country since the war began.

"Most of the places we play are covered with netting to hide from the drones," he said. "Almost every night my band sleeps in the basement of the hotels in a shelter but I don't like going down there. I watch the sky to see what is coming at me. After a while you get used to it and it just becomes part of life."

Therefore, be it resolved that Kleberg and Kenedy Counties will jointly advocate for vigorous use of Deepwater Horizon restoration funding on water quality projects to restore Baffin Bay.

MESSAGING POINTS IN THE PROPOSED MOU

Timing: ...the prospects for reversing the declining health of Baffin Bay are more promising now than ever.

DWHorizon Funding is available.

Science is in completed source pollution tracking studies.

100% shoreline jurisdiction by Kleberg and Kenedy counties.

Benefits regional economy, livelihoods and well-being.

Harmful nutrient loading is mostly from outside Kleberg and Kenedy counties

Kleberg and Kenedy **commissioners courts** are focused on their nutrient loading contribution via DWHorizon \$ (100% group effort)

Wastewater and Stormwater are valid uses of DWHorizon \$

Closing point:

Water was the most injured natural resource in the spill

One of the dog shelters they have set up is along the banks of the Dnipro River just across from the Russian lines. "They don't shoot at us there because we are under camouflage netting," he said. "But they shoot over us at positions behind us."

One of the surprises in the war-torn country is the presence of Mexican food restaurants in many cities. "I have been taking pictures of them because they are so unique," he said. "It is not something I expected to find but the food is great. My favorite is named after Frida Kahlo."

Carrasco is back in the Texas Hill County this week preparing for a return to Ukraine and will play New Year's Eve at the Sip Yard in Port Aransas. We will have a comprehensive interview with him on the *Island Moon Live* YouTube show and Thursday Island Moon radio show in the next two weeks. For more on this story see Ronnie Narmour's column in this issue.



Joe King and wife Nicole helping people and pets in Ukraine.

Moon Monkeys

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Joe King Carrasco in Ukraine recently.

Stuff I Heard on the Island



By Dale Rankin

I was staring at a plate of cheese enchiladas when my phone rang informing me that our property on Packery Channel is for sale at a price of \$2.8 million. This was news to me.

"How can that be?" I said. "It seems the owners would have to know if their property is for sale." But as it turns out that is not the case. In fact, as I found out soon enough it is not at all unusual for scammers to take property listings from legitimate postings on the real estate sites such as the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and place them on a plethora of other self-regulated sites to try and coax down payments and fees from unsuspecting buyers. I also learned that there is very little that honest real estate agents and brokers can do to stop it once the scammers' posts go viral – septic might be a better word – across multiple websites each of which is self-regulated. Let's be clear, the real estate professionals who get caught up in this process are as much the victims as the property owners and interested buyers do their best to stop it, but scammers are like people in prison, they have a lot of time to come up with nefarious ways to cause trouble.

Anatomy of a scam

In this case the property was listed way back in 2020 by the previous owner. The legitimate listing included square footage, a legal description of the property, and several photos. It also included the name of a real estate agent who had the original listing. I called her.

"Yea, I had that five years ago," she said. I also contacted the broker and the previous owner all who said the same thing; that was a listing from five years ago that was taken down after a few months. So how did it pop up as a current listing that caused my phone to ring? As I found out it appeared on an un-fact-checked Facebook post which was taken from a website which took it from the old MLS post from five years ago.

I ended up talking to several people in the real estate business who all expressed frustration with the unregulated social media world. The head of the local MLS listing service said that scammers take old postings, or in some cases new ones as well, and put them on non-regulated websites and/or Facebook and pose as the property owners. When interested buyers call they are told they can "reserve" the property with a single payment often consisting of several thousand dollars, or even make a down payment toward purchase which is likely to be a much higher figure. One agent told me it is not at all uncommon for interested buyers to pursue a sale and get all the way to close before the property "owner" drops out of contact during due diligence.

Around cont. from A1

will be notices in the mail in mail outs from the Padre Isles Property Owners Association that will be going out after the first of the year soliciting help for the remainder of the funds needed for the show which is funded entirely by donations. If you can help out donations can be made by check made out to Island Blast, Inc. and sent to or brought by the POA office 14015 Fortuna Bay Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78418. Or you can donate at "GoFundMe" by scrolling to Island Blast. Island Blast is a 501c3 corporation so your donation can be listed on your taxes. For any questions call Nick 618-889-9160. We would all look pretty silly sitting on our decks on July 4 staring at a dark sky!

ISAC meeting back on The Island!

There is great news this week for the crucial Island Strategic Action Committee (ISAC) that for the past several months has been meeting OTB at Corpus Christi City Hall. The committee meets the first Tuesday of each month and finding meeting space on The Island has been a challenge for many

A search of the website our property appeared on has multiple local listings which on investigation turned out to be taken from MLS and transferred to the site with photos of legitimate agents but contact numbers that are not the same as those on the legitimate listings. I was surprised at how many there were. Other agents also told me stories of renters sending deposit checks as part of the leasing process which are often accompanied by a check for the first month's rent only to never hear back from the "landlord" after their checks clear the bank.

If a potential buyer had called the web listing on the site where I found it, which I won't repeat here, and made any kind of a payment I would never have even known of the transaction. And in fact, it could still happen since I have no way of compelling the website to remove the stolen listing. The only reason I became aware that our property was being used as part of a scam was because it popped up on a Facebook post.

In the journalism world if I saw a post for a local property for sale I would call the agent, broker, or property owner for a confirmation before writing anything about it, but in the Facebook world those rules don't apply and the process of requesting that Facebook remove it takes weeks while the bad information lingers out there as scammer bait. What it all comes down to is your only option is a legal one which comes with upfront cost and may or may not solve the problem so it really is a buyer beware system if you are not going through a real estate agent, broker, or attorney who does the proper due diligence.

When I hear people complain about the amount of incorrect information on the web and on social media I always tell them the same thing. We are now 585 years out from the invention of the Gutenberg Press and movable type and we were just starting to figure out how to regulate free speech in a way that weeds out bad information from good through the legal system, academia, and copy desks when along came an un-regulatable information system that puts the world in the hands of every person with a hand machine or computer and as P.T. Barnum is reputed to have said, "there's a sucker born every minute and two to catch him." Now those two people have a way to contact every person on the planet who might turn out to be a sucker.

All I can say is that if you are going to purchase a piece of real estate, start with a professional to avoid wasting time and money otherwise it can ruin a plate of perfectly good cheese enchiladas.

We live in a *caveat emptor* world.

years but now the folks over at Gulfstream condos have stepped in with the offer of meeting space there starting in January. The move comes at a critical time as the work to repair the Michael J. Ellis Seawall is at a crucial stage and where better to hold ISAC meetings than at the seawall? Unless things change the next meeting will be at 5:30 on Tuesday, January 6 and as always is open to the public.

Christmas Time in Texas

Snow machines are all the rage *Around The Island* this season as snow rains down at gathering spots and unless there is some kind of Festivus Miracle that is about all the snow we will get this season (remember 2004?). But to quote the words of Mr. Strait's song...

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

Merry Christmas everybody and say hello if you see us *Around The Island*.

Zoning cont. from A1

according to city documents. It is located at 6753 State Highway 361 between Sandpiper Resort Condominiums and Lost Colony Beach Houses just south of the Corpus Christi-Port Aransas city limits.

The project called Coastal Dunes, LLC. is owned by California based Cheema Jasbir S and Trident Investment Properties and includes lots ranging from 2900 square-feet to 4900 square-feet to accommodate single-family dwellings, townhomes, common areas, and a dune walkover for beach access.

More than two dozen area residents attended the hearing on the case at the city's Planning and Zoning Commission on December 10 all speaking against the rezoning for the project. A total of 91 property owners (27.74 percent of the total adjacent property owners who received notices of the zoning change) filed responses with the city in opposition. However, a show of hands from the audience showed that about half were there to protest against the new beach access road included in the plans which they say would encroach on nearby wetlands and create a threat to nearby property by allowing a tidal surge to breach the dune line during storms and high-tide events.

The city staff told the group and the commission that the developer is also in favor of removing the access road from the plans, a change that would have to occur in a separate vote by the Corpus Christi City Council before the required vote by the council to approve the vote granting the PUD zoning recommended by the Planning Commission at the December 10 meeting. The access road proposed in the PUD zoning for the Coastal Dunes project would be located less than a mile from a new access road already approved for construction by the council in

