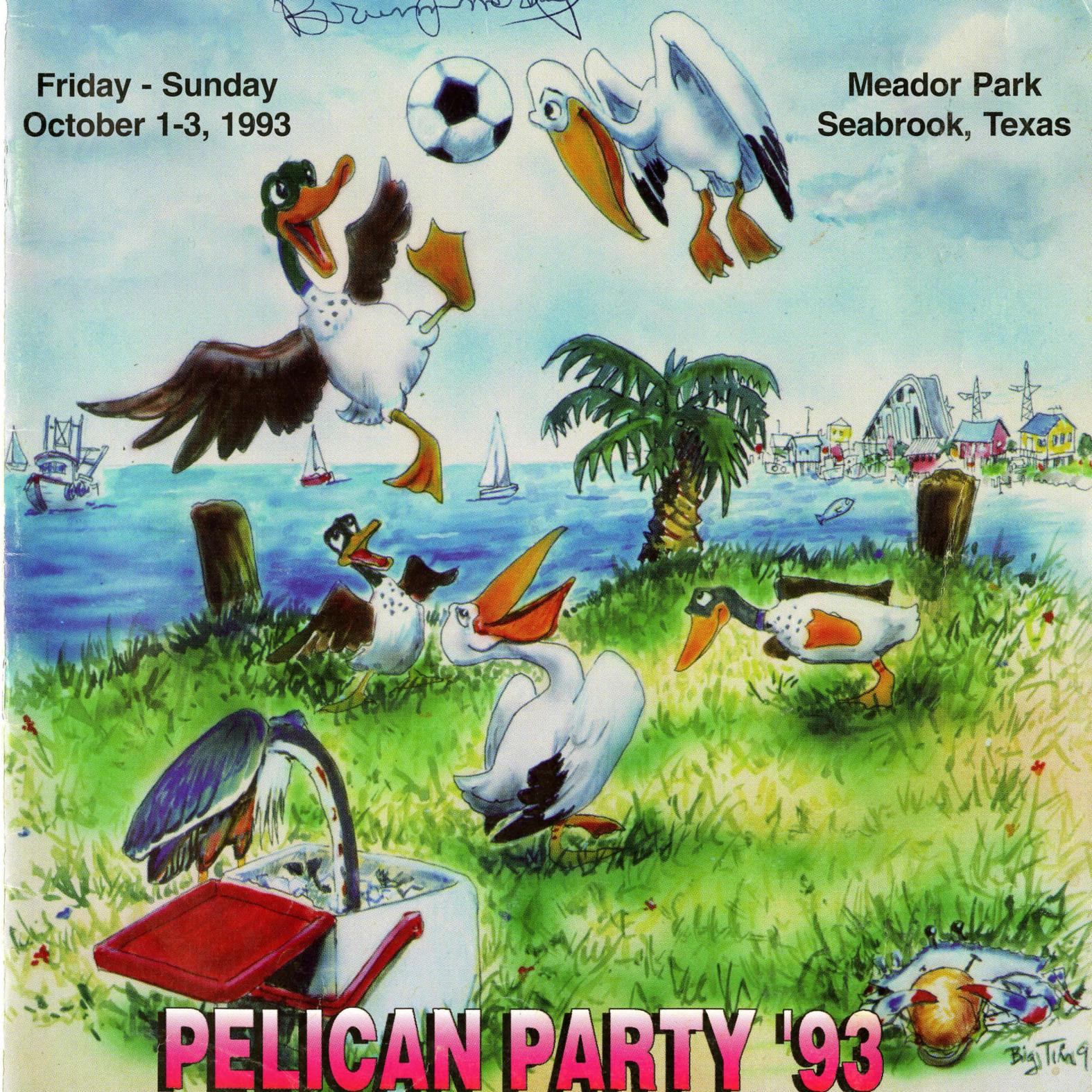


# SEABROOK CELEBRATION'S A DAY AT THE BAY

*Comogene  
Bumpmerday*

Friday - Sunday  
October 1-3, 1993

Meador Park  
Seabrook, Texas



## PELICAN PARTY '93

Arts & Crafts · Live Music · Carnival · Parade · Gumbo and Bar-B-Que Cookoff

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## Seabrook Association

P.O. BOX 1107  
SEABROOK, TEXAS 77586

The Seabrook Association proudly presents Pelican Party '93, our 13th annual Seabrook Celebration scheduled the first weekend of October. The constant effort of so many of our citizens, business people and sponsors have allowed this event to grow each year and become a festival we can all be very proud to be associated with.

In addition to so many new residences and new citizens, there are many things happening in Seabrook that should make us all proud of our community.

The Seabrook Association is comprised of citizens and friends who are interested in helping Seabrook maintain and improve our quality area. We meet for luncheon at Lakewood Yacht Club on the third Wednesday of each month. The Association welcomes any interested friends to join us at our monthly meetings for a pleasant visit with our members.

Sincerely,

*Fred Mohrhusen*

Fred Mohrhusen  
President

Fred Mohrhusen, president .....	474-2681	Marion DeHart, treasurer .....	326-1500
Mary Patterson, 1st vice president .....	334-7010	Pat Landolt, secretary .....	474-3966
Brad Emel, 2nd vice president .....	326-1510	Jan Brown, immediate past president .....	334-5398

# PELICAN PARTY '93

## Schedule of Activities

### REX MEADOR PARK

#### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1

5:00 p.m.	Park Opens
6:00 p.m.	Carnival Begins (Unlimited Rides - \$6.00)
7:00 p.m.	Open Cookoff Judging Begins
9:45 p.m.	Entertainment - Road Kings
10:00 p.m.	Announcement of Open Cookoff Winner
	Park Closes

#### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2

8:00 a.m.	5K Fun Run
10:00 a.m.	Parade
	Park Opens Immediately After Parade
11:00 a.m.	Gumbo Cookoff Begins
12:00 Noon	Silent Auction Opens - Green Tent
1:00 p.m.	Entertainment - Rounders
	Gumbo Taster Kits - Green Tent (\$3.00)
4:00 p.m.	Entertainment - Mamou (Zydeco)
	Announcement of Gumbo Cookoff Winner
7:00 p.m.	Entertainment - Omar and The Howlers
10:00 p.m.	Park Closes

#### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3

11:00 a.m.	Park Opens
	Chili and Brisket Cookoffs Begin
12:00 Noon	Entertainment - Global Village
1:00 p.m.	Chili Taster Kits - Green Tent (\$3.00)
3:00 p.m.	Announcement of Chili Cookoff Winner
	Entertainment - Marcla Ball
5:00 p.m.	Brisket and All-around Winners Announced
6:00 p.m.	Park Closes

# WHO WERE THE CLEAR LAKE PIRATES?

By Jean L. Epperson

*The reprint of a 1926 article written by Ed Kilman for the Houston Post-Dispatch, which appeared in the 1992 issue of A Day at the Bay, elicited much interest in the "prehistory" of Seabrook. The following gives a bit more insight into the pirate legends that have persisted over the years.*

*It should be noted that the Taylor home on Clear Lake was located near the site of the present-day Louie's on the Lake complex on NASA Road 1 in Seabrook.*

Jean Lafitte, the colorful chief of the smuggling and privateer base at Galveston Island from 1817 through 1820, must surely have sailed some shallow-draft vessels past the bar into Clear Lake during his explorations of Galveston Bay. No historical accounts exist of the early reconnoitering of Clear Lake, although there are several mythical narratives of exploration and treasure.<sup>1</sup> These romantic meanderings have no solid basis in fact.

The "old-timers" in the Clear Lake area spoke of a few former residents who were thought to have been Lafitte men; namely Kipp, Taylor, Roach and "Old Ben."<sup>2</sup>

Abraham H. Kipp was born in New York on March 18, 1806. Therefore, he was too young to have been the cook on Lafitte's schooner as the old-timers' story went. Kipp received a third-class headright for 640 acres of land in Texas, which he finally located in Galveston County. A third-class land grant was given to those who emigrated to Texas after October 1, 1837, but before January 1, 1842. Kipp lived in the Baytown area with his first wife Anna, the daughter of Dr. Hervey Whiting. Anna died, and in 1850 he was still

living in Baytown with a second wife, Jane Smith, and was listed as a gunsmith.

Later known as a "Yankee peddler," Kipp began to visit the Galveston Bay area in a sailing schooner selling and transporting goods to Galveston. After 1850 and the death of his second wife, Kipp married Elizabeth, the widow of Stephen Justice, and moved to the Kemah area. He lived there until his death on December 2, 1880, and was buried in Fairview Cemetery in League City.<sup>3</sup> Kipp was not a pirate but the legend persisted, and later, many dug for treasure around his home place in Kemah.

Anson Taylor and his son-in-law Andrew Roach lived in a log cabin on the north shore of Clear Lake near the mouth of Taylor's Bayou, and they were associated with Jean Lafitte.

Andrew Roach was born in Italy, about 1794; his name was sometimes spelled Andreas Roachi or Roche. He was known as one of Jean Lafitte's men. The first mentioned maritime activity of Roach was as the captain of a vessel, called the *Texas*, on which General Felix Trepalacios and Benjamin Milam embarked at Galveston Bay in August 1821. Their destination was Veracruz, in order to ascertain the true condition of the country.<sup>4</sup>

In late December 1821, Roach was sighted on his ship in Galveston Bay by a passenger of the schooner *Lively*. A man named Seymour identified the ship as belonging to his partner, Captain Roach. The ship was about the size of the *Lively* and was suspiciously overcrowded. People scurried about the deck, too many people for a trading vessel.<sup>5</sup>

The Johnson Hunter family encountered Roach and Anson Taylor when they arrived in Galveston Bay in the spring of 1822. The Hunters were invited aboard

Roach's big black ship, related Hunter's son, who was eight years old at the time. Dr. Hunter had met Anson Taylor the year before on the Trinity River, stated his son.<sup>6</sup>

Captain Roach and his vessel were overtaken in the spring or summer of 1822 by a United States naval cutter and he was put on trial for piracy in New Orleans. Roach claimed to be privateering against the Mexican government and he was released for lack of evidence to the contrary.<sup>7</sup>

Roach married Cecilia (Sally) Taylor sometime in 1824. She was the daughter of Anson Taylor and his wife Elizabeth Maley. Anson Taylor was a frontiersman, who was living near the Cooshatti Indian village on the Trinity River in 1819.<sup>8</sup> It is not known when he and Roach became friends and companions, but it was said that Taylor was hunting and supplying the Galveston commune with provisions.

The 1826 Atascosito census listed Anson Taylor as a farmer and stock raiser, 36 years of age, born in South Carolina; his wife Elizabeth Maley, 36 years, born in Kentucky; son Edward, 14 years, born in Tennessee; son James, 12 years, born in Tennessee; son George, 10 years, born in Tennessee; son Robert, 7 years, born in Texas; and daughter Nancy, 4 years, born in Texas. Listed as a separate household was Andrew Roach, 32 years old, born in Italy and listed as a seaman; his wife Sally Taylor, 18 years, born in Tennessee; and their daughter Eleanor, one year, born in Texas.<sup>9</sup>

These two families probably lived first at Lake de la Roche (now Lake Charlotte in Chambers County), then Taylor's Bayou at Clear Lake in Harris County, and finally Round Point in Chambers County. All of these locations would have provided good harbors for maritime activities.

The Roachs and the Taylors were

the first known settlers on the north shore of Clear Lake, at Taylor's Bayou, in 1826 or 1827. The bayou was named for the Taylors. While living here, Anson Taylor buried his wife, Elizabeth, near their log cabin and probably his youngest son, Robert, also. Apparently a stone or some kind of marker designated the grave, as the old-timers remembered seeing it from the road that wound around the north shore of the lake.<sup>10</sup>

Amos Edwards, of Edwards Point (San Leon), bought the Taylor improvements on Clear Lake on March 11, 1830, for his son-in-law Ritson Morris.<sup>11</sup> Taylor had no claim to the land. Morris settled the Anthony Junker family in the Taylor log cabin. Junker was employed to help Morris build a home on the bay shore and to cultivate the plantation. Taylor and Roach were ready to

move on and chose the Round Point location, to be near the new settlement of Anahuac.

Charles Willcox, a merchant of Anahuac, stated that Anson Taylor left Round Point in April 1831, coming to Anahuac with his children. Taylor died the last of May or the first of June in Anahuac.<sup>12</sup> He had been attended by Dr. Nicholas D. Labadie, the physician for the Mexican garrison at Anahuac.<sup>13</sup> Fortunately, Taylor was not alive four years later to learn about the death of his three eldest sons in the Alamo.

