

Neighbors of SEABROOK



MEET THE ALSPAUGHS

COVER PHOTO BY
ADORABELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

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ART BY CHAD HARTMAN

HELLO *Seabrook*

Welcome to our September issue! As summer begins to wind down and the fall season approaches, we're excited to bring you another edition filled with the people, businesses, and stories that make Seabrook such a wonderful place to call home.

This month, we're delighted to introduce you to KellyAnnette and Rick Alspaugh, the warm and welcoming couple behind one of Seabrook's favorite local boutiques. Their passion for supporting the community and their friendly, generous spirit have made them a beloved part of the city, and we're excited to share their story in this month's family feature.

You'll also find plenty of helpful information throughout this issue. Old Glory Construction Management explains everything homeowners need to know about windstorm certificates, while Window Genie of Clear Lake offers creative outdoor Christmas light ideas to help you start planning a stunning holiday display.

Be sure to catch Mayor Jim Sweeney's latest message, browse our jam-packed calendar of local events, discover another hidden gem in Taste of Seabrook, and try the delicious beef cannelloni recipe from Mario's. We're also proud to spotlight talented local artist Chad Hartman as our Artist of the Month.

Thank you for inviting us into your home each month. It's a privilege to celebrate the people, businesses, and organizations that make Seabrook such a vibrant and welcoming community.

Our sponsors are the backbone of this magazine, making each issue possible. Their support for Neighbors of Seabrook reflects their deep commitment to our community. By fostering connections among families and individuals, Neighbors of Seabrook serves as a platform that brings us together, celebrating our collective appreciation for the stunning natural beauty of Texas coastal living.

Until next month, shop local, support local, and take time to enjoy all that makes Seabrook great!

Deanna Lopez

Content Coordinator, *Neighbors of Seabrook*

Neighbors of SEABROOK

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We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the **20th** of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos to: deannalopez@bestversionmedia.com.

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Lakeview PD, El Lago, TX..... 281-326-1098

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City Hall

1700 1st Street, Seabrook, TX 281-291-5600

Library

Evelyn Meador..... 281-474-9142

CONTENT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Content Due.....	Edition Date
September 20, 2026.....	November 2026
October 20, 2026	December 2026
November 20, 2026	January 2026
December 20, 2026.....	February 2027
January 20, 2027	March 2027

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Hospitality by Heart

BY DEANNA LOPEZ · PHOTOS BY ADORABELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

Some people build a business, but KellyAnnette and Rick Alspaugh have spent their lives building a family, and opening their hearts to an entire community. Step through the doors of Alspaugh's Boutique 'By KellyAnnette in Old Seabrook, and the line between customer and family immediately blurs. Visitors are greeted like old friends returning home, offered a "splash of the day", a sip of something special to enjoy while browsing, and treated to a level of genuine, hands-on care that feels increasingly rare. Every item purchased is custom wrapped with care, and Rick will even roll heavier selections out to a customer's car in a polished brass hotel cart.

That deep-seated warmth didn't happen by accident. Long before entering the world of coastal retail, KellyAnnette built a career in the fast-paced oil and gas industry,

working in the jet fuel division. Yet, her true passion always lay in bringing people together. She credits her mother for teaching her that real hospitality has very little to do with the physical house and everything to do with the spirit inside it. From family suppers to neighborhood gatherings, her mother showed her that the greatest gift anyone can offer is time, heart, and genuine attention.

That early foundation naturally evolved into a passion for decorating, event staging, and creative design. Over the years, KellyAnnette expanded those talents into helping others transform their personal spaces, whether styling elaborate table scapes for local celebrations, arranging florals on coastal boats, or creating warm, inviting atmospheres in nearby homes.

Meanwhile, Rick spent 35 years building his own legacy in Kingwood, owning and operating Alspaugh's Ace Hardware. When KellyAnnette began managing the shop's gift department, her keen eye for unique, story-driven products from around the world turned it into a beloved neighborhood destination. It was also during those hardware years that Rick concocted his signature seasoning blend, a flavor that quickly developed a cult following. The Famous Alspaugh's Secret Seasoning remains a local staple today, featured on tables at neighborhood spots like Joe Lee's Seafood Kitchen and at charity events like Men Who Cook.

Then came Hurricane Harvey. The floodwaters claimed the Kingwood shop and nearly everything they had built, testing their resolve in ways few face. For five years, the couple commuted back and forth, holding onto their faith and waiting for clarity on what would come next. The turning point arrived during a quiet moment of prayer when both of their phones rang simultaneously. On the other end were longtime clients, asking when, not if, they would open a new space because the community deeply missed the way they did business.