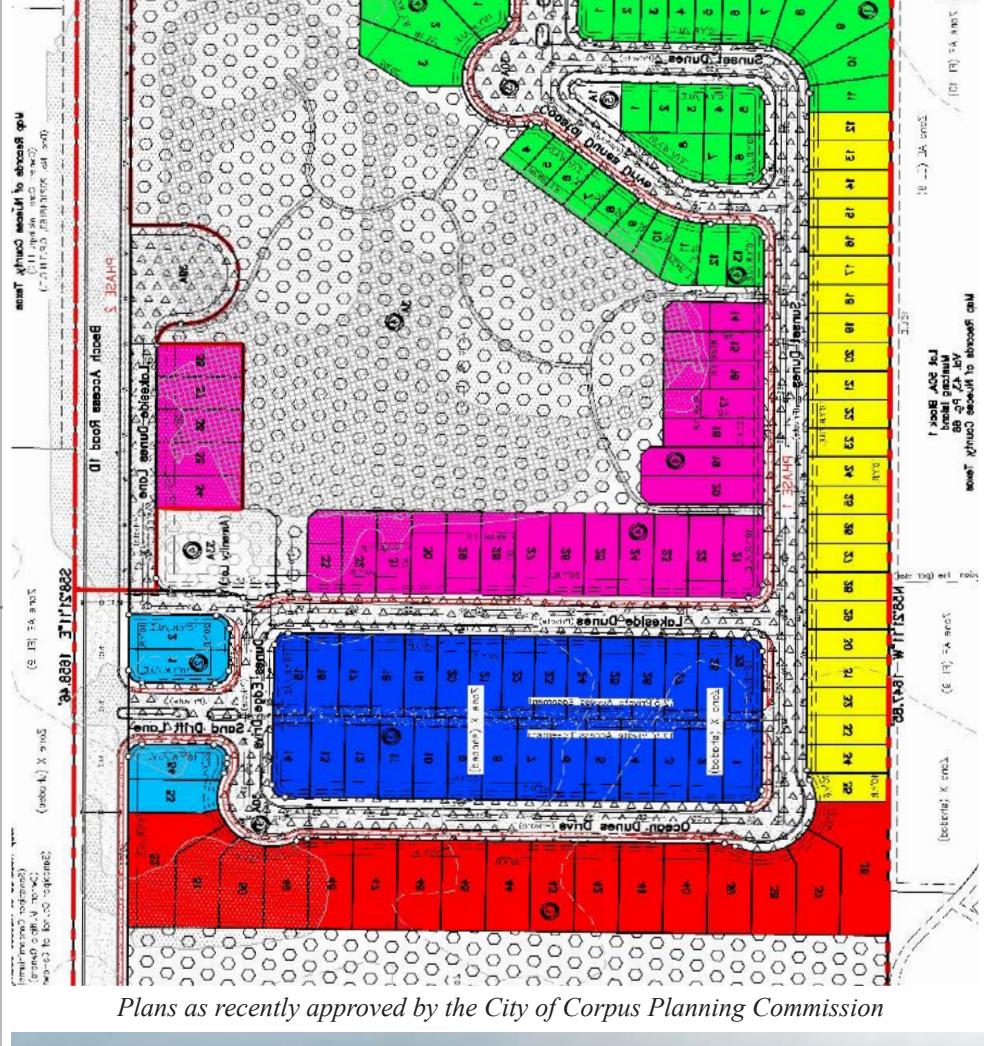
its December 16 meeting.

Under city zoning rules the vote on the PUD zoning for the Coastal Dunes project must go before the city council within six months, by June 2026, for approval or the PUD zoning dissolves and the zoning process must start over from the beginning, a process that has already taken several years to gain approval by the Planning Commission.

The city staff told the commission that a recently approved Beach Access Road Master Plan calls for new beach access roads to be created at one-mile intervals southward from the Corpus Christi City Limits to Mustang Island State Park, however, they said the plan is not clear on whether those "roads" would consist of paths for motor vehicles, carts, or pedestrians.

Specifically, the zoning approved by the commission was changed from "RM-AT" Multifamily Apartment Tourist District to the "RM-AT/PUD" Multifamily Apartment Tourist District with a Planned Unit Development Overlay" with single-family developments ranging from 2,900-square-feet minimum in size to 4,900 square feet, townhome lots that are at least 1,700 square feet in lot area. It will also include sidewalks, swimming pools, a dune walkover, walkways, and decks. The property falls under constraints imposed by the Open Beaches Act, Texas Natural Resources Code, The Dune Protection Act, and the Coastal Public Lands Act, and the presence of wetlands. Each of those issues would need to be addressed during the permitting, design, and engineering of the project, according to the city staff before final approval of building permits.

No timeline for construction on the project was given at the December 10 meeting and calls to the developer's California office were not returned by press time.



Plans as recently approved by the City of Corpus Christi Planning Commission



The ponds at the site of proposed Coastal Dunes development on Mustang Island which are home to many bird species have caused many nearby residents to object to a new beach access road there. The new road would be built at the southern end of the new development, to the right in this photo. Approximate locations are highlighted. The case is now headed to the Corpus Christi City Council.



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Ducks in the series of connected ponds this week.

Nature Notes

No Such Thing as a Seagull!

By Celeste Silling



Bonaparte's Gull Photo by Kris Kalapala

You'll never hear a seasoned birder using the term "seagull." I, myself, have used the treasonous term more than once around a group of birders and been quickly corrected: "There's no such thing as a seagull!"

The animals that we commonly refer to as "seagulls" are, in fact, various types of gulls. There are many different species of gulls, and several of them are regularly seen on Texas beaches. Laughing Gulls are the ones that I see most often on the Upper Texas Coast, but we also see Ring-billed Gulls, Herring Gulls, Bonaparte's Gulls, and others.

Each of these gull species is distinct, with its own range, behaviors, and markings, but they do all look pretty similar. Gull identification is quite difficult, not only because the species look similar, but because these birds change over the years. Winter plumages are different from summer plumages, and first-year plumages are different from second and sometimes third-year plumages. Even their beaks and legs change color over time!

There can also be regional differences. American Herring Gulls look different from Vega (Siberian) or European Herring Gulls. Northern Great Plains California Gulls look different from Great Basin California Gulls. This might not seem like a big deal, since you obviously know what continent you're on, and therefore what version of Herring Gull to expect. But you do have to be careful and double-check that you are looking at the right version in the field guide, app, or online photos that you're using as a comparison.

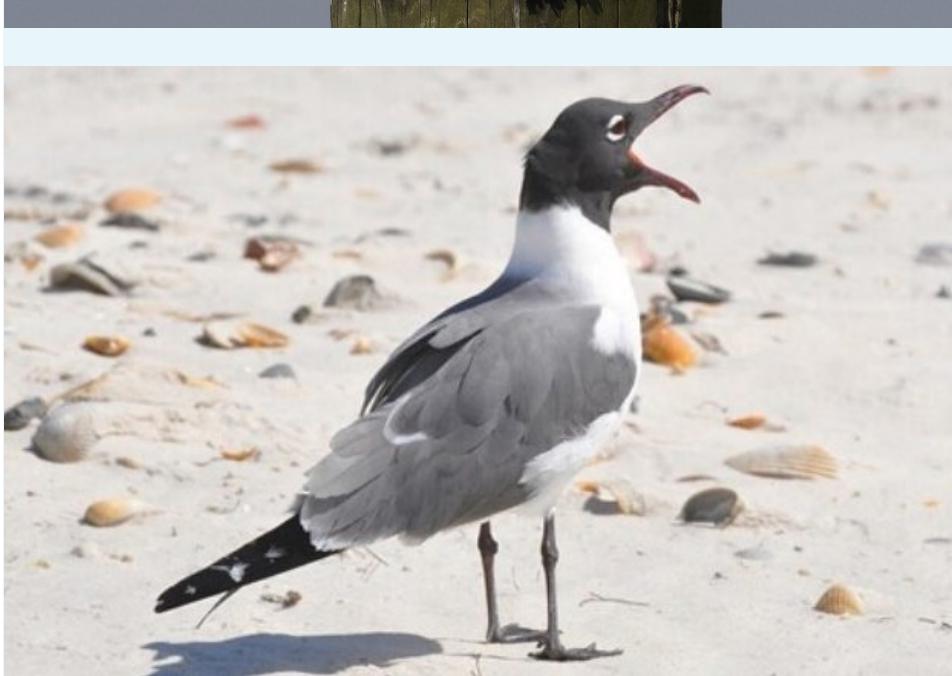
While all of these confounding factors can be frustrating, they do make correct gull

identification more satisfying. A birder might feel some pride when she correctly identifies a Barred Owl or an American Bittern, but if she can identify a second-year wintering Ring-billed Gull, that's a true success!

With all of the work that goes into identifying gulls, it's no wonder that birders and biologists don't want to lump all of the species and variations together under one "seagull" nickname. But in my personal opinion, I think it's fine. People can enjoy birds and nature on their own terms and use their own words to describe them. The word "seagull" might not be taxonomically correct, but we're not all writing our PhD dissertations here!

What's more important than the name we call these animals is the way we treat them. Gulls are often viewed as pests or annoyances and taken for granted on our beaches. But as birders can attest, there's a lot more to gulls than you might think! Just like other bird species, gulls need their habitats to be clean, safe, and undisturbed. You might see large groups of gulls resting on the shoreline this winter and feel the urge to run through them... please resist this urge! Gulls, terns, and other shorebirds need to rest in these large groups to stay warm in the cold winter months. The more they're disturbed, the more heat and energy they lose.

You can help gulls and other birds by giving them their space and leashing your dogs on the beach. And you can learn more about Gull identification by signing up for Gulf Coast Bird Observatory's Gulls and Terns ID Class on February 23-28th. But if you want to just go on calling them seagulls, I certainly won't fault you!



Laughing Gulls

Beachcombing Report

Beachcombing cont. from A1



Jace Tunnell with fireworm

Let's start with the viral stars. The pink meanie jellyfish stopped beachgoers mid-walk and sent social media buzzing with questions, photos, and the occasional "Is this thing real?"

The fireworm, beautiful and mildly terrifying, reminded us that not everything colorful should be touched.

And then there were the sea pig piggy banks — a phrase I never expected to type yet somehow became one of the most shared beach stories of the year.

The objects were just as wild. A 35-foot sailboat, sails still up and GPS still on, appeared like a ghost ship from another timeline.