Roach left the Round Point-Anahuac area sometime after the death of his father-in-law, or after the Mexican garrison vacated Fort Anahuac in 1832. He and his family settled in or near Matamoros, Mexico. It is very unlikely that Taylor or Roach left buried treasure any-

where, unless artifacts of everyday living are found and considered valuable.

Ben Dollivar, called "Old Ben" or "Crazy Ben," was the epitome of an old pirate. He never had a permanent home, but no doubt he visited his old friends on Clear Lake. His erratic behavior, especially when he had too much to drink, was attributed to a saber cut to the head during his buccaneering days. He was said to always pay for his drinks with a gold doubloon. Many different stories were related about Ben in the Galveston Bay area. One story was that when questioned about where his doubloons came from, Ben replied, "Ah gets 'em from a big sea chest down in the *Hotspur's* bilge."

For the record, there were two ships named *Hotspur* at Galveston Island. The first was commanded by

Captain Rapp, a privateer, who after a running battle in 1816 with two Spanish ships off Cuba, put into Galveston to repair his damages. This was before the arrival of Captain Louis Aury on the Island. James Campbell was with Captain Rapp and was severely wounded. Campbell went to New Orleans and Rapp left on another cruise aboard *Hotspur*, never to be heard from again. The second ship called *Hotspur* was given to Campbell by Jean Lafitte, and was lost by him near the Mermentau River. Ben was reported to have been a gunner on the second *Hotspur* with Campbell.

Ben never had a home as was stated, but was content to live in make-shift shelters on the beach. He and James Campbell were good friends and some said that Campbell was the reason that Dollivar lived as long as he did. Campbell would load him into his wagon, when Dollivar was dead drunk, and take him home to his shanty to sleep off the effects.<sup>14</sup>

Different stories were told about Ben's origins — one said he was

born in Georgia and reared an orphan by a cruel uncle on a plantation, another claimed he was the son of a New England minister.

The 1850 census of Galveston County listed Ben as 50 years old (probably not his true age), birth place unknown, living on Bolivar Peninsula near the home of John Jackson.

Ben was found dead in a vacant house in Galveston one bitterly cold morning during the 1850s. His death was attributed to alcohol and exposure.<sup>15</sup>

Who knows what Ben lost or buried of his personal hoard of pirate loot?

#### Notes

- 1) Bill Odell, *Return to Clear Creek* (Seabrook: Privately Printed, 1978), 6-8; Don Townsend, *The Story of B. Harris*, history files of Armand Bayou Nature Center. Ben Harris was a black/Indian cowboy recluse who lived in the woods on the West-Pyle Ranch near Clear Lake. He related an interesting story to a cowboy friend about his grandfather, one of Lafitte's men, and his grandmother, an

Indian woman.

2) Ed Kilman, "Beautiful Shore Estate of E.A. Peden, supposed Rendezvous of Lafitte," *Houston Post-Dispatch*, May 16, 1926.

3) Jean L. Epperson, manuscript *On the Shores* in possession of the author.

4) Charles Adams Gulick, et al., eds. *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1921-1927), II, 51. Article on the life of James Long and letter dated August 15, 1821.

5) W.S. Lewis, "The Adventures of the Lively Immigrants," *Texas State Historical Association Quarterly* (July-October, 1899): 2-32 & 81-107; *Ships Register and Enrollments of New Orleans, I*, 79. The *Lively* was 59 feet long, 17 feet 11 inches wide and 9 feet 4 inches in depth.

6) Robert Hancock Hunter, *Narrative of Robert Hancock Hunter 1813-1902* (Austin: Cook Printing Co., 1936), 4, 5.

7) Federal Archives, Fort Worth, TX, Docket of Suites from March 1820 to January 1830, The United States vs. Andreas Roachi, Indictment for Piracy.

8) John Henry Brown, *History of Texas from 1685-1892* 2 vol. (St. Louis: L.E. Daniell, 1893): 20-21.

9) Mary MacMillan Osburn, "The Atascosita Census of 1826," *Texana* (Fall 1963): 18, 20 & 21. Ms. Osburn misspelled the Atascosita District.

10) *IBID.* Ed Kilman; S.O. Young, *True Stories of Old Houston and Houstonians* (Galveston: Oscar Springer, 1913).

11) Eugene C. Barker, ed., *The Austin Papers* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1924-1928): II, 480-481. Letter from Amos Edwards to Stephen F. Austin, Davis' Point, Galveston Bay, September 15, 1830.

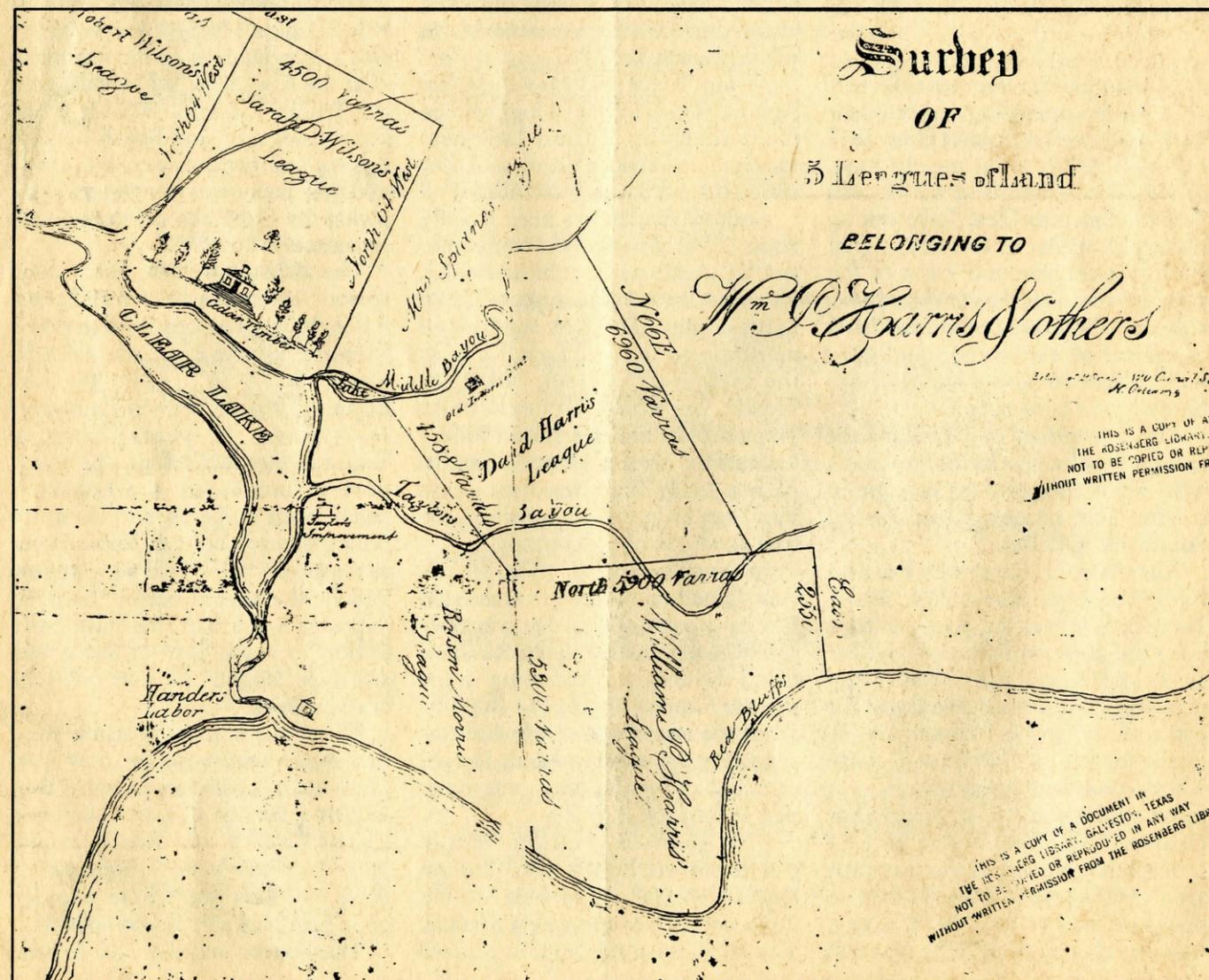
12) Charles Willcox to Benjamin Franklin, September 8, 1840. Benjamin Franklin Papers, Barker History Center, University of Texas, Austin.

13) Dr. Nicholas D. Labadie, *Day Book*, typescript Wallisville Heritage Park, Wallisville, TX.

14) W.T. Block, "Crazy Ben Dollivar's Secret Gold Cache," *True West* (May 1990): 26-29.

15) *Galveston Weekly News* April 29, 1878, "Crazy Ben."

A retired educator, Jean L. Epperson is a freelance historical researcher/writer with many published articles. Her book relating the history of the Clear Lake area is yet to be published.



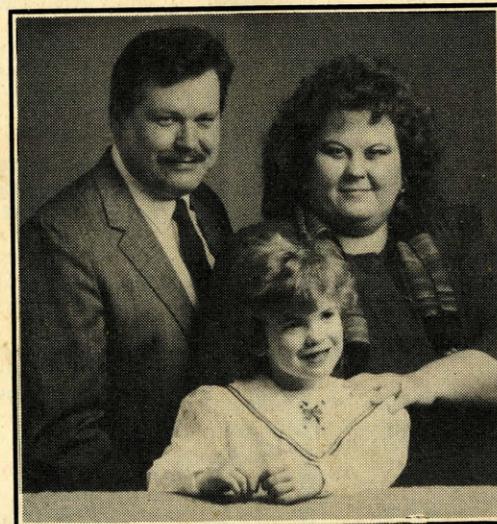
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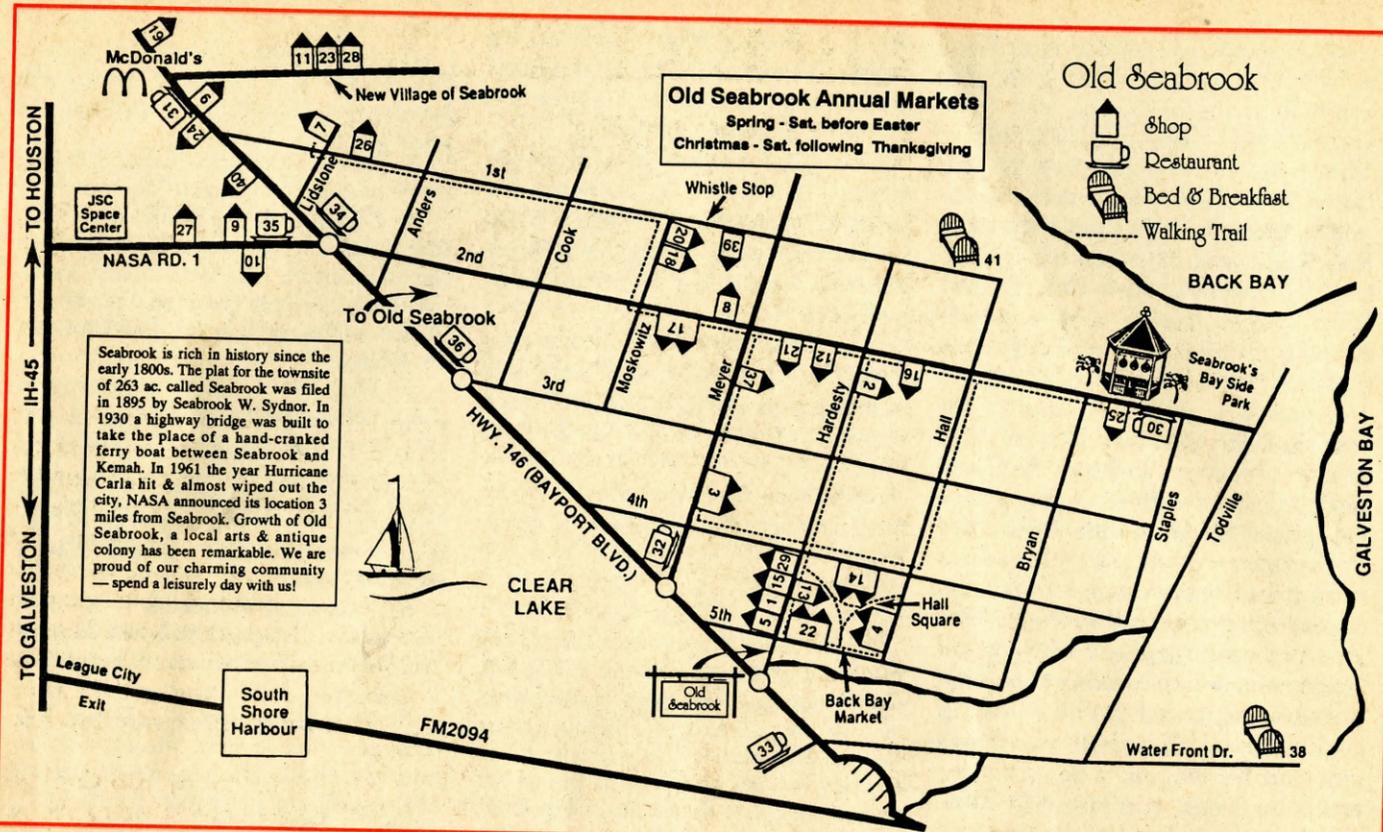
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# THE GREAT TEXAS RIB COOKOFF & PIZZA HUT INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS SHOWDOWN

By Jack Fryday

Each year in Cleveland, Ohio, during the week of Memorial Day, a for-profit company stages the Great American Rib Cookoff. This event draws over 150,000 people and nets many thousands of dollars for the promoters.