That calling brought them to Seabrook. After initially setting up shop above a local pizzeria, they ultimately settled into the historic heart of Old Seabrook, where they can walk to work every day. The coastal town captured their hearts instantly, and they grounded themselves deeply in the fabric of the neighborhood.

For the couple, faith and resilience are woven into every single chapter. As an ovarian cancer survivor, KellyAnnette views her health journey as a profound reminder of what truly matters, inspiring her to live with purpose and share hope openly with others. The sanctuary they've built today reflects that exact spirit. Alspaugh's Boutique 'By KellyAnnette is a haven where people stop by not just to browse for global treasures and custom home accents but to share life updates, seek encouragement during hard seasons, or gather for bi-weekly morning Bible studies led by Rick.

Through every triumph and trial, family remains the bedrock of their lives, providing constant perspective on



what matters most. KellyAnnette is the proud mother of her daughter, Dallas, and together she and Rick are deeply devoted grandparents to their two young granddaughters. For the couple, those family bonds serve as a constant anchor, bringing endless joy and keeping their focus centered on what truly matters most.

KellyAnnette and Rick have walked side by side as true partners in life and work. Ultimately, their story isn't simply about retail; it's about the lost art of true connection. The Alspaugh's have taken a lifetime of personal experience, quiet faith, and genuine kindness and built a sanctuary where neighbors become friends, visitors feel cherished, and everyone leaves feeling just a little more at home.



WINDSTORM CERTIFICATES NAVIGATING THE PROCESS



OLD GLORY CONSTRUCTION
MANAGEMENT



BY ROB HEFNER, OLD GLORY CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Let's talk about Windstorm Certificates. You know, that document issued by the Totally Worthless Insurance Assessment. No, wait - it is the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association. Regardless, TWIA sets the rates for insurance in windstorm areas and Windstorm Certificates play a role in your and your neighbors insurance premiums.

The process of getting a certificate, or WPI-8, starts with a WPI-1. That is a document provided to the state naming an engineer of record, the person responsible if the plans and blueprints with a stamp don't perform as planned. The next step is construction, and the engineer or someone he trusts will inspect the process at different stages. Once construction is complete and all inspections passed, the engineer sends a WPI-2 to the state. That document simply states that the structure was built to windstorm standards as defined on the plans. The state turns it into a WPI-8, aka Windstorm Certificate. You can find yours at <https://www.twia.org/wpi-8-lookup/>

Just my two cents . . . Once upon a time windstorm insurance wasn't offered. People who built big houses worry a lot, so insurance companies said "Hey, we can make a buck!" Everybody was happy until hurricane season. Some homes withstood the winds, others the wind turned into tons of building material projectiles hitting all the surrounding homes.

Well built homes got destroyed by debris from poorly built neighbors. Nobody liked that. Especially the insurance companies.

Bankers, insurance companies, and homeowners decided the best way to ensure things are built right was to involve the government. The state no doubt was excited to control something else, and TWIA eventually was born. Of course anything designed and structured by a coalition of bankers, insurance companies, and the guvmint will perform exactly as planned.

For insurance folks along the coast, it's not if your home will face 135 mph winds, it's when. You want your home, roof, and outbuildings to have a windstorm certificate; as things have progressed, without it you can't get insurance, without insurance you can't sell.

A COUPLE OF PARTING THOUGHTS:

Know who is providing the windstorm cert before you start to build/replace a roof/buy a shed from a big box store. Its is much, much more expensive process after construction

TWIA isn't evil, its just a guvmint organization. OK, maybe it is evil but not intentionally.

I could write a short book about this, but I'm already past my 400 word limit. Thanks for reading!



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SEPTEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026

SEPTEMBER 3RD

BOW WOW BINGO

Jackie's Bar & Grill
1053 Marina Bay Dr

Time: 7 pm

Support Bay Area Pet Adoptions at a fun night for a great cause. Dinner & Bingo included.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2050802362471532>



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SEPTEMBER 4TH

KEMAH TWILIGHT MARKET

608 Bradford Ave

Time: 6-10 pm

Cost: Free

A fun market on the green space on Bradford Ave between 6th St & 7th St. Every Friday night all month!

<https://www.facebook.com/KTXEvents>

SEPTEMBER 5TH

SEABROOK FARMER'S MARKET

1209 Main St

Time: 10 am-2 pm

Cost: Free

Fresh produce, raw milk, local meats, honey, & other goods — all from amazing local vendors. 1st & 3rd Saturday monthly.