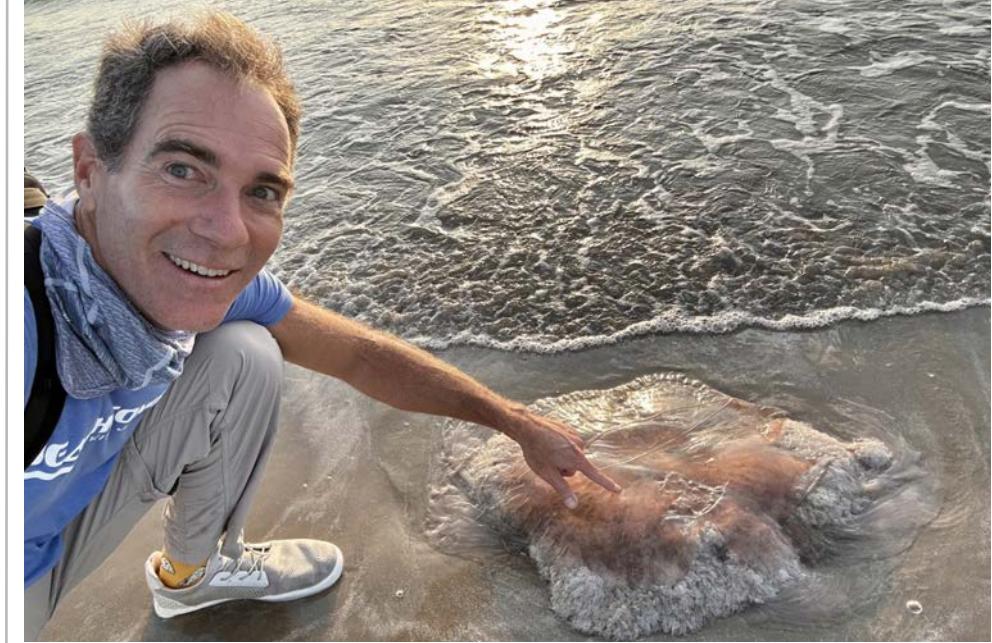
Bales of rubber from ships sunk during World War II washed ashore, turning an ordinary beach walk into a living history lesson.

And perhaps most mysterious of all: seven messages in a bottle, all from the same sender, scattered across the coast like breadcrumbs from the past.

Personally, I logged more than 2,800 miles on my electric bike, blew out three tires, and got stung by more sea critters than I care to count. I beachcombed through high tide events, sideways rain, howling winds, miserable cold snaps, and brutally hot days that left me with heat rash on my back — more than once. Glamorous? No. Worth it? Absolutely.

Because every mile, every soggy notebook page, and every sting was in service of something bigger: helping people connect with the Gulf of Mexico. Through newspapers, videos, radio, TV, and conversations on the beach, the goal remains the same — education, curiosity, and stewardship.

As I look ahead to 2026, I'm energized and grateful. Thank you to everyone who reads, shares, asks questions, volunteers, and cares. The Gulf still has plenty of stories left to tell, and I can't wait to find them with you. 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 harteresearch.org, or Facebook (facebook.com/harteresearch), Instagram (@harteresearch) and X (@HarteResearch) (the platform formerly known as Twitter).



Jace Tunnell pointing at a pink meanie jellyfish

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The Art of Island Life

What I Hope You Find This Christmas

By Melissa Mitchell

We all know Christmas arrives whether we feel ready or not. Sometimes it comes wrapped in joy and full tables. Other times, it arrives quietly—amid unfinished plans, missing faces, or a year that didn’t unfold quite the way we imagined. And yet, it comes all the same.

No matter how prepared we feel—or how unprepared—Christmas meets us exactly where we are. It doesn’t demand perfection or polished moments, but simply reminds us to remember what matters most. For some, that may look like the joyful chaos of children eagerly tearing into wrapping paper. For others, it might be sitting quietly, watching the morning sunrise. And perhaps most of all, it reminds us that there is more to the day than the best-laid plans—no matter how they unfold.

What I’ve learned is that Christmas doesn’t ask us to have everything figured out. It simply asks us to pause.

I hope this season gives you permission to do just that—to slow down enough to notice what’s already here. The good that may have gone unnoticed. The kindness that showed up unexpectedly. The strength you didn’t realize you were carrying until you had to.

I hope you find peace—not the perfectly still kind, but the kind that settles in even when life feels a little messy. Peace that says, *this moment is enough*.

I hope you find connection. Sometimes that looks like a crowded room and shared laughter. Sometimes it’s a phone call, a handwritten note, or a familiar face you didn’t expect to see. And sometimes it’s simply knowing you’re not as alone as you might feel.

I hope you find rest. Real rest—not the kind we promise ourselves later, but the kind that allows you to breathe a little deeper and release the pressure to do it all. The world can wait. Christmas doesn’t require exhaustion.

I hope you find grace—for others, yes, but also for yourself. For the things left undone. For the words you wish you’d said differently. For the ways you’re still learning as you go. Grace has a way of softening the sharp edges of this season.

What I Hope You Find

This Christmas

Here on the Island, Christmas often carries its own gentle rhythm. The air feels a bit calmer. The mornings a bit quieter. Even the busiest places seem to pause, if only for a moment. It’s a reminder that peace doesn’t always announce itself—it often arrives quietly, waiting for us to notice.

However this holiday finds you—surrounded by family, spending time with friends, working, traveling, or enjoying a moment of solitude—I hope it brings you exactly what you need most.

Not more things.

Not more expectations.

Just more light.

From my heart to yours, I wish you a Christmas filled with warmth, comfort, and small moments that linger longer than the day itself.

The Art of Island Life will return next week with more coastal stories and community inspiration. Until then, may your Christmas be gentle—and may you carry its goodness with you into the days ahead.

Merry Christmas!

Have a story you’d like to share? I’d love to hear from you at contact@melissamitchellart.com



The quiet glow of Christmas lights

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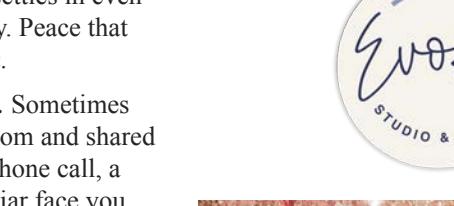
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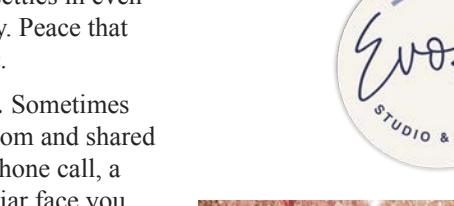
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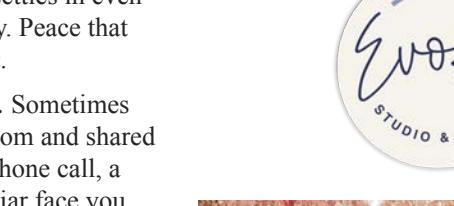
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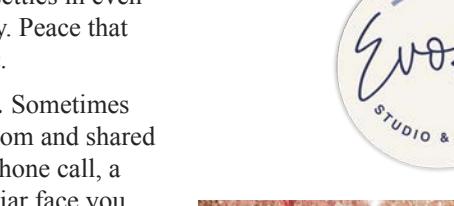
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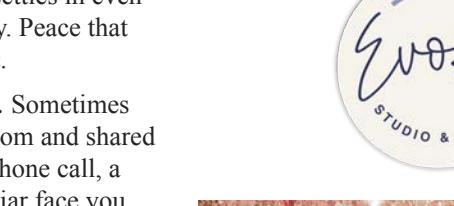
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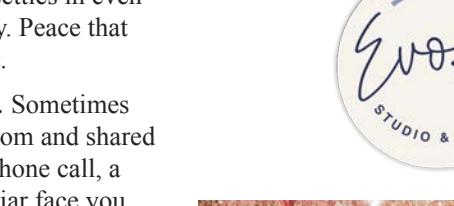
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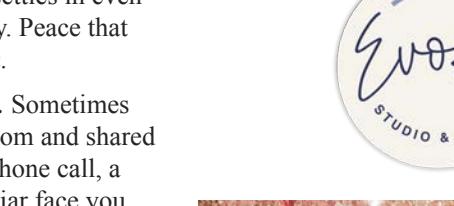
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Island Dog Park gets a leg up

Photos by Jan Rankin



Mike and Rosie Washburn took the Moon to El Salvador.



Kathleen and Tom Cullinan visited the Grotto, a 62-acre botanical garden and Catholic shrine in Portland, Oregon. It is decorated with millions of lights for the holidays.



Riley P Dog Park aka Padre Island Dog Park is thriving thanks to donors.

We want to send out an end of year thank you to the supporters of the Riley P Dog Park located at the end of Whitecap Boulevard. It has been a work in progress for more than ten years and is still a work in progress. Thank you to a very generous donor for the three new beautiful Palm trees placed on one side of the park. They are absolutely gorgeous. If anyone would like to make an end of the year donation we are a 501c3 and tax deductible. We still have room on our donor sign for many more names! We are also in need of more trees and shrubs. We also desperately need a storage shed to keep our lawnmower and other equipment in. So please reach out if you can help. Rileypdogpark.com or simply drop off or mail a check to Riley P Dog, 14646 Compass Street, Suite4, 78418. Have a pawsome Holiday season everyone.

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History cont. from A1

night at all, they awoke the next morning to a beautiful blanket of three inches of white covering their Island.

Snow covered the Coastal Bend from Galveston, to Brownsville and as far inland as Goliad and Victoria. The snowfall got heavier as it moved north dropping 1.5 inches in Brownsville and 10-12 inches in Victoria. There was a run on disposable cameras in Island Stripes stores as Islanders tried to fathom the unfathomable; a White Christmas on The Island! Others rushed to the beach and built fires so they could stay warm outside while they watched The Island slowly become engulfed in snow.

For a little historical perspective, the last time Corpus Christi or the Coastal Bend

received similar 24 hour snowfall totals was in February 1895 when a snow event the snow totals were nearly double (10-20 inches) those of the 2004; but it was not on Christmas Eve.

It was a rarity described by the Weather Wonks as "a combination of the very low-latitude upper-level trough, and the deep cold air mass." That is to say...snow. A coffee table book of photographs of the event has sold more than 70,000 books in seven printings since its release in October 2005.