Ever since I first became aware of this (over 10 years ago), it has been my belief that the *real* Rib Cookoff should be in Texas (after all, what do people in Ohio know about cooking ribs?). More specifically, I have been wanting this event to be in Seabrook, Texas.

Finally, I have found a group that is willing to move forward with such an event . . . namely the Seabrook Rotary Club. In addition, the Evelyn Meador Library has agreed to be a major participant in the event.

The event will be called **The Great Texas Rib Cookoff and Pizza Hut International Bluegrass Showdown** and will be held on October 23, 1993, at the Meador Park in beautiful downtown Seabrook, Texas. All proceeds will benefit Rotary charities with a large portion flowing to the library and also to the Interfaith Caring Ministries' Child Care Scholarship Program.

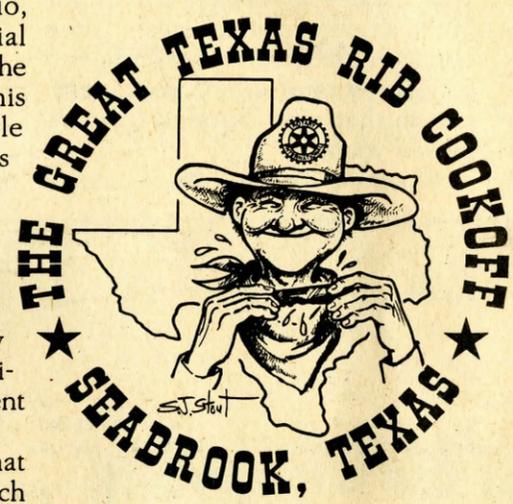
The event will really be two events in one. The Rib Cookoff will pit up to 100 contestants against each other for a first prize of \$2,000. There will be a second prize of \$500 and a third prize of \$250. Trophies will also be awarded. The entry fee will be \$100 per contestant with a 40'x40' space allocated to each cooker. The event will run from 9

a.m. to 9 p.m. The rules and entry form can be obtained by contacting Jack Fryday, at 299-3470.

year in Owensboro, Kentucky. Our event will be a regional event for Texas with the winner progressing to the national contest. Because we are only having a one-day event, the number of bands that can enter is very limited. Bands are selected on a first-come first-served basis. There is a \$50 entry fee for each band. The contact for the Bluegrass Showdown is Ed Fryday, at 762-7554.

In addition to the Rib Cookoff and Bluegrass contest we expect to have entertainment for the children, arts and crafts, and a Business Expo tent, as well as several food vendors including several barbecue restaurants selling ribs.

My long-range plan is to make this a true statewide contest that will expand into a several-day event. If you are interested in more information, just call me at 299-3470.



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# MEMORIES OF School in the '30s

By Rena Bracewell

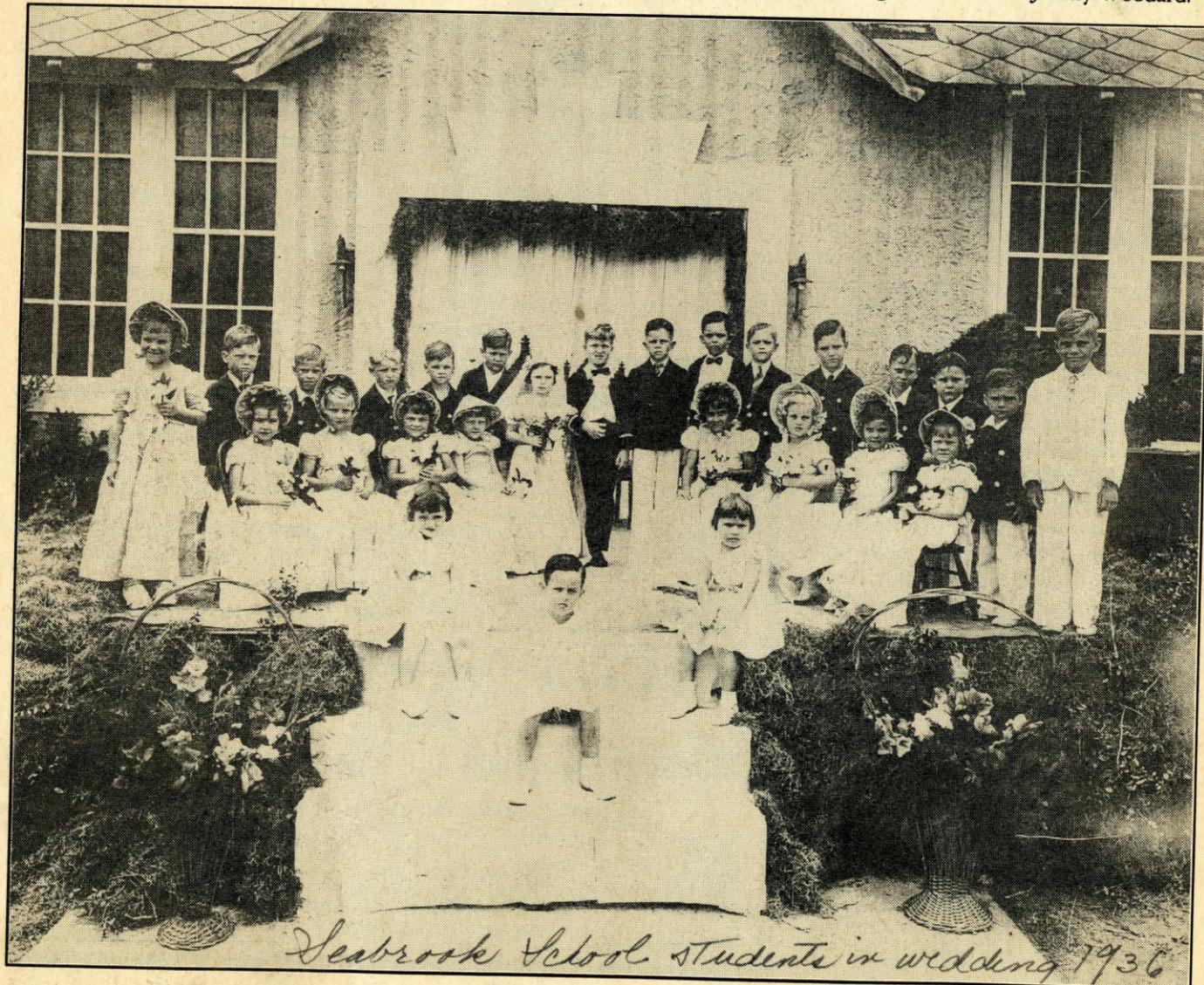
I never walk into City Hall that I don't stand a moment surveying the well-kept lawn and letting my memories restore the scarred and play-worn grounds which that grass covers, and the well-loved building which stood there not so many years ago. With only a little imagination, I

can hear the laughter and the yelling, and smell the ligustrum bushes that bloomed there in spring . . . and see again the children large and small, running or milling about, or opening their lunches, wrapped in newspaper, in the shade of the oak trees. Those children are now the parents and grandparents of other generations, but on that schoolground they are forever young.

When the doors of the old school

on Hardesty Street, commonly called Seabrook Grammar School but officially part of Harris County Common School District No. 13, closed behind the last departing student in May 1930 (*A Day at the Bay*, 1991), the groundwork had

The Tom Thumb Wedding in 1936. Can you locate Tony Muecke, Leonard Sweet, Nan Curry, Barbara Christy, Margie McCabe and Jimmy Woodard?



already been laid for the new school on First Street between Cook and Anders. During the summer months' this site was the scene of intensive activity. Local residents often stopped to look in on the work in progress. They lingered to ask questions, give advice and marvel at the construction procedures as the wonderful new, modern school took form under the watchful eye of the architect and builder, Mr. Oswald H. Theriot.

Early onlookers found teams of mules pulling weighted timbers across the mound of dirt that had been hauled in by the truckload. Later they saw the reinforced concrete beam taking shape, the concrete being trundled in wheelbarrows, load by load. The enclosure formed within this beam was filled with more dirt and a concrete slab poured over it all. The walls were built in the same way as the beams, with concrete reinforced by 8-inch clay tile, and they were later stuccoed inside and out, and then painted white. Over the concrete floor red and black tiles were laid. A hip roof of slate covered it all. Total cost, \$20,000.

(These floors later proved to be

the source of problems. The earth fill absorbed moisture from the ground, especially in winter, causing the concrete to sweat, and the tile floors on cold days were constantly wet. This situation distressed teachers, but to students, ignoring rules that had to

***Students and parents were awed by the look and smell of newness, and by the red and black tiles, the drinking fountains placed at intervals along the hall, and the doors with their multiple panes of glass.***

be laid down concerning it, it was ideal for sliding.)

The new school, while not possessed of any but basic features, was a source of great pride. It was in comfort and convenience several

steps above the old school, and amply provided for the educational needs of the children of Seabrook. Electricity having arrived in Seabrook in 1927, the school building was adequately lighted inside and out. (In the old school, only the auditorium had been wired for electricity, and that just in the last two years.)

Although the two restrooms were outdoors behind the school building, they had flush toilets and sinks that drained into a septic tank to the back of the schoolground. Water was furnished by a well situated between the two restrooms. A pile of coal lay ready to fuel the large pot-bellied stoves that stood in each room.

September of 1930 found the new school ready to open its doors to students from grades one to nine. Students and parents were awed by the look and smell of newness, and by the red and black tiles, the drinking fountains placed at intervals along the hall, and the doors with their multiple panes of glass. Perhaps some felt out of place and longed to be back in the old school many had

International Garden Party around 1934.





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celebration.*

*Larry King,  
Mayor*

attended several years.

A long hall ran the length of the building with classrooms to each side, five in all. Double doors at each end of the hall opened onto a concrete porch, and from that a sidewalk led to each restroom. Double doors also opened at the front of the building from which a short hall gave access to the longer one.

To students entering this building for the first time, the dominating feature was the gray metal lockers lining the walls on both sides of the hall. As a seven-year-old I was totally intimidated by them, and had the feeling of being inside a large machine. Perhaps it was because of those lockers I had to be conducted to my classroom every morning of the first week of school. It is difficult to understand how even a seven-year-old could get lost every day in a school with one long hall!

(These lockers were a great convenience to students and teachers, but since it was necessary for most lockers to be shared by two students, some obvious problems arose. In the fifth grade, my lunch was regularly robbed of special treats; the culprit was my locker mate.)

During the first year, 65 students enrolled in Seabrook Grammar School. In September 1930, a number of families moved from Texas City to Seabrook, among them the Bishops, Mallorys, McCauleys, Pates and Yeamans. The children in those families, arriving in a body at school one morning, increased the enrollment suddenly by about 10. In 1929, the age limit of a child entering first grade in Texas had been lowered from seven to six. Even if a child would not be six until September 15, he could enroll. School officials were not strict about these requirements, and it was not uncommon to overlook a sixth birthday that was as late as September 30, or even well into October.

The first year of the new school, grades seven, eight and nine were placed in one classroom. That created a trying situation, for many of these older students were quite large, having started school at age seven. Several had been retained at least once. More than a few were undisci-

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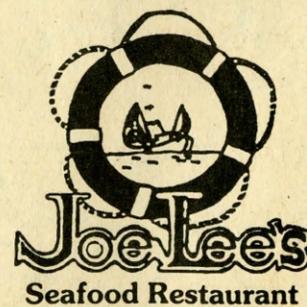
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plined and were ready to start a fight for any reason. A few even had records of fighting their teachers. Although most of the older students were quiet, studious and well-mannered, in general they just did not fit into a grammar school with smaller and younger children.

One vivid memory to me is a recess during which the bigger boys undertook to kiss all the eligible girls. A regular circus developed, with the boys running and grabbing, the girls running and shrieking. The younger children stood on the sidelines, boys yelling and jumping up and down in excitement, girls shrinking into the shadows with a mixture of horror and envy. The show was in its prime when teachers showed up and put an end to it.