<https://www.facebook.com/TexasMarkets>

SEPTEMBER 9TH

BOURBON & BUBBLES

Clear Creek Winery & Eculent

Time: 7pm

Cost: \$150

An exclusive, luxury dining experience pairing exceptional bourbon and champagne with an immersive multi-course culinary journey by Chef David Skinner & Tony Bell.

<https://www.bourbonandbubblestx.com>

SEPTEMBER 12TH

KEMAH TEXAS FARMERS MARKET

608 Bradford Ave

Time: 6-10 pm

Cost: Free

A fun farmers' market on the green space on Bradford Ave between 6th St & 7th St. The 2nd & 4th Saturday night monthly.

<https://www.facebook.com/KTXEvents>

SEPTEMBER 15TH

TOUGHEST 10K KEMAH

Kemah Boardwalk

215 Kipp Ave

Time: 7 am- 10 am

Cost: \$70 per person

This distinctive course takes runners over the Kemah-Seabrook Bridge and finishes at the popular Kemah Boardwalk.

<https://onetough10k.org>

SEPTEMBER 19TH

TEQUILA & TACOS FESTIVAL

Kemah Boardwalk

Time: 6 - 9pm

Cost: \$75

Sip on your choice of 72+ tequilas & mezcals, enjoy 22 mixology stations, try handcrafted cocktails, snack on tacos & more! 21+ only.

<https://www.kemahboardwalk.com/tequila-and-tacos>

SEPTEMBER 26TH

GUIDED KAYAK TOURS

Armand Bayou Nature Center

8500 Bay Area Blvd, Pasadena, TX 77507

Time: 7 am- 10:30 am

Cost: \$50 per person

Come explore the beauty of Armand Bayou with us on a guided kayak adventure! Participants must be 16 or older and an adult must accompany children under 18. Registration is required.

<https://www.abnc.org/kayak-tours>

SEPTEMBER 25TH

MUSIC IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

League Park

512 2nd St, League City

Time: 7pm-10pm

Cost: Free

Join the League City Folk Association for a night of acoustic music in historic League Park.

<https://www.facebook.com/LeagueCityFolkAssociation/events>



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SEPT 3	KINGWOOD	6:30PM	AWAY
SEPT 10	FT. BEND ELKINS	7PM	HOME
SEPT 18	BARBERS HILL	7PM	AWAY
SEPT 25	S CBHS	7PM	HOME

Outdoor Christmas Light Ideas TO CREATE A STUNNING HOLIDAY DISPLAY

BY MARY FALLER, WINDOW GENIE



Outdoor Christmas lights can transform your home into a festive and welcoming holiday showcase. Whether you prefer a classic, modern, or playful style, the right lighting can highlight your home's features and create a memorable seasonal display.

CLASSIC CHRISTMAS LIGHT DISPLAY IDEAS

Traditional lighting designs create a timeless holiday look.

- **Rooflines and Gutters:** Use warm white lights for an elegant appearance or multicolored lights for a festive touch.
- **Wrapped Tree Lights:** Add a magical glow by wrapping trees with string lights to create a winter wonderland.
- **Lighted Wreaths:** Place pre-lit wreaths on doors, windows, or exterior walls for a simple holiday accent.

MODERN AND MINIMALIST LIGHT DESIGNS

For a clean and sophisticated style, consider simple, coordinated lighting.

- **LED Icicle Lights:** Add a frosty look along rooflines and porches.
- **Pathway Lighting:** Use white or blue lights along walkways and driveways for a modern finish.
- **Net Lights:** Cover bushes and hedges with net lights for quick, even coverage.

WHIMSICAL AND FUN CHRISTMAS LIGHT IDEAS

Create a display that brings holiday magic to life.

- **Animated Displays:** Add moving reindeer, snowflakes, or Santa scenes for extra excitement.

- **Candy Cane Pathway Lights:** Create a cheerful entrance with festive walkway lighting.
- **Lighted Inflatables:** Add personality with illuminated snowmen, Santa figures, and ornaments.

CREATE A CUSTOM LIGHTING DESIGN

Mixing bulb sizes, colors, and styles can add depth and dimension to your display.

Combining C7 bulbs, mini lights, and different lighting tones allows you to create a unique look that complements your home.