Twenty one years have gone by since it happened, but anyone who lived here at the time still has a story about the year we had a White Christmas on The Island.



www.nickaway.com 2004 ©

Christmas Day 2004. Photo courtesy of nickaway.com



Island Moon founder Mike Ellis



Photo by Pam Morgan



PINS Nickaway I22504

Snow on Turtle Shack Photo by Nickaway



Christmas morning deck & swing by Miles Merwin



A rad Texas snowman

Snowfalls in the Coastal Bend

Year	Date	Amount
1888	January 15	1.0
1888	January 16	0.2
1895	February 14	4.3
1897	January 25	1.0
1897	January 28	2.0
1897	January 29	3.0
1906	February 7	0.1
1912	January 12	0.1
1914	February 25	0.5
1918	January 11	0.4
1918	December 25	0.1
1924	December 20	0.1
1924	December 21	0.2
1926	January 23	1.5
1932	March 10	0.2
1940	January 19	1.6
1940	January 21	0.1
1949	January 29	0.2
1958	February 12	0.5
1967	January 9	0.1
1973	January 11	0.2
1973	February 8	1.0
1973	February 9	0.1
2004	December 24	2.3
2004	December 25	2.1



A sad Texas snowman

Island Outdoors

On the Rocks

By Jay Gardner



I don't know how in the blazes it is Christmas time already. I looked through the archives at last year's Christmas article, and things really haven't changed. I wrote about the freshwater lens in the ground on the Island and digging wells in the sand. We are still talking about water and digging wells this year, and also another year has clicked off and we're still staring at muddle and puddle under the JFK Causeway. Coming soon in 2019.

Tyler and I went down the beach the other day to see if we could get into some pompano as we typically do around this time of year. The tide was a bit angrier than we expected, and we quickly got a lot of quit in us. The water temperature was still ok, but we still didn't walk out past our waists, which limits how far out your cast gets. We were barely past the first bar, and our results showed it as a giant goose egg. There were lots of people trying, but we only saw one person bring a pompano in, and he was in a wetsuit evidently going out and throwing hero casts. All about the risk and reward.

The tides are swinging way up and down the beach, and on high tide, you are almost at the base of the dunes. Driving south of Bob Hall on high tide (mostly in the morning) can be pretty sketchy unless you have 4 wheel drive. I've seen some folks getting a lot of sand dollars in the morning, but it is

definitely the early birds getting the worms. Err, something like that.

Unless you are deaf, everyone knows that duck season is back with a vengeance. I don't even need an alarm clock during this time of year; the 12-gauge shotguns get me up before it has a chance to go off. I guess based on the number of shots we hear that duck hunting is really good this season. Or maybe that the hunters this year are bad shots. I guess I need to get out there once and see what's going on.

Flounder season has opened back up again, and I'm seeing some good catches. The flounder populations have been waning over the past years due to pressure, but thankfully the folks at Texas Parks and Wildlife have been putting some solid efforts into hatching and stocking flounder back into our bay systems. They have stocked well over a half million flounder in the Laguna over the past few years, and they are getting them dialed in on breeding more in captivity. We all need to thank Ashley and her team at the Marine Development Center for their efforts.

Well folks, I'm short on deadline today – that pesky work thing. Y'all drive safe out there drop me a line at jaygardner1032@gmail.com and we'll see you next week On the Rocks.



Tyler contemplating his pompano fishing strategy



© Michele Walters

Yesterday's sunrise gave me so much hope for the future!! Even when things are crazy hard... remember you are never alone!

Bob Hall Pier By Michele Walters

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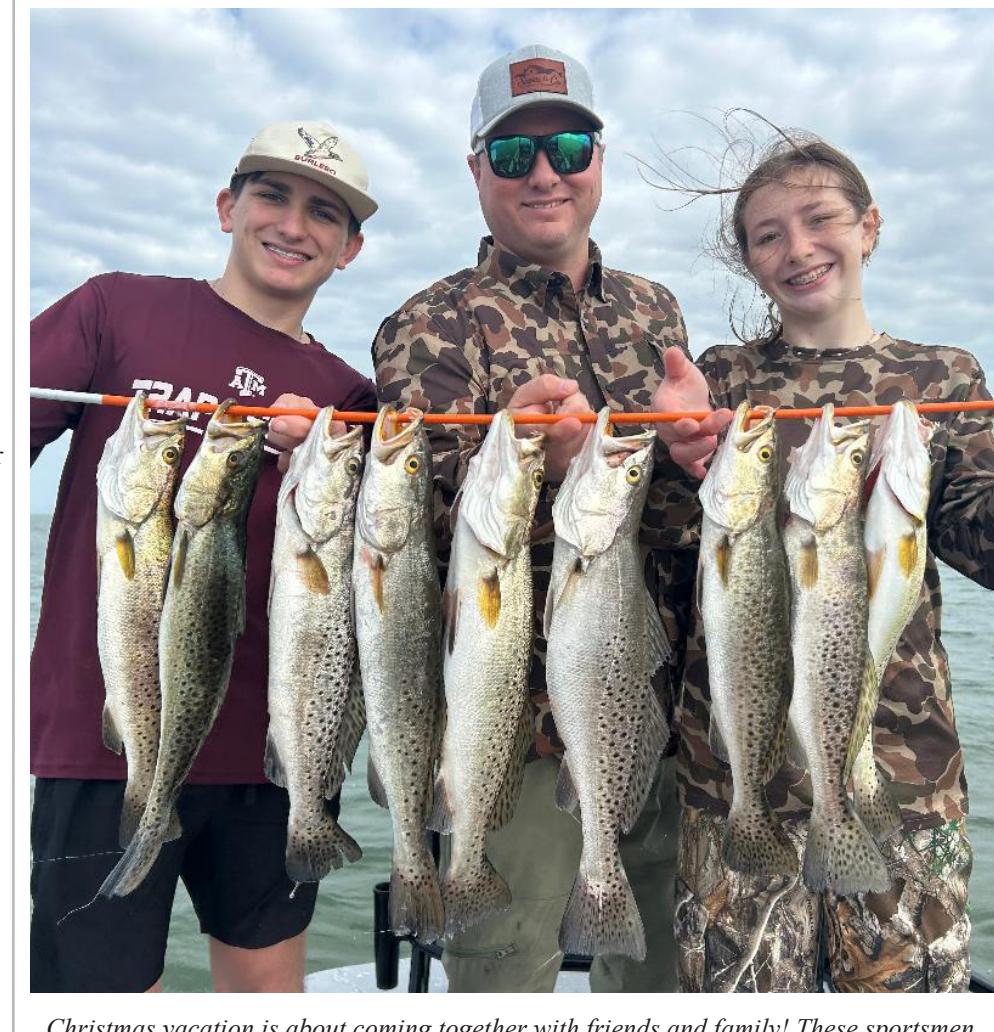
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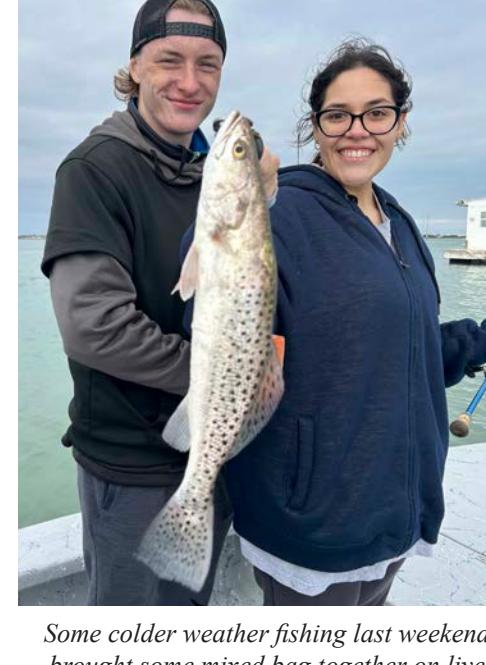
By Joey Farah

Backwater Adventures



Christmas vacation is about coming together with friends and family! These sportsmen united to build this limit of trout drifting a grass line South of Pure Oil Channel, with Capt. Joey Farah this week.

I'm drowning in a spin of business like everyone else, shopping, work, Bah Humbug! Take a look around and count your blessings and remember that we are truly lucky to even be breathing. Call those friends that you haven't talked to in a long time, hand over an extra dollar to someone who needs it, smile and hug family, I know that this has been a cold winter in heart for me and many others but warm in so many other ways including the weather. I'll take some of my own advice and get into the Christmas spirit. Grab a fishing pole this week and make a few casts, get back into the love of the Ocean one cast at a time or even just get your feet wet somewhere along the beach. God Bless all of you and Thank You for being my Island family here between the lines of the Island Moon for twenty-nine years now. I love collecting my thoughts and scratching them into black and white each week, you get exactly what's going on in the water and in my heart and mind each week. Merry Christmas everyone!



Some colder weather fishing last weekend brought some mixed bag together on live shrimp. We caught some nice trout including this one in the Packery.

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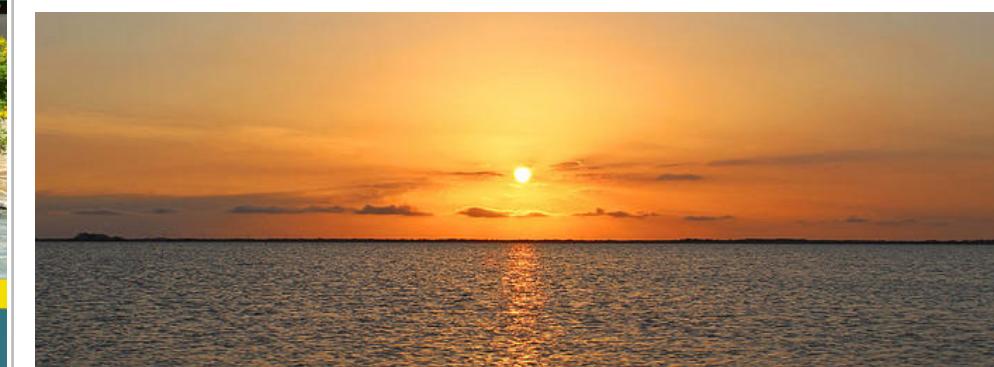
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I took this Big Trophy trout out of the water for this picture on Tuesday. She fell for a down south lures purple rain on a light 1/16th ounce jig head. As cold fronts start up again look for fishing to get even better than it already is. Let's go! Farah



Sunset on the Laguna MArde



Food Vampires

Adventurous eaters are not born. They are made

By Chris Jordan

The 2014 book *Transformative Experience* by philosopher L.A. Paul posits that a life event can render a person fundamentally changed in ways that cannot have been foreseen. Paul gives the example of becoming a vampire. A great meal can do that.