Mr. Robert Taylor served as principal the first two years and also taught grades seven, eight and nine. That first year must have tried him sorely, but even though he was often obliged to administer punishment and to pit his will against those of some of his students, he was able to hold edu-

cation in high regard. He had infinite patience in helping students through a difficult procedure in math or science, and all in all, he had their respect. Mr. Taylor took a personal interest in all the students in school, and frequently stopped to chat or joke with a younger child in the hall or on the playground. He also had a sense of humor. His oft-repeated



Grades 1-9 at Seabrook Grammar School, 1931. Mr. Taylor, principal; Mrs. Taylor, Miss Phillips and Mrs. Kegler, teachers.

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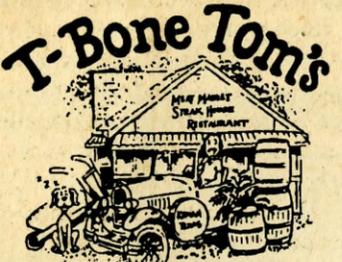


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motto was, "Never do today what you can put off for tomorrow."

Parents of the older students became increasingly doubtful their children were being given all the opportunities that a high school could afford, and they began pushing to send them to Webster High School along with students in grades 10 and 11, who had been attending Webster for several years. But Webster thought better of making this arrangement, either the first year or the second. The second year, still hoping Webster would come through, students in grades eight and nine began the school year in Seabrook. After a week they gave up

*Mr. Hester favored oleander but the first vote was for ligustrum, which he planted around the building, enclosing it inside a fence as protection from the cattle that roamed freely until the stock law came into effect in 1933.*

hope, and most transferred to La Porte High School. The following year Webster agreed to take all students in grades eight through 11. Both older students and younger benefited from this change.

Mr. Taylor's wife Bess had come over from the old school, and now she continued as a teacher of first and second grades, launching a new group of pupils on the road to learning. Mrs. Taylor was firm in discipline and thorough in teaching, and the pupils who came under her influence for two years were off to a sound start.

MY first two years in the new school were spent in Miss Verna Phillips' third- and fourth-grade classroom. With her amiable manner, talents and practical

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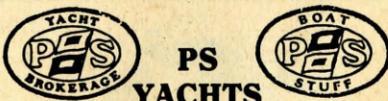
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philosophies, Miss Phillips was well-liked by her students. She was fond of music and we sang nearly every day. It was in her classroom I learned many of the popular Christmas carols, phrases of them still calling back to me the aura of Christmas in those simpler times. On Mondays we had "Current Events," which required each pupil to report on a news item from the newspaper, the purpose being to acquaint pupils with local and national happenings. It was during this activity that Miss Phillips reported to us the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby.

A pleasant activity I remember from my two years in Miss Phillips' classroom is the "peep shows" we made by setting up a three-dimensional scene in the end of a shoebox, with a background and tiny figures taken from magazines and glued into place to form a miniature landscape. The scene was lighted by an opening cut in the box above it, and a hole in the opposite end enabled the observer to look in. You were only allowed to "peep" at it, so that the effect was a fleeting glimpse of a fairytale world, an effect that was enhanced if the creator of the box had come into possession of a fragment of colored cellophane for covering the hole.

So great was our fascination with Miss Phillips, especially the girls, that from time to time we would give her a "shower." If any girl brought Miss Phillips a bouquet, or perhaps a piece of homemade cake, we would be inspired to run into the field behind the school, or a nearby vacant lot, and pick handfuls of wild-flowers. These we scattered over her desk in profusion, with the original bouquet in a glass in the middle, or the piece of cake hidden under the greenery. Then various ones of us would go to our meager lunches and take out a choice cookie or an apple and tuck them around through the foliage. When Miss Phillips arrived, a group of girls would run to meet her and conduct her ("Don't open your eyes!") to the surprise. If her heart was touched by our devotion, likely she had other thoughts also... especially as we walked away, glowing at her delight, and left her to clean up

her desk in time for lessons to begin; left her wondering how to return the food offerings tactfully.

At first the playground was bare of all but dirt and the grass that was sprouting in that dirt. Through the PTA, shrubbery was purchased from Mr. Joe Hester Sr. Mr. Hester favored oleander but the final vote was for ligustrum, which he planted around the building, enclosing it inside a fence as protection from the cattle that roamed freely until the stock law came into effect in 1933. At a later

time, oak trees were also planted by Mr. Hester. In their beginning years, these trees were supported by tripods and protected from the abuse of children's play by a barrier of barbed wire. Today those trees still stand in a straight row at the edge of City Hall grounds, a reminder of times past.

The PTA also had the playground equipment — swings, seesaws, and a basketball goal — moved from the old schoolground to the new location and repaired. They bought a basket-

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ball for the girls, but the boys had to be content with just a new bladder for their ball! In subsequent years the PTA furnished or repaired whatever play equipment was needed.

One piece of equipment added to the schoolground in the early years was a merry-go-round. Excitement and disbelief went through the students and teachers when we came to school and saw this new, shiny red toy. Most of us had no idea how or where to get on it, or how to make it turn . . . but we quickly caught on. It

seemed safer to stand right at or near the middle, rather than to cling to the outside rail and be whirled squealing into orbit. When all had ridden, no one wanted to ride again, for many of the children who had tried out the new toy were huddled in corners or crouched on the ground, overcome with nausea — and those who had ridden in the “safety zone” in the middle were suffering the most!

We conquered the merry-go-round, though, and riding it became a popular activity at recess. Within a

month we had worn a deep circular path around it. And the same bullies who swung their classmates too high or bumped the seesaws learned they could terrorize others by whirling the merry-go-round at top speed. Within a few years the mechanism had broken down and the merry-go-round was removed, although the central pole remained for years.

THE year of 1930-'31, a black panel truck driven by Mr. Lum Martin served as our school bus. With benches built along the sides, it was adequate for transporting students to school, but it was crowded and stuffy. In September 1931, Webster School District purchased for Seabrook School a new yellow Chevrolet school bus with long, leather-covered benches down the sides. It was comfortable and dependable, and was roomy enough to allow for a straddle board to be added down the middle in a few years. This bus remained in use many years, picking up students in the morning on two routes and then transporting high school students to Webster. The first run was along Lakeside Drive (now NASA Road 1) and Highway 146, where many of the students lived on dairy and other farms. The second followed Todville Road from El Jardin (Red Bluff) on the north to the “flats” (now called The Point) near the bridge, where the families of fishermen lived in house trailers or on boats.

In the afternoon the procedure was reversed, with grammar school students waiting for the bus to return from Webster. Because of the necessity of using one bus for many jobs, all bus riders were obliged to wait a long time on the schoolground unsupervised at one time or another. In fact, we spent a large part of every day waiting.

Mr. Ray Larrabee drove this school bus for quite a few years. Mr. Larrabee, called “Ray” by old and young, was a dependable and responsible driver. He was courteous and kind to his young passengers, but he would not tolerate any rough play or allow any threat to safety. He had a dry sense of humor that

endeared him to all bus riders. But no matter how he kept kids laughing with his jokes, he was serious about discharging his duties.

Parents who objected to the bus scheduling arranged to drive their children to and from school, often sharing the chore with a neighbor. Kids who lived near the school either walked or rode their bicycles. My brothers and I often walked home, a distance of nearly two miles, down the “dirt road” (now Meyer Street, but then a narrow country road covered with red sand), or along the abandoned railroad track that ran across the prairie behind the school, crossed the present Meyer Road, and finally ran parallel with Todville. It was a lonely, brushy route, but it did not occur to us to be afraid . . . as long as we remembered to look out for snakes.

When the morning bell sounded, students lined up at the front door of the school in a designated order, one arm extended toward the person in front for orderly spacing. When the principal rang the bell again, we filed into the building and went to our classrooms. (In later years we marched in to the spirited *Under the Double Eagle*, played by Mrs. Porter.)

We had “big recess” at 10:00 in the morning and “little recess” at 2:00 in the afternoon. Many students grabbed an apple or a sandwich from their lunch and ate it quickly while running to their area of the schoolground. The grounds were divided, by the wide sidewalk running from the front steps to the street, into boys' playground and girls' playground. Softball was the most popular game with both boys and girls. It was played with a large soft ball with thick outside seams, on a 45-foot diamond. In later years Seabrook periodically competed with Kemah in baseball; the two teams were pretty evenly matched as to skill. Cost of transportation prevented traveling any farther to play. Basketball was also played.

Other games popular with big kids were Darebase, Run-Sheep-Run, Keep-away, Red Rover and Pop-the-Whip. These games, as played by the

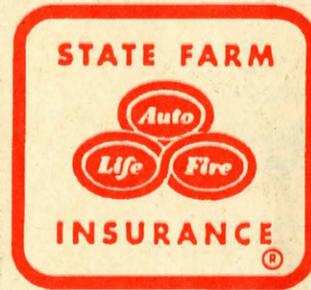
older boys or girls, were exciting and energetic; they were given an added challenge over the basic games. There was no regular supervision over these activities, but from time to time a teacher or two would be seen standing in a conspicuous spot.

The younger children played Drop-the-Handkerchief, Green Gravel, London Bridge or some form of make-believe. There was always a jump rope turning, and the broad sidewalk was ideal for drawing off a hopscotch with a piece of coal or

chalk. The sidewalk also lent itself to skating, for the few who had skates and brought them to school.

In the morning before school, boys' interest turned to marbles, especially in spring. The bare ground would be deeply scarred by the holes, the boundary lines, the runs made by the hurtling, spinning marbles. With the boys on their knees on the damp ground, or leaping up to grab up the newly won marbles, yells would ring out, as excited as those on the baseball diamond. “Kicks on!”

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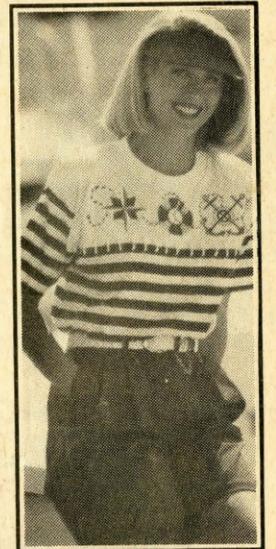
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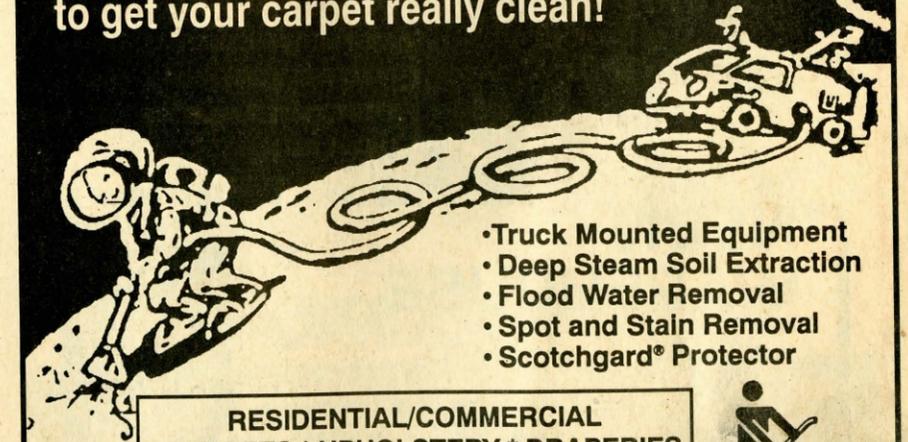
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Another diversion for boys was mumblety-peg. A boy carried a good pocketknife in his pocket as a matter

of pride. He took it out only to show it off, to sharpen a pencil, or to play mumblety-peg. If he took out his knife for any but acceptable purposes, he was no longer permitted to carry it.

Wrestling was permitted, but was called to a halt if it turned into a fight or the participants became angry, or pulled hair or tried to inflict harm. If a real fight erupted, it drew a circle of excited onlookers, cheering it on. The "best" fights took place after school, when no teachers were on hand to

spoil the fun. A fight was punishable only if unjustified; it was considered legitimate if someone's honor was slurred. (In later years, Mr. Bay's approach was to give the fighters boxing gloves and let them slug it out. The gloves were big and well-padded, and were not likely to inflict injury.)