Safe Holiday Lighting Installation Tips

A beautiful display starts with safe installation. Use a sturdy ladder with assistance, secure lights with outdoor-rated clips, and avoid nails or staples that can damage surfaces. Always test lights before installation, replace damaged wires or bulbs, and avoid decorating in unsafe weather conditions. Use weatherproof lights, extension cords, and timers designed for outdoor use.



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NEED HELP WITH YOUR CHRISTMAS LIGHT INSTALLATION?

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From simple designs to elaborate displays, we handle the entire process so your home shines beautifully while you keep your feet safely on the ground.



OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS LIGHT FAQs

What are the best outdoor Christmas lights?

LED lights are a top choice because they are energy-efficient, durable, weather-resistant, and available in many styles.

How do I safely power outdoor Christmas lights?

Use weatherproof extension cords, GFCI-protected outlets, and outdoor timers. Avoid overloading circuits to keep your display safe.



SEABROOK *News*

A Message from Mayor Jim Sweeney

September brings continued progress on several major projects throughout Seabrook.

I hope you had an opportunity to join us on August 22 for the ribbon cutting and community swim party at the new Pelican Bay Community Pool. This beautiful new facility is an exciting addition to our community, and we look forward to enjoying a full swimming season in 2027.

The East Meyer Avenue reconstruction project should now be approaching its final construction phases, while design work for North Meyer Avenue should be substantially complete. These projects represent important investments in our city's infrastructure and will provide long-term improvements for residents and visitors.

Construction on the Pine Gully Pier should also be well underway. I will continue sharing updates on my Mayor's Facebook page as additional information and construction milestones become available.

The Edge at Seabrook Town Center development has now gone vertical, making the long-awaited project increasingly visible from Highway 146. We are all looking forward to watching it take shape ahead of its anticipated opening in late 2027.

In other news, TxDOT is expected to advertise the new Seabrook boat ramp project for construction bids this month. The project includes a new boat ramp beneath the Highway 146 bridge, a new access road from the 10th Street exit, truck-trailer parking and additional parking for cars. Repairs to the boat ramp on the Kemah side are also included in the same bid package.

We do not yet have a construction timeline, but I know our boating community is looking forward to finally having the Seabrook boat ramp back in operation. I will continue providing updates as TxDOT moves the project forward.

City Council's regular September meetings are scheduled for Tuesdays, September 1 and September 15. Council will also continue working on the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year, with additional budget discussions to be added to the city calendar as the process develops.

Other meetings this month include the Parks and Trails Committee on September 3, the Seabrook Economic Development Corporation on September 10, and the Planning and Zoning Commission on September 17. City offices will be closed Monday, September 7, in observance of Labor Day.

Finally, bring the family out for the city's Kids' Fish event on Saturday, September 12. I hope to see you there!

Thank you,

Mayor Jim Sweeney

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BEEF CANNELLONI



BY ANDY PAKKALA, MARIO'S PIZZA & PASTA

YIELDS: 8 SERVINGS (16 CANNELLONI)

PREP TIME: 25 MINS | BAKE TIME: 25–30 MINS

INGREDIENTS:

MEAT & SPINACH FILLING

- 1½ lbs Ground Beef (80/20 recommended)
- 1 tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 cup Yellow Onion, finely minced
- 3–4 cloves Garlic, minced
- 5 oz Fresh Spinach (approx. 1 bag)
- 12 oz Whole Milk Ricotta Cheese
- ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, freshly grated
- ½ tsp Dried Oregano or Italian Seasoning
- Salt & Freshly Cracked Black Pepper to taste

SAUCE & ASSEMBLY

- ½ lb Ground Beef (80/20 recommended)
- 24 oz Marinara Sauce
- 16 Fresh Pasta Sheets (cut to approx. 5x5 or 6x6 inches)
- 8 oz Mozzarella Cheese, shredded

PRO-TIP FOR ROLLING

If filling manually takes too long, transfer the blended filling into a gallon ziploc bag and snip off a thick corner. Pipe a uniform log of filling directly onto each pasta sheet—it speeds up the process significantly and keeps the tube thickness even!

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS:

1. PREP THE PASTA

Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a gentle boil. Submerge pasta sheets for 1–2 minutes until just pliable. Strain and lay flat on parchment paper or clean towels to prevent sticking. Cut into 5x5 or 6x6 inch squares if using large sheets.

2. COOK THE FILLING MEAT & AROMATICS

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the minced onion and cook for 3–4 minutes until softened. Add 3–4 cloves of minced garlic and 1½ lbs ground beef. Season with 1 tsp salt, ½ tsp black pepper, and dried Italian herbs. Cook until the meat is fully browned (approx. 6–8 minutes). Drain off excess grease and let cool slightly.