My maternal grandmother Claudia Kinkel, known to all her grandchildren as Mum, was a renaissance woman who came of age in the roaring twenties. She was a birder, a tailor, a photographer, a suffragette, a gardener, an author, a musician, and a gambler. And she could absolutely slay a crossword puzzle. I lived a life of vicarious extravagance as a youngster poring over her Gatsby gowns, pillbox hats, and hand-colored glamour shots. You see, Mum was going to be a movie star and the only things that got in her way were marrying a Big Band banjo player, raising a family, and The Great Depression.

Chief among Mum's talents was her cooking. She was a culinary force to be reckoned with. If there were a timeline of my life illustrating important food events, points all along would be attributed to Mum. She showed me how to clean a catfish and she put that first succulent bite of fresh fried fish in my mouth. There was garden mint in sun tea. Roquefort salad dressing. Oysters. Johnny cakes. Wild-harvested watercress, ramps, native pecans, and bull nettle seeds. Pralines. Egg rolls. Scrapple. Venison sausage. And Camembert. Where did she get that in the Texas Hill Country in the seventies? The list of food experiences Mum delivered is inexhaustible, each one leaving me slightly changed. Each widening my view of an ever-expanding culinary landscape. The curiosity in food my grandmother instilled in me has never left and grows more intense every day. Adventurous eaters are not born. They are made.

And so it would seem natural that my first job would be at the venerable Grey Moss Inn just down the street from our little horse farm where I grew up between Grey Forest and Helotes. I would learn about wine and more about food and be introduced to fine dining. And, of course, I would have several minor food awakenings during my time there.

In the early nineties, I worked for the stupendously talented Guy Carnathan at Beulah's in Port Aransas. Guy's inherent, savant-like good taste and knack for orchestrating artistic synergy between foods was inspiring. And there was more wine and much food talk that might have counted for philosophy, religion, or pomposity.

During one of my stints away from Port Aransas, I met a man named Blake Pickett. Blake could race a competition jet ski, ride a bull, hunt an elk, guide a whitewater river trip, weld up a truss in a skyscraper, prepare veal saltimbocca, or break a donkey. When our paths crossed, as it happens, Blake was opening an Italian restaurant overlooking the Guadalupe River in Kerrville. I helped him do it. Blake's artistry in the kitchen was astounding and I was his sommelier. We put on multi-course wine-paired dinners, each time pushing our respective abilities further, challenging each other, swinging from the bleachers.

During my time in St. Croix operating a little rum, wine, and tapas joint, I met and befriended a gentleman named Bill Wray. Bill is a Vegas-based businessman, mover & shaker, singer, songwriter, recording artist, television producer, and an astounding stage performer. We had a band together, The Kings of Croix, and Bill altered the relationship people had with music each time they saw him perform. Bill and I still keep up, so a few years ago I called on him for a favor. A group of friends and I were going to Las Vegas and I asked Bill to hook us up. He told us where to go, got us into shows, past long lines at clubs, on VIP guest lists,

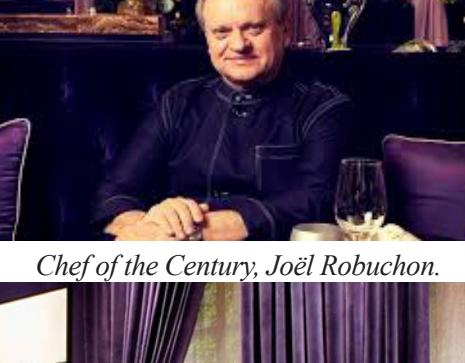
and all that jive. Everyone in our group was a career food person: chefs, restaurateurs, waiters, sommeliers, and one genuine Italian. We ate, drank, gambled, and caroused. But the main event was dinner at the eponymous Joël Robuchon restaurant in the MGM Grand. If you don't know who Chef Robuchon was, he was The Chef of the Century and had thirty-two Michelin stars among his restaurants. Weeks before, I asked Bill if he could arrange a special dinner for us at Joël Robuchon. It was in that conversation I learned Monsieur Robuchon would be in Las Vegas at the same time we were. Bill made a reservation for us. That was all anyone in our party but me knew. After exhaustive primping and outfit-changing at our hotel, we were all finally ready to head over to the MGM Grand for dinner. We arrived at the restaurant, were greeted by the maitre d'hôtel, and whisked past the dapper crowd and into a lavish private dining room. This was unexpected by everyone and I fended off their astonished glances with a shrug. The room was beautiful, the table was set for royalty, and the chairs were the most comfortable any of us had ever sat in. Several men and women silently attended to us, only speaking as necessary.

What happened to us all next is difficult to convey. I liken it to an out-of-body experience that afflicted a not-horrible form of PTSD upon us. I remember only little hazy bits of that three hours of my life. There was rustic bread made in-house and a flight of numerous artisanal butters from around the world. There was rare and coveted wine we will never be able to taste again. Of course there were several courses and towards the end, there we all were, dumbfounded, barely able to speak or even comprehend what we were experiencing. We were stuck, minds blown, in some kind of sensory overload loop. We had a dessert of a glass-like sphere that our waiter shattered with a spoon, spilling an olfactory fog out onto the table.

And then it happened. A man entered the room, followed by another. The first wore a suit, the second a chef's coat. I gasped audibly. The chef spoke to us first, in French. The man in the suit second, in English. We stuttered and mumbled praise and managed to ask a few questions. Finally, one of my chef friends asked how long the man in the chef's coat had been learning his craft under the tutelage of the great Joël Robuchon. I gasped audibly again. The man in the suit paused, and without interpretation to the man in the chef's coat, said to my friend "Madame, this is Chef Robuchon standing here before you now," and gestured deferentially to the man in the chef's coat.

It took only a moment for my chef friend to lose and then regain her composure. She stood up slowly, but with intention, walked over to Chef Joël Robuchon, grabbed him by both shoulders, beamed her biggest starry-eyed smile right into his face, put one and then the other cheek to each of his, and bear-hugged the crap out of him.

We somehow got out of there alive but our very nature had changed; we were now vampires, living an enchanted but desperate existence as empty vessels, similes of our former selves, barely holding on until our next opportunity for such nourishment as had transformed us that night.



Chef of the Century, Joël Robuchon.



The private dining room at Joël Robuchon, the MGM Grand Hotel, Las Vegas.

Island Moon on a Spoon

Small Sensations and Heavy Appetizers



By Vita Jarrin

Welcome to December! I certainly hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. As I put my thoughts together for this week's article, I contemplate if anyone really wants to hear about Christmas food so early in the month. After having just devoured so much Thanksgiving food and all the leftovers that followed, I'm sure the last thing we want to talk about is a full blown Christmas menu.

However, Christmas is just around the corner, therefore, one thing I can certainly talk about is a question that's popping up everywhere. What foods can I serve at my cocktail party that are delicious and filling, yet mingle friendly?

Well, I have the answer... heavy finger foods or heavy appetizers. "Well how can I mingle if my plate's heavy?" you ask. It's really not about the weight of the plate, it's really about the ingredients in the food. What's the difference between heavy appetizers and regular appetizers? Heavy appetizers typically include something filling like meat, seafood or poultry, coupled with bread, pasta, mashed potatoes or a filling of some sort. What this does, is it allows your guests to float around the room with a small plate while mingling with others. It also fills their tummies so that it can sustain the cocktails being consumed. Therefore, they feel like they had a full meal, without tying themselves down to a full sit down dinner.

Confused on how to make heavy appetizers? Don't be. The fun thing about these appetizers, is that you take a regular dish and miniaturize it. For example: Hamburgers. There's nothing delicate about serving a hamburger at a cocktail party. However, take a regular hamburger and downsize it to a mini burger, and serve it on a mini brioche bun, top it with some cranberry sauce and melt on Roquefort bleu cheese and you have a special holiday slider. Now you have a hearty yet petite, fancy appetizer that is guaranteed to surprise the palate. You have sweetness from the bun, savory from the burger, a tart cranberry sauce and a creamy, lightly salted cheese that brings it all together. It's that easy!

This week I am sharing with you a delicious Italian Sausage Slider topped with Sicilian style pickled mushrooms, crispy bacon on a sausage patty, with melted Havarti and Muenster Pepper Jack Cheese on a toasted, crispy sesame seed bun! You can choose various cheeses for this, like mozzarella. I chose Havarti and Muenster because pork is a bit bland and these cheese flavors are a bit more pungent and it also melts beautifully.

This recipe that is super easy!

Yields 8-10 Sliders

Ingredients:

2 lbs. Italian Bulk Sausage

10 Slider Buns

10 Slices Havarti Cheese quartered (place 2 pieces on each bun)

10 Slices Muenster Pepper Jack (cut in half and place on burger)

1 lb. Apple wood smoked bacon

10 slider buns

Bacon fat from bacon to seat burgers

1- 10 oz. jar of pickled mushrooms (Italian section in store)

pickled in white vinegar, capers and extra virgin olive oil) you can buy canned mushrooms and make your own. Recipes available on line or write me.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice Buns open and place on a foil lined sheet pan. On another foil lined sheet pan, add the bacon and place in the oven for about 7-10 min until crisp. When cooked, remove from sheet pan and place on a paper towel lined dish and drain bacon fat into a skillet in order to cook the burgers.