A POPULAR place at recess was Bennett's Store on Second Street, a block from school. There, a penny or a nickel could buy a few minutes, even a half-hour, of happiness. Mrs. Bennett and later her daughters Genevieve, the twins Dorothy and Doris, and Ruthie would apply themselves frantically for 10 minutes, doling out candy and other treats as well as school supplies, and collecting handfuls of coins. A penny would buy a piece of bubble gum (it could last all day if you were careful with it), or a wax doll full of a sweet pink liquid (a fleeting joy, but one to treasure in memory while you chewed the wax). A penny would also buy five "silver tips" (Hershey's Kisses), a big round "moon" cookie, a banana square, a big jawbreaker layered with different colors (part of the pleasure was in taking it out to see what color it was) and with a black "peppercorn" in the middle, or a licorice stick or its sister, a red "whip."

Another penny novelty was a thin, flat slab of gum, delightfully flavored, accompanied by a card bearing the picture and biography of a famous Indian chief. It was the rage to collect these cards, and there was quite a traffic in exchanging them. Even today a whiff of the distinctive aroma of that gum calls to my mind those Indian cards. Surely there may be a pack or two of those cards forgotten in some attic in Seabrook!

The penny that bought the greatest value was one that purchased a Bebe Bat. A wooden stick held a malt-flavored concrete-hard bar about 4 inches long and an inch thick. It could be licked or sucked, and then rewrapped and savored again and again. To share it with your best friend, you let him grip it with his molars just at the point where you wished to divide it. A sharp blow of

the hand broke off the portion you were willing to part with.

As for a nickel, it could provide an unequalled feast — a pack of Wrigley's gum, a Hershey bar or a Babe Ruth, a small pecan pie — or a selection of penny items.

The best time of day was lunch. When students were dismissed at noon, some went running home. Some could go and be back in 10 minutes! But most of us packed a lunch and ate either at our desks or on the schoolground — in the swings, on the steps, under the oak trees when they began to give shade. A special treat among younger girls was to "spread lunch." We would spread out a newspaper on the grass and place the contents of our lunches on it, then each selected what took her eye. Before being accepted, each lunch was subject to group approval.

Hamburgers made their debut in Seabrook around 1931, and could be bought for a nickel (a larger one for a working man was 10¢) at Chapline's store, and in later years Kellett's set up a hamburger stand. Hamburgers made an immediate hit with the school children of all ages, who looked forward from one hamburger to the next.

(After the Community House was built in 1939, through the benevolence of Mr. George Hamman, hot lunches were served to the students.)

IN our classrooms at Seabrook School, the basic needs were provided by the district — blackboards and chalk, desks brought over from the old school. Textbooks were furnished and supplemented when necessary by the PTA, which also purchased extra materials for the primary grades, dictionaries for the upper grades, and a picture to hang on the wall in each classroom. Students furnished their own supplies and used them frugally. Both sides of the paper were used, it was a major disaster to lose a pencil. A few students had fountain pens, but as yet most used ink in a bottle, along with a pen staff with a replaceable point.

The few library books in each room had been salvaged from the old school and the PTA supplied others

from time to time, choosing each one carefully. Students who finished their work had to fall upon the resources of this library, as supplementary

assignments were seldom provided for accelerated students. With two grades to demand the teacher's time, some students were left with much



May Fete at Seabrook School around 1936, with Queen Helen Anne Shove and King Elton Porter. Can you find Jenny Curry, Herchel Brown, Paul Schwander, Jimmy Woodard, Jimmy Bracewell and Eula Rae Larrabee?

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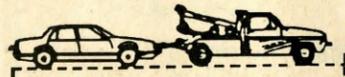
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time to fill. I can trace some of my interests and attitudes today to the books I discovered in those meager classroom libraries. My seventh-grade class had access to an outdated set of *Book of Knowledge*, which opened new worlds to me.

It was a requirement of Webster School District, under which Seabrook teachers were hired, that those not having a degree should have two years of college plus two years' experience in teaching. Seabrook teachers met the latter requirement, but until the middle '30s, none had degrees. All qualified for a salary range from \$100 to \$110, with the principal at \$180. Most of the single teachers boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Jack Ballentine.

What they lacked in formal education, most of our teachers had in common sense and devotion to their job, and the students learned and matured under their care. A weak teacher one year — and we had a few — would be balanced by an earnest, no-nonsense teacher the next year. Each teacher was responsible for everything taught to her pupils in the two years they were in her class. Every teacher could call upon an appropriate word of wisdom to suit any occasion: "Speak now or forever hold your peace." . . . "Look before you leap." . . . "Opportunity knocks but once." These are some of the maxims I heard repeated often.

Morals, honor and common sense were also emphasized in much of the poetry we read together or memorized. There was always an occasion — classroom recitation, a school program, PTA — for one or more students to recite a poem of inspiration or patriotism. Even in primary grades little verses and songs helped to lay down good manners. ("Little feet, be careful where you take me to . . .")

Once a week all classes filed out of the building to salute the flag that hung from the exact pole that stands in front of City Hall today. While we were instilled with pride at being Americans and revered Lincoln, Washington and the founding fathers, we also held Robert E. Lee in great esteem. We were steeped in sympathy with the Southern cause as

well as in devotion to Texas, its history and its heroes. We sang with equal fervor *My Country, 'Tis of Thee; Dixie; and Texas, Pride of the South.*

Four of the five classrooms were divided among grades one to seven, and the fifth room served as the auditorium. There, the entire school convened once a week for "Chapel." We would begin with a prayer, then hear a pep talk by the principal (Mr. Taylor and later Mr. Bryant). Students would go up on the stage

and give recitations. Often a designated class would perform a skit or a play. Occasionally there would be a visit from "Mother" Turner (Mrs. W.W. Turner, a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy), who kept the spirit of the Civil War alive within us by her emotion-charged speeches.

But most of the time was devoted to singing. To Miss Phillips' spirited piano accompaniment, and later Mrs. Porter's, we sang Steven C. Foster songs, spirituals, old senti-

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mental songs, patriotic songs. Since many of our fathers had fought in World War I, the memories of that war were kept alive with its songs ("There's a long, long trail a winding"). Teachers and the principal led rounds — "Row, row, row your boat" — and we sang lustily, each group trying to keep afloat by drowning out the other two. *The Golden Book of Songs*, purchased by the PTA, was distributed among the students during chapel. It was a wonderful collection and we learned most of the songs in it. Tattered copies of that song book still exist.

SEVERAL times a year our school gave a major program at night for the whole community, and nearly everyone came. The upper half of the wall between the seventh-grade classroom and the auditorium was removable in two panels, almost doubling the seating space, and every seat was filled. Parents and teachers spared no effort in training the students in their parts, contriving costumes, and decorating the two rooms and the stage. The night of a performance our little school would be transformed — by the children in

their costumes and makeup, by the performance actually unfolding so flawlessly, and by the people of the community, who turned out with such enthusiasm and anticipation.

The Christmas program was always a major occasion. The walls were hung with smilax and youpon. There would be a pine tree in each classroom, hung with paper chains and lanterns, and a big one in the auditorium, decorated by the mothers, with homemade ornaments from each classroom and some lovely shiny ones purchased by the PTA. Every class in school participated in the program and the auditorium would be filled to capacity with parents, children, former students who were now in high school, and friends.

When all the recitations were said, the skits put on and the plays performed, all without too many mishaps, and all the songs and carols sung either by children's choirs or by the general assemblage of people, then came that once-in-a-year event which was an essential part of Christmas. Under the tree stood a large box, filled to the top with Christmas treats. They were individually bagged and each bag bore a child's name, no effort having been spared in the weeks before Christmas to learn the name of every child in and around Seabrook, from infancy through seventh-grade. The PTA purchased a generous assortment of candy, nuts of several kinds, and for each bag a beautiful, huge delicious apple and an equally huge navel orange, both of a quality far removed from the apples and oranges that turned up in lunch bags. The auditorium was hushed while several of the ladies undertook to call the names on the bags and each child marched forward to receive his treat.

When a school program or event was in preparation, to be presented either to the school or to the community, mothers congregated to cut out and sew costumes. Several ladies were quite clever in designing whatever was needed, from a whole set of crepe-paper vegetable costumes to a Japanese kimono or a Dutch cap. (Frank Bracewell and Jane

Ballentine performed a windmill dance dressed as Dutch children.) A lace doily became a collar, a bathrobe made a robe for one of the Three Wise Men, a petticoat was transformed into a Pilgrim's dress. Rhythm band suits took shape, including boots and tall drum major hats. Three rooster suits would have taken a prize!

The Smith sisters were quite talented vocally, and occasionally they would perform as a trio or quartet at a community function. Their specialty was old sentimental and western songs. After their rendition of *After the Ball* made a hit, a group of older students were inspired to pantomime the story on the stage, with Willard Beaman, hair powdered, as the old man; Scatter Platzer as the young lover; Grace Slaughter as his sweetheart; and Carson Compton as the "rival."

As a rule, the graduation exercises at the end of seventh grade consisted of a conventional ceremony. Parents gazed with pride on their sons in suits and ties, and their daughters in long dresses and makeup. Speeches were given by the principal, salutatorian and valedictorian. Their school days at Seabrook Grammar School were over. They would continue their education — most of them — at Webster High School. It was always a proud occasion.

But in 1934, a spectacular play given by the seventh-grade class, along with sixth grade, replaced the formal graduation ceremony. In *A Gypsy Wedding* the graduating class portrayed a gypsy clan whose princess (Ida Marie Ellis) was marrying the prince of a neighboring clan (Walter Wetzel Jr.). We in the sixth grade were the clan being left behind. The wedding ceremonies allowed countless opportunities to perform dances, songs and recitations. Scarves and jewelry gave an exotic look to the somewhat simple costumes. (I had once been a cucumber standing beside a tomato and was now a gypsy maiden shaking a tambourine!)

The May Fete each spring was a grand affair. A wooden stage had been built out from the front of the

school, lavishly decorated with garlands of greenery and spring flowers. The piano had been moved outside, and chairs set up for parents and friends. The King and Queen were duly announced, and a Duke and Duchess from each grade, and each couple paraded in to the music of *Aida*, played by Mrs. Porter. Ladies-in-waiting, pages and other attendants filled out the court. When all were in place, the entertainment began. A variety of dances and stunts were performed for the pleasure of the King and Queen and the court. (The Rooster Dance was one of these.) And last of all, a group of boys and girls in spring attire, the girls' heads encircled with leis of flowers, approached the Maypole, took the streamers in their hands, and flawlessly wound the Maypole. The May Fete was a beautiful occasion in a beautiful setting.

The first years in the new school, children who lived some distance and had no transportation missed some of the evening functions. But eventually permission was given for

the school bus to make its usual runs on such an occasion, enabling more children to attend school events. It was exciting to ride the bus at night. Upon returning home, if any child was alone, Mr. Larrabee kept the bus waiting until that child reached the house and opened the door.

PTA meetings were held once a month in the auditorium after school. Besides the business at hand, there would be a short program — a talk by a teacher or parent, a reading by a student or a brief skit by students.

The same parents worked tirelessly in the PTA over the years of the '30s, and some stayed in it even when their children had finished grammar school. Always alert to school needs, they were equally willing to outfit a first-aid kit, buy a cot, sanitize the drinking fountains, and provide gym suits for Interscholastic League. Each year they gathered and distributed clothing and food to the needy, and there were many of them in our community. Every spring near the closing of school, they gave a picnic for students and teachers at

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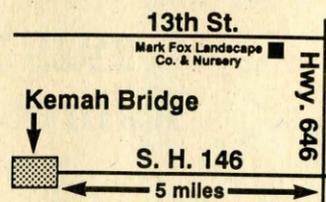


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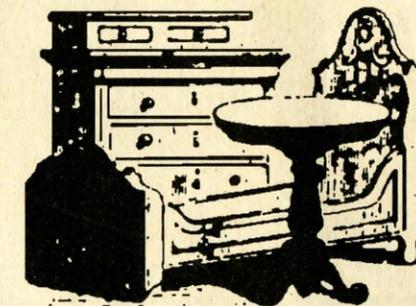
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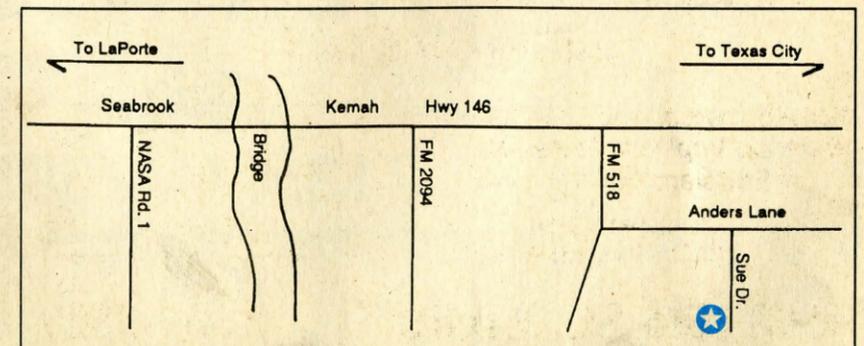


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To raise money for these projects, the PTA planned and carried out a number of fund-raising events. A

Halloween carnival was held every year, with grab bag, apple-bobbing, fortunes and treats. (A child could fully enjoy the evening on 25 cents!) A play, *The Manless Wedding*, was

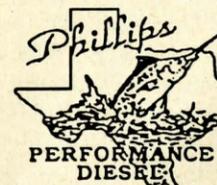
given at the library; women of the community played the parts of every member of the wedding party and guests. Numerous dances were given at Rutgers Hotel, through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wetzel. A magician show given by a traveling professional showman created a sensation, being different from our homespun talent. Periodically some of the ladies would bake a cake to be raffled off. At one time they acquired a quilt top, made a quilt and quilted it, then sold chances on it.