3. WILT/STEAM THE SPINACH

In the same pan (or microwave), steam/wilt the fresh spinach until it completely collapses (approx. 2 minutes).

4. BLEND THE FILLING

In a mixing bowl, combine the browned beef/onion mixture, squeezed spinach, 12 oz ricotta, ½ cup Parmesan. Use food processor and pulse 4 to 6 times just until cohesive if needed.

5. PREPARE THE MEAT SAUCE

In a skillet, brown the remaining ½ lb ground beef, draining excess grease. Pour in the 24 oz marinara sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.

6. ASSEMBLE & ROLL

Place a generous line of filling down the center of each pasta sheet. Roll tightly into a tube. Use flour to get pasta edges to stick together.

7. BAKE & SERVE

- Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
- Spread about 1 cup of meat sauce evenly across the bottom of a 9x13-inch casserole dish.
- Ladle the remaining meat sauce evenly over the tops of the cannelloni (ensure the pasta edges are covered with sauce so they don't crisp up harshly).

- Top with 8 oz shredded mozzarella.

- Cover loosely with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 5–10 minutes until the cheese is melted, golden, and bubbling.

- Rest for 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley or basil!



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BY TONY BELL | PHOTOS BY ADORABELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

What if Kemah's next great night out felt like New York or Las Vegas?

On September 9, Bell Empire Media & Events and Eculent will introduce Bourbon & Bubbles, an invitation-only evening for guests who appreciate extraordinary food, imaginative cocktails, beautiful surroundings, and impeccable service.

Led by Chef David Skinner, Eculent has earned national attention for transforming dinner into an immersive journey through storytelling, theatrical presentation, and culinary creativity. Skinner is also the chef behind Ishtia, the Kemah dining concept that earned him recognition as a 2025 James Beard Award semifinalist for Best Chef: Texas. His work extends to Clear Creek Winery and a collection of house-made spirits, infusions, and cocktails that make the experience as remarkable in the glass as it is on the plate.

For Bourbon & Bubbles, Skinner is partnering with Tony Bell, founder of Bell Empire Media & Events and producer of local festivals, private gatherings, and the Bay Area Breakfast Club. Bell's years of creating large-scale social experiences in Las Vegas inspired him to bring a more polished, exclusive concept to the Bay Area.

The result is an unforgettable evening built around exceptional ambiance, breathtaking cuisine, and impeccable service.

Guests will arrive in gala-inspired, dress-to-impress attire before entering the whimsical, speakeasy-style setting inside Clear Creek Winery and Eculent. The evening will feature an eight-course tasting menu paired with bourbon-forward cocktails in an intimate atmosphere designed to transport guests somewhere unexpected.

This is not a casual gathering or an ordinary dinner reservation. Bourbon & Bubbles is a carefully curated experience for guests who value exceptional cuisine, inventive cocktails, polished hospitality, and a distinguished guest list.

The September 9 event will launch a quarterly series, with each evening offering its own distinctive atmosphere. The second event, scheduled for December 2, will be a black-tie, holiday-inspired celebration. Additional events are planned for March 3 and May 26.

Attendance is limited to 60 guests, and the inaugural event is already sold out. Future evenings will remain private and invitation-only, with access available through Tony Bell.

Those interested in attending may request a place on the waitlist at www.BourbonAndBubblesTX.com.



The evening will feature an eight-course tasting menu paired with bourbon-forward cocktails in an intimate atmosphere designed to transport guests somewhere unexpected





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Slime Frenzy

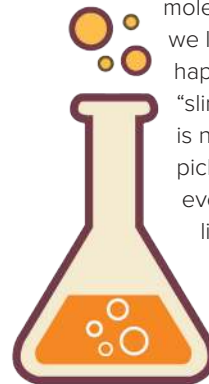
BY MEGAN MAHLIK



Slime concocting is a growing trend. While the stretching and squishing is part of the fun, the science behind the slime is just as cool.

Glue has long flexible molecules called polymers. A polymer will easily slide past other polymer molecules as a liquid. When these polymers are mixed with the chemical Borax, which is present in things like liquid starch, the water in the glue creates an ion called a borate ion. These ions connect the polymer

molecules to each other, creating a rubbery solution we like to call slime! The amazing thing is that this happens instantly when the two are mixed. This "slime," is actually a Non-Newtonian fluid—a fluid that is neither a true liquid nor true solid. While you can pick up the slime as a solid, it would also be able to eventually take the form of a container which is a liquid property.