Preheat skillet with the bacon fat and sear burgers on each side, cooking them to 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Set on sheet pan again and place cheese halves on them, and place in the oven for about 4 minutes to melt cheese. Place cheese on open faced buns and melt them in the oven as well.

Assembly:

Assemble the burgers by placing the patty on the bottom half of bun, add a dollop of pickled mushrooms and top with 2 slices of halved bacon. Add top bun. ***tip***place mushrooms under cheese before melting it, so they don't fall off burger while guests are eating and mingling ;)

Have Fun! Try new things... Happy Eats! Enjoy!

Tip of the week: If you want to have sliders at your cocktail party, remember that beef isn't your only option. Try making a turkey burger with cranberry sauce or have a variety of sliders, like a sausage slider with marinara and mozzarella, served on a pretzel bun and call it a pizza slider. Or better yet... have a slider bar! Place a platter of unfilled burgers made of different meats and have toppings ready for your guests to enjoy! Add shooters filled with a mayo and ketchup blend, spiked with a little Sriracha and fill with steak fries and voila! The Ideas are endless!

Vegetarian? Use grilled portobello mushrooms or your favorite veggie burger!



The Peggy Ann is a beloved Port Aransas shrimp boat and local shrimp company — family-owned and named for Peggy Ann — known for selling fresh, nightly-caught Gulf shrimp straight off the boat. For decades it's been a cheerful part of the harbor scene and community life in Port Aransas, where locals and visitors stop by for jumbo, just-pulled shrimp and a friendly chat with the crew. Its bright presence and hometown reputation make it a small but happy symbol of coastal Texas fishing culture. By Michelle Walters



Gene's Corner

Tips on Holiday Eating

By Gene Saegert

I got this from a professional Holiday eater, sage advice I think.

1 Drink as much eggnog as you can and as fast as possible and as quickly as you can. It is like fine single-malt scotch, it is rare. In fact it is seasonal and rarer than single malt scotch. You can't find it any other time of the year. So drink up! Who cares that it has 10,000 calories in every sip? It's not as if you're going to turn into an eggnogaholic or something. It's a treat, enjoy it! Have one for me, have one for everybody, it's later than you think. It's Christmas after all!

2 Avoid carrot sticks. Anyone who puts carrots on a holiday buffet table knows nothing of the Christmas Spirit. If you see carrots, run next door immediately, where they are serving rum balls and bourbon bars.

3 If gravy is available, use it. That is the whole point of gravy. Gravy is not a stand-alone dish. Pour it on, then add some more. Make a gravy volcano out of your mashed potatoes. Fill it with gravy. Eat the volcano. Repeat.

4 About mashed potatoes, always ask if they are mad with skim milk or whole milk. If it is skim milk just pass. Why bother, it is like buying a sports car with an automatic transmission.

5 Do not snack before going to the party in an effort to control your eating. The whole point of going to a Christmas Party is to eat other people's food for free. Lots of it. Hello?

6 Do not under any circumstances exercise between now and New Year's. You can do that in January when you have nothing else to do. This is the time to take long naps, which you will need after circling the buffet table while carrying a 10 pound plate of food and that vat of eggnog.

7 If you come across something really good at the buffet table, like frosted Christmas

cookies in the shape and size of Santa, position yourself near them and don't budge. Have as many as you can before becoming the center of attention. It's like a beautiful pair of shoes. If you leave them behind you're never going to see them again.

8 The same applies to pies. Pecan, Pumpkin, Mincemeat. Have a slice of each. Or if you don't like mincemeat eat two Pecan. Always three. When else do you get to have more than one desert? Labor Day?

9 Did someone mention fruitcake? Granted it is loaded with the mandatory celebratory calories, but avoid it at all cost. I mean, have some standards.



Fruitcake made the naughty list this year.

10 One final tip: If you don't feel terrible when you leave the party or get up from the table, you haven't been paying attention! Re read tips, start over, but hurry; January is just around the corner.

Remember this motto to live by: "Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, martini in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO what a ride!"

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Thought for the day: Do twins ever realize one of them was unplanned?

Game Wardens Reveal Top five Hunting Violations

Your Texas Game Wardens compiled this list of the 5 most common hunting violations of 2025. Avoid a citation by avoiding these mistakes:

No proof of Hunter Education: Be able to provide proof of Hunter Ed if you were born after Sept. 1, 1971.

Harvest log violation: Complete the harvest log on the back of a paper license, or use the Texas Hunt & Fish app if you have a digital license.

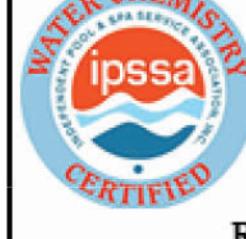
Improperly tagged white-tailed deer: One example of this is a buck tag on a doe. Review how to properly tag a deer with a paper license; or tag with the Texas Hunt & Fish app if you have a digital license.

Illegal white-tailed buck taken (in counties with an antler restrictions): A legal white-tailed buck has at least one unbranched antler or an inside spread of 13" or greater. See our tips for determining inside spread.

Untagged white-tailed deer: tag your harvest before you move it.



Photo courtesy of gearupforgamewardens.org



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Thoughts from Reverend Ken

By Rev. Dr. Ken

Over the years, I have found that children can become confused about the name of Jesus. Jesus is mostly referred to, of course, as Jesus. But on occasion, Jesus is referred to as Immanuel. One time I had a child ask if Immanuel was Jesus' middle name. Does Jesus have two names?

There are two stories in the Bible about the actual birth of Jesus. The more elaborate story is in The Gospel of Luke where we get the manger, shepherds, sheep, and angels singing. This is the story Linus recites.

The other story is in The Gospel of Matthew. It is in this story where both names, Jesus and Immanuel occur. Joseph is told to name the baby Mary will bear Jesus. He is also told his birth will be a fulfillment of a prophecy that indicates the child will be named Immanuel.

The name Jesus literally means God Saves. This name helps define the mission of Jesus as the one who saves humanity from sin, evil, and death. The name Immanuel literally means God is with Us. This is the name that points to the importance of Christmas. As The Message, Eugene Peterson's translation of the Bible, reads, "God has moved into the neighborhood." God fills every moment and every space with his loving presence.

God is with us. God is with us in every room where relationships, minds, and bodies break down. God is with us in every dialogue that degenerates into battle and attack through judgment and insensitivity. God is with us on every street where need and injustice are like potholes. God is with us in every terrain where ignorance and sin have left a trail of decay and death. God is with us in every heart that mourns in lonely exile. God is with us in all the corridors where power struggles escalate. God is with us in the marketplace where the golden calf of consumption overshadows the contentment of faith.

God has chosen in love to be intimately involved in the messiness and nightmares of our lives and of our world. This is how God has chosen to redeem and transform, to save and lift up. This is how God has chosen to bring equity and peace. Unknowable love and unknowable power chose the most vulnerable, a baby. Love has found a form; love has become an action; love has been

made real and concrete. Love has been made flesh.

It is the birth of a new era. Greatness is defined as self-emptying. Power is defined as servanthood. Victory is defined in self-denial. Blessing is found in humility. As Mary, the mother of Jesus sang, God has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

To say God is with us does not mean that we can use God and our biases as a hammer against others. This is the error of Christian nationalism and gross self-righteousness. To say that God is with us is to be about love. Jesus, the one who saves, enacted the vision of Mary through self-giving love. So too, do we.

This is the witness that affirms God is with us in the cancer clinic and the assisted living facility. God is with us in the worries of family and marriage. God is with us in the pangs of grief and the emptiness of loneliness. God is with us in the complexities and nuances of community and the chaos of national uncertainty and division. God is with us in life and death.

That Jesus is also known as Immanuel reminds us that mess is the place God is born.

If you are reading this on Christmas Eve, I invite you to the Christmas Eve worship service at Island Presbyterian Church, at 6 pm. It will be a candlelight communion service. Bring your family and let's rejoice in God choosing to made known in the flesh so that we might know of the love that redeems all creation!

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



Winter solstice By John Morris



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Senior Moments Special to the Island Moon

United States Navy is Born in 1798

By Dotson Lewis

Dotson's Note: The **United States Department of the Navy (DON)** is one of the three military departments within the United States Department of Defense. It was established by an Act of Congress on 30 April 1798, at the urging of Secretary of War, James McHenry, to provide a government organizational structure to the United States Navy (USN). Since 1834, the department has exercised jurisdiction over the United States Marine Corps (USMC), and during wartime the United States Coast Guard (USCG). These branches remain at all times independent and coequal service branches within the DON. It is led by the secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), a statutory civilian officer. Thanks to my friend, the county Veterans Service Officer, Marine J.J. De La Cerdá, and Wikipedia for the facts and photos contained in this report.



Seal of the U.S. Department of the Navy from 1879 to 1957

The Department of the Navy was an executive department, whose secretary served on the president's cabinet, until 1949, when amendments to the National Security Act of 1947 established the Department of Defense as a unified department for all military services; the DON, along with the Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force, became a component of the DoD, subject to the authority, direction and control of the secretary of defense.

From 2001 to 2019, proposals to rename the Department of the Navy to the **Department of the Navy and Marine Corps** were introduced with wide support in the United States Congress, but failed due to the opposition of senator and former U.S. Navy officer John McCain.

The Department of the Navy is headed by the secretary of the Navy, also known as the SECNAV in naval jargon, who has the authority to conduct all of the affairs of the department, subject to lawful authority, the secretary of defense, and the president. The secretary of the Navy is appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate. The secretary is assisted by an under secretary of the Navy, four assistant secretaries of the Navy and a general counsel of the Department of the Navy, who are also appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The highest-ranking military officers in the Department of the Navy are the chief of naval operations and the commandant of the Marine Corps, who are the principal military advisors to the secretary of the Navy. They supervise their respective military services of the Department of the Navy, and in a separate capacity serve as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They are assisted by a vice chief of naval operations and an assistant commandant of the Marine Corps.