Two unexpected opportunities opened to the students of Seabrook School. Early in the '30s Mrs. Huff came to the area and recruited students in piano and expression. Her prices were reasonable, and she had a number of students — only a few in piano, since few homes had a piano, but a considerable number were interested in studying expression. Mrs. Huff had a thick, very old book of long recitation-type poems of a bygone era, and she picked them to suit each student's personality and ability. After several months and a



Mr. Bay with the Seabrook School's sixth-grade class in front of the Community Building.

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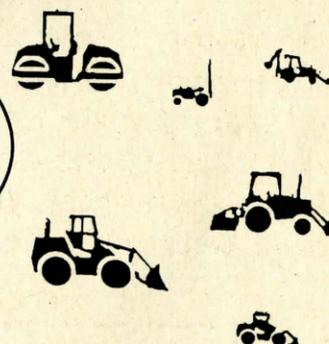
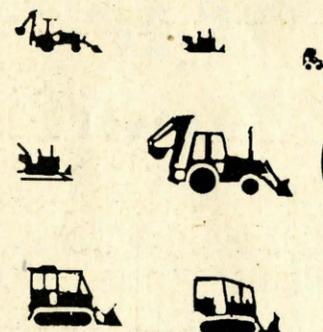


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number of lessons, her pupils performed at a recital on the stage of the school auditorium, a few in piano

and a number in recitations. Mrs. Huff left soon after the recital.

The second opportunity was



Mr. Dinkins with the fifth- and sixth-grade girls' basketball team, around 1936. Top row: Doris Bennett (Hester), Iva Lou Mallory, Dolly Starnett, Pearl Henry, Mary Lou Winfield. Bottom row: Dorothy Bennett (Elder), Josephine Revels, Louise Burkes, Pokie Platzer (Stamper), Rachel Graves and Betty Botkin.

opened by a Webster High School student, Mary Catherine Beatty, who was proficient in dance. She offered grammar school students lessons in tap dance and ballet — a lesson a week for a dollar a month. Many parents scraped up a dollar so their children could take advantage of this opportunity, even though after the first month some of them could only pay for one lesson at a time. Parents and pupils were most enthusiastic about this class, which was held in the library. Mary Catherine was a capable teacher. After several months of lessons, a recital was held in the school auditorium, and the budding dancers, in their colorful costumes furnished by the parents, showed off their progress on different levels. Wesley Muecke, as the only older boy in the class, distinguished himself as the instructor's partner and won an encore.

Every spring for a number of years, the school children of Harris County had taken part in the Interscholastic League competitions, commonly called County Meet. This

event was held in Pasadena and the day was allowed as a school holiday. Students at all levels competed in many categories, from a wide range of athletic events to selected school subjects, to debate and declamation. In addition to some athletics, Seabrook Grammar School participated in spelling, choral singing, and later in rhythm band. We spent an exciting day, and our students often came away with several blue or red ribbons.

ALTHOUGH most of our teachers remained several years, gradually there was a subtle change, and by 1939 it was a totally different faculty. Teachers who remained two or more years after joining the faculty were Miss Mary Lawrence, Mrs. Ruth Shove, Mrs. Mary Key, Mrs. Sarah Hester and Mrs. Elizabeth Porter.

Mr. Taylor was replaced as principal by Mr. R.W. Bryant. Mrs. Taylor was difficult to replace in primary grades. Neither Miss Walker nor Mrs. Bradford stayed a second year. In 1934, Mrs. Porter (who had taught in the old school as Miss Elizabeth Broyles some years before) was hired as primary teacher. Mrs. Porter remained a part of the faculty for many years, moving up from one grade level to another every second year with her class, so that many of her students were with her five years.

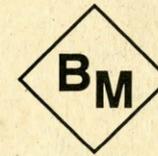
Mr. Kingsbury served as janitor in the old school and the new, except for a year or two when Lum Martin held that position. He was by turns intolerant and friendly with students. If he liked a boy student, he did him the special favor of allowing him to pull the clinkers out of the stove!

Mr. Orin T. Dinkins came to Seabrook School as principal in 1934. A very great change took place with Mr. Dinkins' arrival. School rules, which had become increasingly lax, were dusted off and unquestionably enforced. Teachers were to be on the schoolgrounds when students were; certain playground behavior was no longer allowed. If an infraction of conduct occurred, Mr. Dinkins, who had studied law, gathered witnesses to the event and

held court. After hearing all the evidence, he passed judgment on the case, either dismissing it or finding the culprit guilty, in which case he decided on and levied the punishment. Usually it was a predetermined

number of sturdy licks with his Sam Brown belt.

Mr. Dinkins, in spite of his strictness, presented a cool exterior. He was interested in the students and the community, and was always will-



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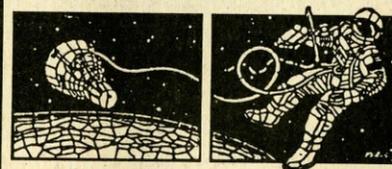
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ing to talk with parents. He won the respect of students, teachers and parents. He was especially looked up to by the older boys, who recognized his genuine interest in them as well as the ability to remain in control in any situation. During the five years he remained at Seabrook Grammar School, Mr. Dinkins accepted and carried out several responsibilities assigned him by the PTA, in addition to teaching and administrative duties. He was replaced in 1939 by Mr. James F. Bay, who himself inspired love among his students and faculty.

To all purposes my account of Seabrook Grammar School ends in 1935, when I graduated from seventh grade and went on to Webster High School . . . but my interests there were far from over. I was there for every school function, and my homing instinct drew me back at every opportunity.

In the years from 1935 to 1940 the school enrollment increased very little. The school had lost its "newness" and had settled into a routine program. But new methods, influences

and materials had crept in, and by the end of the '30s, changes were becoming apparent. Little did we know, either students or faculty, community or school board, the violent change that was ahead for us.

But that's another story.

*Rena Bracewell was born and reared on a poultry farm on Todville Road. When she was 18 years old, her family sold the property and moved away. Five years later, Rena bought back her family home, but didn't move back to Seabrook until 1961. After teaching school for 41 years,*

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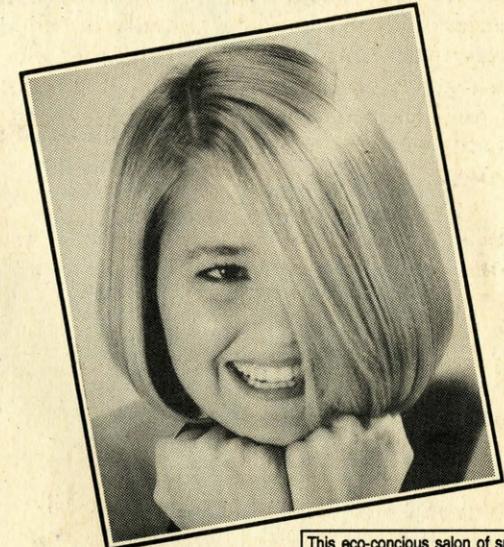


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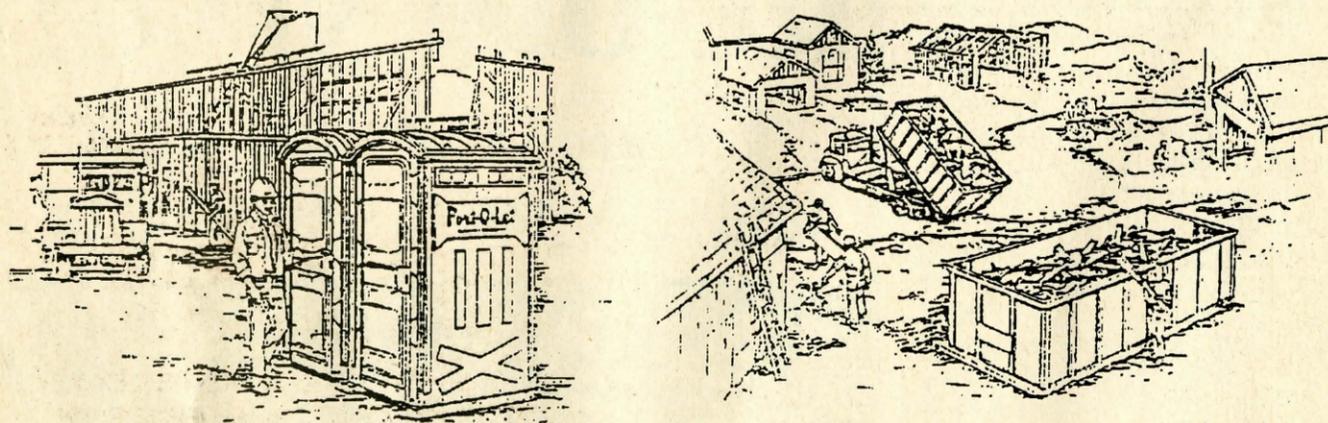
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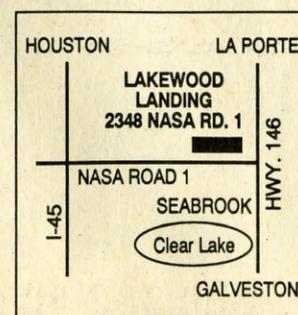
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# SEABROOK'S PELICANS

By Andrew V. Sipocz

Pelicans are large fish-eating birds found all along the Texas coast.

They are bold birds, and can be easily observed sitting on pilings and piers in Galveston Bay and Seabrook Slough. Two kinds of pelicans live in the Seabrook area . . . the white pelican and the brown pelican.

The white pelican nests mostly north of the Great Lakes and in Canada, commonly spending the winter in Seabrook and all along the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico. White pelicans too young to build nests of their own will spend their days, both summer and winter, in Seabrook. A huge bird with black wing tips, the white pelican has a very large bill. The bill has a pouch built into

will form a line across the water and herd fish into a cove where they are easily caught.

The brown pelican nests along the east and west coasts of the United

migrate south for the winter and are found all year in the Seabrook area. This pelican is a large brown bird with a white stripe along the top and side of its head. Like the white pelican, it has a pouch built into its lower beak.

However, rather than just dipping its head underwater, it dives from 10 to 20 feet in the air and completely submerges as it catches fish in its pouch.