This slime recipe will last a long time if you store it in an airtight container. With your parents' help, go ahead and put some science into motion! Remember, this type of slime is not edible.

Slime Recipe:

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp. Powdered Cornstarch
- ½ Cup Washable PVA Glue
- ½ Cup Liquid Starch
- ½ Cup Water
- Food coloring



Directions:

Mix water and glue in a large bowl. Add powdered cornstarch. If you wish, add a couple drops of food coloring. Stir in of the liquid starch. Knead the mixture until it is thoroughly mixed.

ARTIST OF THE MONTH:

Chad Hartman

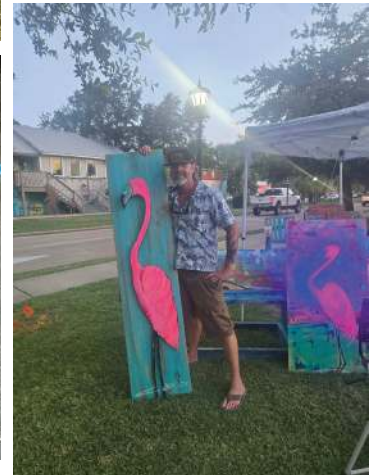
BY DEANNA LOPEZ

Chad Hartman doesn't follow the typical path of a fine artist. A former Houston firefighter with nearly two decades of experience as a commercial hunting and fishing guide, his transition into painting was fueled by an intense obsession with the natural world and a desire to capture moments most people speed right past.

For years, Hartman painted strictly abstract pieces in relative obscurity, amassing hundreds of canvases he simply gave away. The turning point came when he began fusing abstract, chaotic backgrounds with vivid, razor-sharp wildlife figures; specifically the fish, birds, and marine life he encounters daily on the water. His work captures the raw, energetic reality of nature, driven by high-octane colors that highlight the brilliance found in wild environments. Heavily inspired by Guy Harvey's narrative storytelling and dynamic ocean scenes, Hartman builds pieces that reveal the split-second drama of the coast.

His creative process is as energetic as his subject matter. Self-described as constantly on the move, Hartman works in rapid spurts rather than long, static sessions. He thrives on high energy, channeling the fast pace of EDM to focus his mind while mixing bold layers of paint. Beyond traditional canvas, his craft extends to custom taxidermy, where he integrates sculptural marine mounts directly into painted, three-dimensional backdrops to bring a scene to life.

While his roots stem from the West End of Galveston, Hartman's focus is expanding across the local coastal scene. Looking ahead, he aims to grow his reach online and ultimately establish a dedicated gallery space that allows him to keep creating without stepping away from the water. For him, the ultimate goal isn't just selling art, it's shifting how people perceive the world around them. Whether it's watching pelicans ride the wind currents over the causeway or capturing the vivid hues of a fresh catch, his work serves as a reminder to slow down, look closely, and appreciate the authentic beauty of the Texas coast.



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MY FIRST HARVEST MOON REGATTA

BY BRAD MILLER

Most folks in the Bay Area have heard of the Harvest Moon Regatta. It is a 147 nautical mile offshore sailboat race from the Galveston Pleasure Pier to the Port Aransas Ship Channel hosted by Lakewood Yacht Club every year since 1987 and coincides with a full moon in the fall. From the first time I heard about it I said, "I'm going to have my boat in the HMR someday!" This past October I got my wish.

The race began at 2:00pm on Thursday with scores of sailboats of varying lengths and hull configurations crossing the starting line with full sails. It is truly a sight to see. The rules are detailed but overall simple: no motor and no autopilot, sail as fast as you can to the finish line. Our crew of 5 worked well together and told lots of stories. That night we took shifts two at a time, balancing the wind and the waves, with a beautiful full moon lighting our way. Words simply can't describe the feeling.

Twenty-five hours later we crossed the finish line! At Port Aransas Marina we were greeted at our slip by an energetic welcoming committee and a bottle of Champagne. The newly built facilities and pavilion offered a perfect venue for the regatta celebration. Most of the crews were wearing shirts with the name of their boat and logo. The HMR organizers and volunteers were so delightful and really put on a top-notch event.

At 0800 on Sunday morning, we cast off to make our way back to League City. The Gulf had heavy seas with an easterly wind straight on our nose so we chose to use the ICW. One hundred ninety nautical miles and 35 hours later we were back home. Tired, but invigorated. It's an experience I will never forget and plan to do again.



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