The Department of the Navy comprises two uniformed services: the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps (sometimes collectively called the «naval services» or «sea services»).



The Department of the Navy consists of all elements of the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps. According to Navy Regulations Section 0204-2, the term «Navy Department» refers only to the executive offices at the seat of government.

The Department of the Navy is composed of the following:

- All field activities, headquarters, forces, bases, installations, activities, and functions under the control or supervision of the Secretary of the Navy; and
- When it is operating as a service in the Navy Department, the Coast Guard. (Ordinarily part of the Department of Homeland Security, federal law provides that the Coast Guard may be transferred to the Department of the Navy by the President at any time, or by Congress during time of war)
- Headquarters Marine Corps;
- Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, also known as OPNAV or the Navy Staff;
- Office of the Secretary of the Navy, also known as the Secretariat;
- The entire operating forces of the Navy (including naval aviation) and the Marine Corps, including both the active and reserve components.

From 2001 until his death in 2019, Congressman Walter B. Jones Jr. introduced legislation to rename the Department of the Navy as the **Department of the Navy and Marine Corps**. The legislation would have also renamed the secretary of the Navy to the secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps. Congressman Jones put forward the legislation to give the Marine Corps equal recognition with the Navy as part of the Department of the Navy, stating in 2018, “The Marine Corps is an equal member of this department, and therefore, deserves equal recognition in its title.” In 2013, the Congressional Budget Office estimated the cost of a name change to be only \$500,000 over several years.

His proposal had strong support in the House of Representatives and Senate, with 98 percent of house members and 80 percent of senators supporting it in 2008. In 2010, it set a record number for cosponsors in the House, with 415 members. The redesignation has been endorsed by Marine Corps and Navy professional associations including the Marine Corps League, Fleet Reserve Association, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Former commandants of the Marine Corps generals Alfred M. Gray Jr., Carl Epting Mundy Jr., Charles C. Krulak, James L. Jones, Michael Hagee, and James T. Conway have endorsed the change. Former famous marines have also voiced support including Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and Gunnery Sergeant R. Lee Ermey, who stated in 2010 “When we die, when mama and dada get that letter of condolence, it would be kind of nice if the Marine Corps was mentioned...just change the letterhead. What’s the harm in that? These young men and women are fighting and losing their lives for this country. We aren’t asking for our own department. We are reasonable people. We are just asking for an honorable mention.” Former secretaries of the Navy Paul Nitze and John Howard Dalton have also supported the change.



J.J. De La Cerdá

Dotson's other note: Despite having consistent support in both the House of Representatives and Senate, the proposal consistently failed to pass due to the intervention of Senator and former Navy officer John McCain, who served as the chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

THANKS FOR READING

Cookies, candies and Kleenex

Editor's note: The following comes from our friend Mindy Niles from years gone by. Mindy is now deceased but fondly remembered here at the Island Moon.

By Mindy J. Niles

It's that time of year again, the one we all look so forward to!! Flames flicker from the fireplace, smoke winding up the chimney and into the cool night air. Houses are bedecked with strings of colored lights and palm trees are decorated beyond recognition.

Wreaths are hung upon the door to greet holiday guests and special family fare is prepared. Cookies, candies, kleenex... WAIT! That's the time of year I was thinking of.... ah-CCHHOOOO.

Kleenex! That's what I had in mind. Just as sure as Thanksgiving rolls around and one's mind turns to Christmas and all its doo-dah, I am reminded once again that I should have bought that Kimberly-Clark stock when it was down. Drat!

Is it the parties that encourage the sharing of pathogenic organisms? The gatherings that are moved inside, while during the other 10 months of the year they are generally held out of doors? Are we Islanders for once held victim by the maladies affecting the rest of the land locked country? Sniffs sniff.

We have all been there... and trust me, the flu and cold season has arrived on Padre. One can judge the extent of the spread of the winter woes by the Puffs supply on the shelves at HEB. Just this week, the shelves were approximately 50% bare, with no sign of the smelly aloe tissues available at all! Proof.

The first day you have that little tiny disconcerting tickle in your throat, a funny scratchiness in the roof of your mouth, and/or a slight stuffiness to the ears. You try to write it off to a pizza burn, or maybe yelling your football team to victory on Sunday. That could explain the throat or the mouth, but the ears.... Aahhh... there's the rub.

That first morning of wretchedness you awaken with breath coming in and out of only one nostril. You flip to lie on the other side and after a short spell, your other nostril now is stopped up, and all your suspicions are realized. You have it. It ain't goin' away anytime soon, and you are gonna' SUFFA'!

In anticipation of the end of November, I always replenish my Robitussin DM, the Tylenol and the numbing nasty nefarious throat spray. The later is now available in “cherry” (right) which is slightly less despicable than the previous Pine Sol flavored variety. It is just plain evil, but required if you are to persevere.

Last year I was prescribed some heavy duty cough syrup which I think, if sold on the street could net me some serious bucks. It is priceless however and I would not dream of parting with so much as a drop, so don't even think it. I dole it out by the $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoonful, though the instructions call for a full teaspoon every 12 hours. I tried that on the first dose, and didn't wake up for nearly 24 hours.

By day two, the red nose rivals that of Rudolph the day after the long ride. This is about the time you need the Aloe coated tissues and resort to smearing something gooey like Vaseline or moisturizer on your painful proboscis. A word of advice, do not attempt to clean your glasses with this particular type of tissue. Disaster.

Day three dawns with the added dimension of a throat which feels it has swallowed a shattered champagne bottle (sans the champagne). This accompanied by lungs that gurgle and coo not unlike that new baby doll you bought your toddler for Christmas. Yummy, the delights of the season!

No whining until day 3. Until that time you continue to write it off to maybe... allergies, something passing through with that last front. By day 3 you know you have not dodged the flu bullet. (This applies to women only. Men begin to whine and moan on day one, in anticipation of the possibility of a germ infecting their tender beings.)

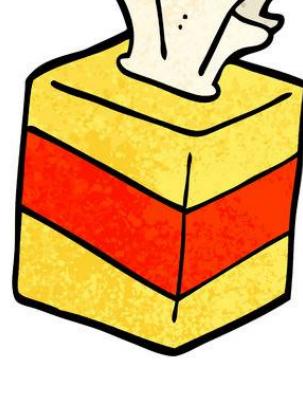
Kleenex everywhere. Stuck in ladies sleeves, pockets, purses and coats. At a bridge gathering it is not unusual to find them in the chair, or scattered like crumbs on the way to grandmother's house between card tables. I consider myself the Kleenex Queen with at least a six pack always on hand. If my supply gets any lower than that, I begin to get a tad nervous.

Day 4, 5 or 6 calls for some rethinking of your situation. You are still alive and you are feeling that you just might survive yet another visit by the uninvited virus. Not quite time to put away the tissues or Tylenol but a time to truly appreciate what it feels like to breathe using your entire nose, and to value your lung capacity like never before.

The first day of real recuperation calls for admiring those folks who are really sick, suffering from more serious illnesses. Time to take stock of those other 300 plus days of the year when you feel like wrapping Christmas packages or stuffing turkeys. So what if it's May that's no excuse.

Since it's only day 2, I'm resplendent in my flannel pj's with a mismatched totally tacky bathrobe, tissues in my pockets and cherry throat spray never far from reach. I sincerely hope the sniffles pass by your house this winter or at least don't hit you just before LaPosada weekend!

If someone should be so kind as to share the virus with you, please stay home. Stay in. You won't be doing anyone a favor by coughing into their airspace, and remember... Typhoid was traced back to one woman by the name of Mary.



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Island Crossword

Crossword Solution on classifieds page

Sudoku

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Going Easy On You...

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

Knuckle-Cracker

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

Mind-Numbing Frustration

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

Brain-Buster

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

They said it was margaritas!

PHARR — One person was arrested on drug charges after an officer with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission's (TABC) Ports of Entry Department discovered methamphetamine concealed inside alcoholic beverage containers being transported into Texas from Mexico.

TABC agents arrested Sandy Jennifer Treviño, 31, of Pharr, Dec. 7 at the Pharr International Bridge and charged her with possession of a controlled substance. She was booked into the Hidalgo County Jail.

According to investigators, Treviño entered the United States by motor vehicle at the Pharr International Bridge on Nov. 20 and declared that she had alcohol with her. A TABC regulatory compliance officer (RCO) conducted an inspection of the vehicle's cargo and found what appeared to be a case of ready-to-drink cocktails containing tequila. The quantity of canned cocktails exceeded Texas' legal limit of distilled spirits that an

adult traveler may bring into the state for personal use, which is 1 gallon per 30-day period. The RCO disallowed the cans and retained them for disposal.

Later, while preparing the cans for disposal, the RCO discovered that the liquid inside had crystallized. Agents with TABC's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) were notified and took custody of the cans. A field test indicated the presence of methamphetamine.

Based on the preliminary investigation, TABC agents obtained an arrest warrant for Treviño, leading to her arrest on Dec. 7.

Possession of a controlled substance (Penalty Group 1) is a first-degree felony punishable by five to 99 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

The case remains under investigation.