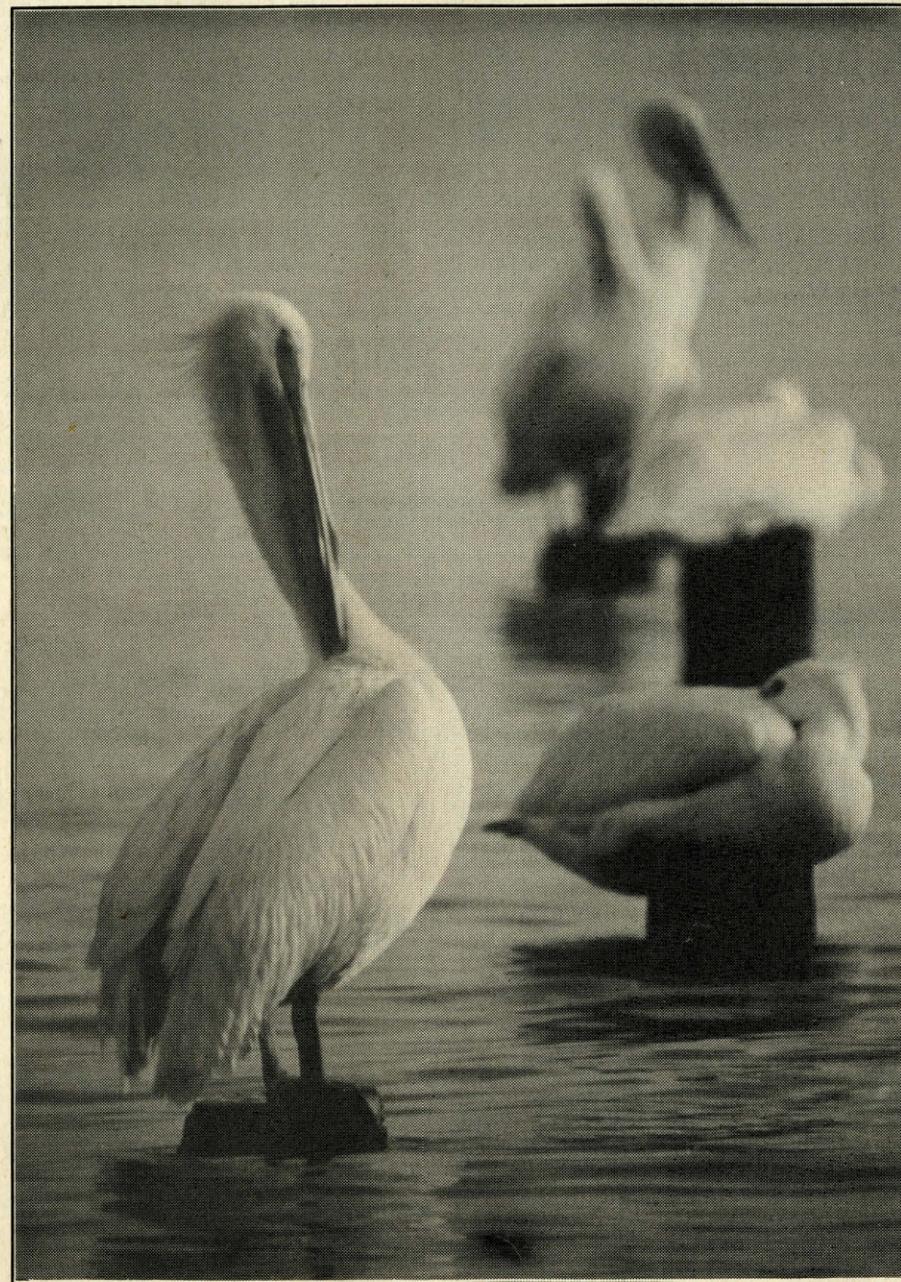
Pelicans nest on the ground in large groups or colonies on islands where they are safe from marauding raccoons or coyotes.

Nesting brown pelicans were observed by the first settlers of Texas and the size of nesting colonies were documented as early as 1855.

Biologists counted many hundreds of nests on Pelican Island just offshore of Galveston Island in Galveston Bay and on Bird Island in San

States and the Gulf of Mexico. In Texas, they nest on only one island in Corpus Christi Bay. They do not

Luis Pass. However, by the early 1900s fishermen became wary of the pelicans' great fish-catching skills



and began to crush the eggs of nesting birds.

In 1918 a researcher working for the Office of Biological Survey, the forerunner of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, studied the kinds of fish eaten by brown pelicans. He found they ate almost nothing other than menhaden (shad). Brown pelicans also ate a few anchovies and mullet. Fishermen did not target these species at the time, and even today few people fish for them in the bay other than for bait. The biologist's findings were largely ignored, however, and the nest destruction continued.

The widespread use of the pesticide DDT throughout the United States had further impacts on brown and white pelicans. The pesticide degrades into a form which, when consumed by birds, causes the shells of their eggs to become so thin the weight of the bird lying on the eggs crushes them. The pesticide washed into Galveston Bay and all other coastal waters with rainfall and runoff from rivers and bayous. It accumulated in fish that were then caught and eaten by pelicans. Between having their nests destroyed by fishermen and the egg shell thinning from DDT, brown pelicans almost became extinct by the early 1960s. No brown pelicans nested in Texas by then.

The use of DDT has been outlawed in the United States since that time and very few modern fishermen would ever think of crushing a pelican nest.

White pelicans are common all along the Texas coast now and can easily be seen sitting on pilings in the bay while driving along Todville Road. Brown pelicans are much rarer; however, last year they tried for the first time since the early 1950s to nest on Pelican Island in Galveston Bay. Only three chicks were observed last year and tropical storm Arlene prevented successful nesting this year. Yet it shouldn't be long before nesting brown pelicans are once again common on Pelican Island. Meanwhile, the birds born and raised in Corpus Christi Bay are often seen in the Seabrook area. If

you are patient, they can be observed diving for fish in Galveston Bay and Seabrook Slough.

*Andrew V. Sipocz is currently employed as Regional Wetlands Assessment Biologist with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, in Seabrook. He utilizes his knowledge to assist private companies and individuals, federal and state agencies, and local governments avoid adverse impact to the river, swamp, marsh, bay and near-shore ocean environments. In his spare time, Andrew enjoys fishing and hunting, poling his pirogue and listening to music.*



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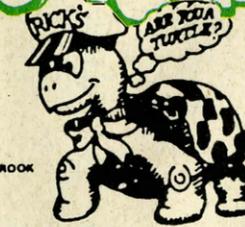
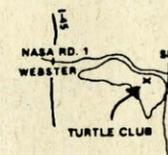
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# Seabrook's Cheerleaders ... a k a Small Business Owners

By Mary Sue Anton

As small-town America becomes inundated with super stores, malls and chains, it is refreshing to find that folksy small businesses are thriving in Seabrook. Even better is discovering that all of the people interviewed for this article love Seabrook, love their work and plan to stay awhile.

## Phil Hall

In 1675, Indian attacks were blamed on the sins of the people, among which was "the manifest pride openly appearing amongst us, particularly in that **long hair**, like women's hair, is worn by some men, either their own or others' hair made into periwigs." The Massachusetts General Court consequently passed laws upbraiding such fashions.

On the other hand, in the 1970s, Phil Hall, owner of Phil's Barber Shop, reacted differently to the new style of shoulder-length hair on young men. He went back to school to learn how to style it. Admits Phil, "Yeah, if I hadn't learned how to cut it I would have been out of business. And the kids knew that if I cut their hair I wouldn't whack it all off. They trust me."

A graduate of Sam Houston High School in Houston, Phil claims that his career as a barber was an accident. Being married at the time to a beautician whose parents were barbers, this peace-time Navy veteran decided, in the late '60s, to use his GI bill to learn something and make some money while thinking about what to do with his life. He attended San Jacinto Barber College, across from the Harris County Courthouse in downtown Houston — today a parking lot. To his surprise, he liked cutting hair, shaving and trimming

beards and wishes he had gone into it sooner. His only daughter, Phyllis, is now attending Pasadena Beauty College, so will follow in her family's footsteps.

After starting his career at Ray's Barber Shop in the Miramar Center, Phil says that Delbert Walker "conned" him into buying his three-chair, walk-in barber shop on Meyer by "badgering" Phil until he got a local bank loan. He and his part-time employee, Lillian Johnson, stand before a handsome hand-carved, tiger oak, mirrored-back bar. All his antique dealer neighbors concur that this eye-stopper, Phil's own acquisition, dates back to the late 1800s or early 1900s.

It would be hard to interview a

barber in 1993 without asking about President Clinton and his famous haircut . . . "What about all the hoopla about the president's \$200 haircut?" Phil is pretty philosophical, saying he saw no problem with Clinton paying \$200, but resented the fact that he tied up air traffic. This small-town barber charges \$8 and offers a discount to seniors. When queried about a person who pays \$20 for a haircut, he thinks it is fine if a person can afford it but, in his opinion, it isn't a better haircut. (In 1860, Tony Delight's in Chicago, a famous barber shop, charged 6 cents for a shave and raised the price of haircuts to 12 cents that year.)

This mild-mannered tonsorial artist insists he has no difficult cus-



Phil Hall

tomers. His goal is to provide quality service, so he keeps in mind his regular clients' styles, works with new customers, and admits he finds some people more particular than others. Small, wiggly children acting up — even tears — he can handle. He says his shop is pretty childproof, anything breakable having already been destroyed by previous generations. He offers advice for parents: "Stay calm." To pave the way for what could be that traumatic First Haircut, parents are advised to bring a toddler in several times ahead of time to acquaint him or her with the surroundings.

Although contrary to what the general public thinks about a barber, Phil insists he doesn't hear much gossip or news. He says he is usually the last one to know because everyone thinks he hears everything and tells him nothing. "Guys don't talk as much as women do." (Most of his clients are male.) He admits guys do open up from time to time, telling him their troubles. "We are a good cheap shrink."

For fun, Phil goes backpacking, hiking, camping, walking, and says he is a couch potato when it comes to TV. As a lot of other small-business owners, he admits to no real vacation in 10 years, working instead toward debt-free status, something he says will happen "unless I get sick or a hurricane comes."

Phil points out that he has always liked the laid-back atmosphere of Seabrook, even though it has grown from 3,000 to 10,000 in the time he has been here. He says it used to be he could tell that a person was from Houston, saying a Houstonian's mind was "always racing." Now, he finds, the pace of life in Seabrook has picked up. He says, "We think fast, we act fast and we do things fast. We just don't know it until we get someplace where it is slow and easy." Still, he says, we are good people, hard workers, very civic-minded, and more involved than other towns around. He admits that causes arguments at City Hall, but it is also a good healthy sign that the town is vital. He confesses he avoids politics. Once, he thought about becoming

involved, but was cured when he was serving on jury duty and got a glimpse of all the paperwork on the mayor's desk.

Even though Phil's home isn't in Seabrook, he says he was a resident for a long, long time and still considers himself a Seabrook resident and a member of the community. And with so many residents — including a few astronauts and millionaires — depending on this personable barber, his heart is in the right place, right up there at the top — with the heads of the city.

## Vinny Schillaci

In the late '70s, Vinny Schillaci, an "Italian" transplant from New York, decided that fried chicken, about the only fast food available in Seabrook at the time, was too greasy and messy to take aboard his pristine sailboat as he plied Galveston Bay. Vinny ("spell it like *My Cousin Vinny*") was from Albany, where he

says there is a sub shop on every corner. He had never worked in a sub shop, but says he certainly had eaten a few while growing up. Thus was born the idea for Neptune Subs, a business located along the railroad tracks on Highway 146.

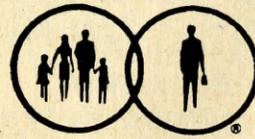
Vinny Schillaci exudes an aura of boundless energy and a zest for life, and is always a gentleman, even if it means having to explain once more his Bald Monday sign out front. His first-rate woodworking skills and hard work shine all over his polished green and yellow, elongated restaurant.

So how does a boy from Albany, New York, get to Seabrook, Texas? After high school, Vinny rode his motorcycle to Florida and lived in a tent in the Keys, while scuba diving. Later, he was a security guard in Miami and then worked for a salvage company that dealt with insurance claims in New Orleans. In 1975, he was headed for California when a friend introduced him to Seabrook.



Vinny Schillaci

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Vinny first worked for Jim Simpson, stripping, varnishing and hand-painting wooden hulls; and later went into business for himself, specializing in teak refinishing. Using his scuba diving skills, he also scraped and scrubbed boat bottoms and retrieved whatever had been dropped overboard.

Vinny still tries to scuba dive at least once a year at Cozumel or else he goes to a "beautiful little resort" south of Cancun, near Tulum. Closer to home is his sailboat, a C & C 30 named appropriately enough *Zucchini*, on which his wife Lindy sails with him "when the weather is nice."

The name, Neptune Subs? Vinny had first planned to decorate his venture like a train station and call it Sub Station because of its location. But the name was already taken, so he went back to the doodling board where he sketched a trident spearing a sub. The name draws not a few people looking for a shrimp poor boy but he sticks to his original intent, the perfect thing he says, "for old sailors, and the speed of it, too, because everything is already cooked. You can come in here and have a sandwich in no time flat."

Did you know that subs — also known as hoagies, poor boys or heroes, depending on where you live — originated in the Northeast, some say during World War I when Italian shipyard workers tried to stuff as much food into one sandwich as they could to take along to work? And by the way, if you are a real purist, you dress a sub with oil and vinegar, NOT MAYONNAISE!

What is the most popular item on the menu at Neptune Subs? Vinny says it would be a tie between the Italian sub (Cappicola [that's Italian ham], hard salami, provolone cheese with oregano and parmesan) or homemade chicken salad on a choice of French or whole wheat rolls, served with lettuce, tomato, onion, OIL and VINEGAR!

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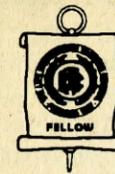
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tomers in the world. Our customers are happy. We make them happy." A lot come from the chemical companies, NASA, locals, and even surrounding towns.

Vinny's biggest complaint about customers is, "I just wish that 10 customers would come in one car. Then I wouldn't feel like I had such a small parking lot. I also wish they would sit on each other's lap when they come in here to eat so I wouldn't feel like I had such a small dining room." Recently, an outdoor eating area has been added that will help the overflow. On the wish list is better parking and easier in and out. "A lot of our customers aren't afraid to back up onto the shoulder—our customers are tough."