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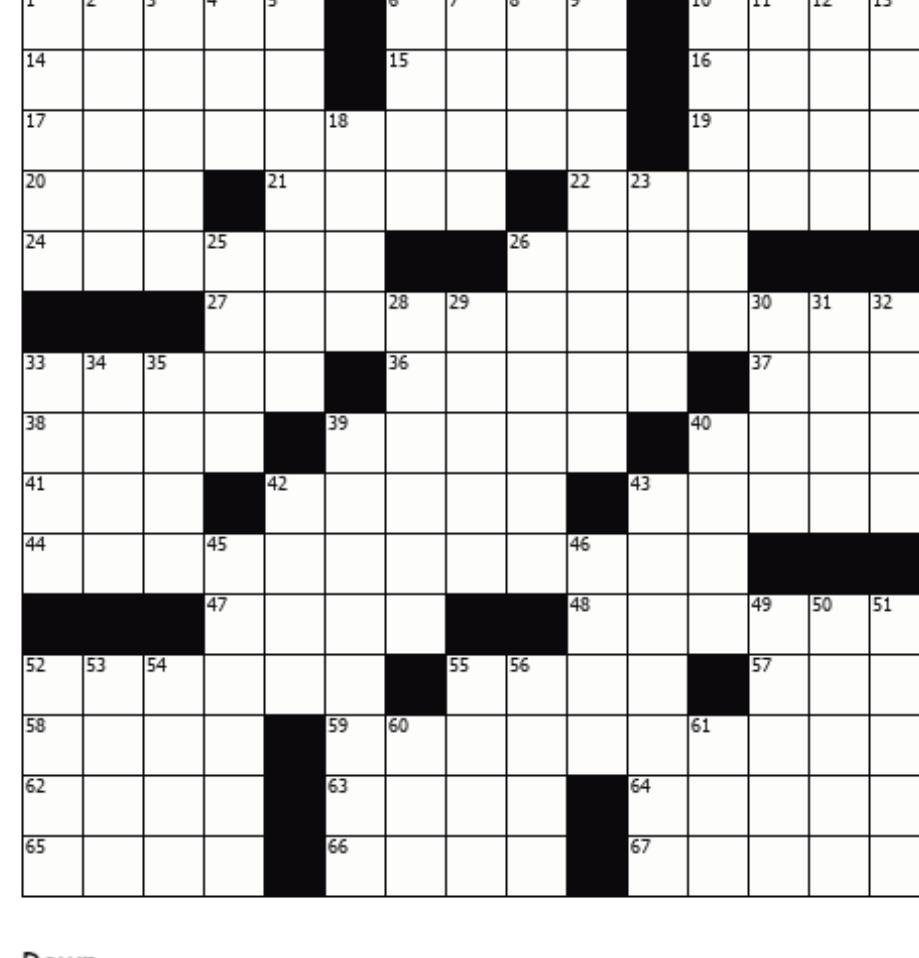
marinemasters@hotmail.com

Island Crossword

Crossword Solution on classifieds page

Across

1. Screenwriter's dream
6. Sound in body
10. Elite police team
14. Part of many action flicks
15. "Potpourri for 1000, ___"
16. Seedy place?
17. Go great guns!
19. You'll get credit for it
20. Before, of yore
21. Type of child
22. A prayer
24. Saratoga Springs, e.g.
26. Kaffiyeh wearer
27. Go great guns!
33. Doesn't just sniffle
36. Fiery fits
37. Steak partner
38. Some spread it on thick
39. Quoted as an authority
40. Earth mover
41. Work of Sappho, e.g.
42. Golf club head socket
43. Down the hatch
44. Go great guns!
47. Pretentiously cultured
48. On the up-and-up?
52. Amati of violin-making fame
55. God with a bow
57. "___, a deer ..."
58. It may be half or blue
59. Go great guns!
62. Head start, e.g.
63. Dash
64. "Cheers" character
65. It can be pressing
66. Cocoon covering
67. Palliates



Down

1. Earthy pigment
2. Powerful draft horse
3. Zoo necessities
4. Eruption particle
5. Sharp replies
6. Weather forecast, perhaps
7. Treaty brother
8. Wahine wear
9. Demanded a ransom, e.g.
10. Public secretary of old
11. Romances
12. First name in folk music
13. Suffix for four
18. Pot ingredient?
23. Some cheers
25. Nee Christiania?
26. Turner portrayer
28. Straight-laced and then some
29. Like some breakfast cereal
30. Ayn Rand character
31. Cream ingredient
32. No longer bursting at the seams?
33. Sound of thunder
34. Burghoff's co-star
35. Hebdomad
39. Small country houses
40. Remunerates
42. Fire antonym
43. Soap unit
45. Kind of income
46. Seniors' last dance?
49. Gray matter output
50. Herman's Hermit
51. Twins share them
52. Parishioner's word
53. Botanical joint
54. Chief magistrate of Venice
55. Etc. relative
56. Social standing
60. "Bingo ___ Yale" (Porter tune)
61. ___ Dolorosa

Police Blotter

December 2025

State Highway 361/Newport Pass Rd. Dec. 5 Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle 11600 blk. SPID Dec. 7 Burglary of a Vehicle 13700 blk. Sea Horse Ave. Dec. 8 Theft from a Building 14500 blk. 14500 Compass St. Dec. 4 Burglary of a Motor Vehicle 14300 blk. SPID Dec 5 Theft \$2500-\$30,000 14300 blk. SPID Dec. 13 Terroristic Threat 15400 blk. Seamount Cay. Ct. Dec. 4 Injury to Child/Elderly 13600 blk. Catamaran Dr. Dec. 13 Aggravated Assault Deadly Weapon 14300 blk. SPID Dec. 13 Assault with Injury 14300 blk. SPID Dec. 13 Terroristic Threat



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Costs start at \$15 for 25 words 25 cents a word after that Pictures or art additional \$5.00 Small charge for larger ads Ads with payment can be taken to our office at: 14646 Compass St., Suite 4 Deadline for classified ads is no later than NOON on Tuesday **PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE PUBLICATION**

We accept: American Express, Visa, MasterCard

Al-Anon & AA Meetings

Alcoholics Anonymous Sunset 7 AA Group Meets four times per week on North Padre Island Monday, Wednesday & Friday 7 pm at Island Presbyterian Church, 14030 Fortuna Bay Dr. Sunday 8 am at Padre Balli RV Park Open Pavilion 15820 Park Rd 22. (In bad weather, the Sunday meetings will be indoors at IPC)

Is alcohol causing a problem in your family?
Try Al-Anon
Al-Anon meets at 7:00 pm Sundays at Padre Island Baptist Church

Services
Appliance Repair



-N- House Appliance Repair
Most major brands & appliances
Also offering complete dryer vent clean outs along with pool cleaning services
Mention this ad for discount on repairs
361-960-0911

BBQ Cleaning

CALL
The BBQ Cleaner
Authorized Technician

Because YOU don't want to do it!
Frank 361-813-1929 cell
361-99-GRILL (994-7455)
CoastalBendGrillCleaning.com

Unity by the Sea
Start your week feeling lighter and brighter. Join us Sundays at 11 a.m. for a positive message, Coffee & conversation.
546 Caribbean Dr., Flour Bluff
Hold Your Special Event with us!
Unitybythesea.org
361-777-8844

Services
Junk Removal



Save Our Shores Junk Removal
Veteran Owned & Operated
Furniture Removal & House Clean Outs
Construction Debris Removal
Light Demolition
Bulk Item Pickups
Hot Tub Removals
Fence Removal
Dumpster Rentals AND MORE!
Owner:
Nate Epling
361-941-3041

Decks/Docks/Boat Lifts
Artistic Construction
Boat Lifts, Decks, Docks, Etc.
Licensed & Insured
Member of Padre Island Business Association
361-444-4702
Sunniepadreisland@yahoo.com

Collector's Items
Five 1999 George magazines by Founding Editor JFK Jr.
\$500 Cash only
361 510-3089

Rene's Plumbing
For all your plumbing needs. Gas lines, sewer, drain cleaning, water lines, water lines, water heaters, faucets and garbage disposals. "Licensed and Insured" Since 1970 Call 361-215-7943

Services
Pool & Spa Service

ATLANTIS POOL AND SPA SERVICE
Weekly Pool Maintenance - Repairs
Renovations - Chemicals - Supplies
Residential - Commercial
25 Years Experience - Insured
Free Delivery! Free Estimates!
Island Resident Owned
Call 361-949-8899

Wade In The Water Pool Services
Cleaning - Repairs - Remodels
Hot Tubs • Warranty Station
Don't go OTB for pool & spa chemicals!
15715 SPID #101
Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
FREE WATER TESTING
Locally owned and operated since 2010
Call 361-658-8581

Outdoor Services

Lawn & Tree Trimming



COMMERCIAL CUTTERS
Tree Trimming & Stump Grinding Services
Fully Insured - Free Estimates
361-446-3980

Services
Housekeeping

Seaside Housekeeping & Interiors
Reliable quality work since 1996
Insured and bonded
References available upon request
Please call or text Valerie Elliott
361-215-4640

GOT CRACKS?
CALL THE STUCCO PROS
AT 361-949-2100

Roofing

Wolfe Construction, Inc.

- Insurance Restoration Specialists
- Roofing
- Residential & Commercial

Bryan Wolfe
361-949-1180
15809 El Socorro Loop
Corpus Christi TX 78418

ROOFING PROS!
Custom Home Exteriors, Inc.
Tom Sheehan 361-949-2100
Engineer Inspected/Windstorm Certified Quality Owens Corning Shingles
Island Homeowner
Roofing Padre Island Since 1985!

Thuron Home improvement services
Appliances - fixtures exchange
Drywall repair and painting
Doors, windows, or cabinet repairing
Electrical or plumbing problem
Assembling new things and much more
Please contact us at 512-779-7494
Seniors - single mom's savings available



Pelican's landing. By Lu Ann Kingsbury

Island Family Eyecare

OUR SERVICES

- Eye Exams
- Glasses & Contact Lenses
- Urgent Eye Care
- Diabetic Eye Exams
- Children's Eye Exams

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\$1599 like new
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or larrycherrison1@gmail.com
for more info or to see

Tides of the Week



Crossword Solution