Vinny's store of literature close to the entrance is intriguing, the magazines, newspapers. "Do you really want your customers to read?" Here Vinny's humanness and the secret of his success surface. "Well, we want customers who come in alone to feel at home. A lot of food places paint bright colors because they don't want their customers to relax. They want them to eat and beat it. We have a lot of customers who come in and read, put their feet up for an hour."

And what about Bald Monday? Vinny says that while brainstorming one day with Tim Hosler, he came up with the idea of Bald Monday and Tim just flew with it, suggesting, "The more you shine the more you dine." It all started with Vinny's dislike of those TV commercials making bald guys feel insecure by trying to sell them hair. This good-looking, "30 something" entrepreneur, who says he was "50 percent bald when the Bald Monday campaign started and about 60 percent now," mentions Sean Connery, named *People* magazine's sexiest guy two years ago. He believes men should be proud that their hair is gone and he thinks a lot of guys really look better without hair.

Oh, yes, Bald Monday. Every first Monday, Vinny gives a discount according to how much hair the customer has lost. A totally bald customer gets to eat free, while others

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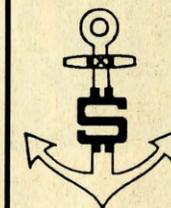
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not so blessed pay according to the percentage of hair still up there. Vinny admits that sometimes, especially with a tall guy, after giving a little discount he walks by and discovers there is less hair than he first realized, and he might have to go back and give him a bag of chips. The downside of this promotion is when an unsuspecting balding customer, just whizzing through Seabrook, hasn't read the sign and doesn't know what it is all about. But they have to offer it to all, and Vinny says he has seen a few guys get real embar-

assed, just wanting to evaporate after realizing all eyes were on his hairline. Relax, guys. It is just one Monday a month; all other days are safe haven.

Vinny admits they have had a lot of fun with Bald Monday — even ladies going through chemotherapy, wearing wigs or hats, have no qualms about removing them to get free food.

In on all the capers are his employees, several longtime. His day manager, Pat Knight, who also does all the buying, has been at Neptune

Subs almost since the day it opened 15 years ago. Vicki Berryman, the other daytime worker, has over 10 years' service. Three people also carry the night load, Ann Teeter working as manager alongside a part-time helper and the delivery guy.

And the restaurant business? Vinny is quick to say it isn't for everybody. It is a lot of hard work. He says the main ingredients are good management and location, adding what might be a good location today might not be so in 10 years time.

As a child, Vinny was in and out of a lot of back doors of restaurants, his father being in the beverage end, providing syrup for carbonated drinks. What Vinny likes is the independence, which he says will almost be a thing of the past in 50 years. A role model? Perhaps a man named Elkins, who made lots of money in Albany during the summer, making great steak sandwiches. In the winter he closed and went to Florida. His sign read: "Closed for the Season — Reason: Freezin." One can see a glimmer of an idea as Vinny tells this

story. Two years ago, Vinny married the former Lindy Bailey from League City, who, as an artist, does some of the artwork for the restaurant and fills in if needed in a pinch. She is hard at work on 40 pastels that will hang at a one-man show at the River Cafe in Houston during the month of October.

Another member of Vinny's family is his son Benjamin, age 11½. He lives with Vinny and Lindy summers and participates with the Seabrook swim team.

*Calligraphy*

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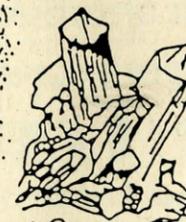
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Speaking to where Seabrook is going, Vinny admits he wouldn't mind a little controlled growth — he just doesn't want to see ugly stuff. He explains that the Seabrook of today isn't what attracted him to move here. It seems that this hustler yearns for 20 years ago when the "small town feeling was still there."

At the same time, Vinny says of Seabrook, in relation to the rest of the bay area, "We are a little secret." And although he says he wouldn't mind a few more customers learning

about Neptune Subs, one gets the impression that he wants Seabrook to remain a little secret.

## Regis and Sally Wroblewski

In 1981, Regis Wroblewski, a graduate of the University of Texas pharmacy school, and his wife Sally had a chance to buy the Pine Knot Pharmacy and Gift Shop on NASA Road 1. And while the hometown

drugstore was originally a place where locals traded yarns around pickle barrels and the pot-bellied stove, the Wroblewski find that not much has changed. Although drugstore ice-cream tables and soda fountains are a thing of the past in Seabrook, this two-man "Chamber of Commerce" team takes great pride in dishing out information about, and directions to, area businesses.

Sally says, "It is kinda like being a melting pot of the community; there is something about a pharmacy that draws people, thinking we know everything about Seabrook and the area."

While Sally Wroblewski is a native Texan, she says that Regis is a "Yankee-made Texan who says 'y'all.'" His family transferred to Texas City from the Northeast in the late '40s, when Regis was five years old, right after the Texas City "blast." [During the period April 16-18, 1947, a ship explosion spread to another ship and a chemical company in Texas City, killing some 500 persons and leaving the waterfront section of the city devastated.] Sally was born in Yoakum, Texas, and then lived in Pasadena. When she was in the eighth grade, her family moved to Texas City.

Despite what Regis' Pennsylvania birth certificate might say, his drawl more than suggests he is a native Texan. He explains how he came to be a pharmacist instead of a dentist. Although his great love was baseball, his father, the first person in his family to get a college degree, insisted Regis do the same. When Regis' dental school plans fell through, he enrolled in the University of Texas pharmacy school in Austin. "I felt, well, I will just try it and see if I like it." Still, his real dream was to play ball professionally.

Sally interjects, "He was a good third baseman. You should have seen him play."

After getting into pharmacy classes, he realized a need to be in the lab and not on the ball field. His dad's motto was, "If you are going to do something, do the best you can." Luckily, for Seabrook and some of the surrounding communities, Regis

liked pharmacy a whole lot.

With graduation came decision-making. The Wroblewski had fallen in love with Austin, but the proximity of a lucrative Houston job offer lured them back closer to home. Regis eventually purchased a Gibson's pharmacy in Seabrook. Neither wanted to leave their hometown friends and family but eventually faced up to it, and in 1973, purchased their present home in El Lago. Sally says when you remain in your hometown you tend to not make new friends, so the move forced them to make lots of friends and they have never regretted striking out on new ground.

It was after Gibson's closed that the Wroblewski bought into Pine Knot, now a tradition in Seabrook for 30 years. Originally named Seabrook Pharmacy, it opened in the Seabrook Professional Building just as NASA was starting up here. Dr. Larry Chapman recalls sitting around drinking coffee, waiting for patients to come to his office next door. Later, when Gene and Doris Morris bought it, Doris and her sister Joy Jowell, who now owns Texas General Store, carried antiques — thus the name Pine Knot. Today's Pine Knot is located in Seabrook Plaza, just five blocks away from its original location.

Manager and primary buyer for the front end of this combination pharmacy-gift shop, Sally, a perfectionist in dress and manner, gives the appearance of a take-charge person. A Sagittarian, she says she tries to be her own person. "You have to be involved in and know a business and do it yourself to really understand all it involves and what you have to do to make it run."

At the beginning, she knew nothing of retailing, her only previous business experience having been in the trust department of banks, but she learned very fast — on the job. Sally had been a stay-at-home mother, baking the cookies, handling Scout and school band duties before taking a part-time job with Exxon. She soon learned that with going to market, building up her manufacturer base and running a gift shop, the



Regis and Sally Wroblewski

Exxon job had to go. Sally laughs, "I had always been in arts and crafts and I thought this would be a little fun type of thing. I didn't have any idea how much work it involved."

According to Sally, the Precious Moments porcelain and Yankee Candles lines are very popular items. They feel lucky being so close to Dallas Market, considered the largest market in the United States. Working as a team to select gift items suitable for, or requested by, their customers, the Wroblewski try hard to keep up with what is popular and what is in style. Their rule is to buy in all price ranges to accommodate everybody.

Their large store inventory includes quality handcrafted items. Sally prides herself in choosing well-constructed items and in learning as much as she can about each item. Regis adds, "The difference in our shop and some of the mall businesses is the clerks there may not be very knowledgeable about the merchandise — if indeed, a clerk can be found."

Sally says, "Our customers like to visit, and because we are a small community, they feel comfortable coming and just talking to us like we were one of the family."

The Wroblewski have faithful customers, many returning even after moving away. The reason is evident. They and their two clerks, Jackie McLarty and Virginia Ybarra, are "people" people. Regis contends that personalized service is the way a family business feels it is being a part of the community.

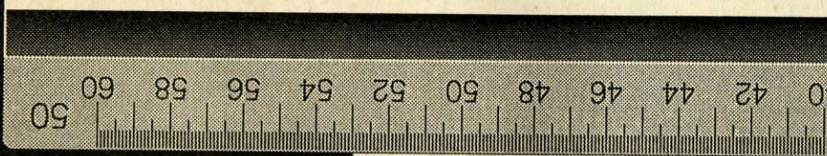
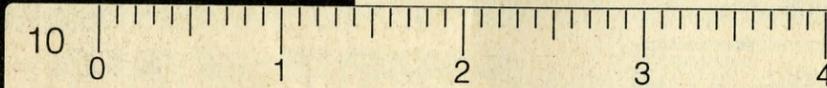
As a pharmacist looking after his customers' health needs, he sees himself as different from a "chain" pharmacist who can go home at the end of a shift. If a child develops a terrible earache in the middle of the night or just got out of the emergency room, Regis is available to go down to the shop for a prescription.

When the question of pet peeves is raised, we find there is a downside to one's "wanting them to call me at home." Regis reluctantly admits, "Over all the years I didn't get to be

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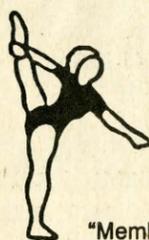
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on time hardly ever for anything because I was held over or just because of the hours . . . kids' events, showing up in my smock or, sometimes, not making it at all." Easy-going, Regis good-naturedly observes that comes with being a pharmacist and owning your own business.

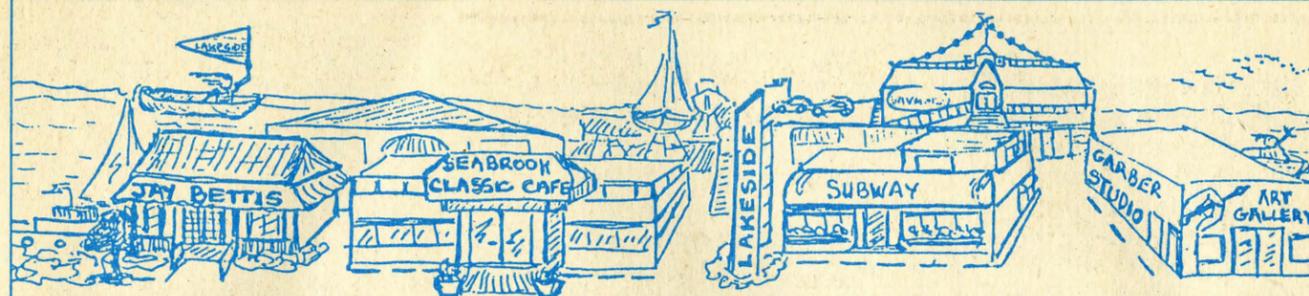
The biggest change in the pharmacy business over the last five years, according to Regis, is that a third party — whether government or insurance carrier — has entered into his relationship with the customer. Since Regis is "locked out" of some insurance plans, he finds he has to explain to longtime clients that he can no longer fill their prescriptions. With third parties out there making the rules, neither he nor his customers can do anything about it. With someone else telling him how he can be the pharmacist or what he can do, he says it becomes just a job, not a profession.

The conversation turns to Seabrook. Sally feels people in a small community should try to improve it, and not just from a monetary standpoint. Rather, all should work hard to make a difference in people's lives. Regis adds that he saw a great community spirit when Hurricane Alicia came [in 1983]. "Why can't we do it when there isn't a disaster?"

Sally believes the city government should be a catalyst for development and encouraging new businesses. And while Seabrook is enjoying an upsurge in residential growth, more businesses are needed to give the rest of the bay area a reason for coming to Seabrook. Regis expresses disappointment that people from places like Nassau Bay, Brook Forest or Webster sometimes won't come to shop in Seabrook, thinking it is too far.

Both agree that the NASA Road 1 construction is very badly needed and think it will be a traffic nightmare, but are convinced that their faithful customers will make every effort to get around the barriers. Regis says his bigger concern is with NASA cutbacks.

For fun, Regis is still into sports;



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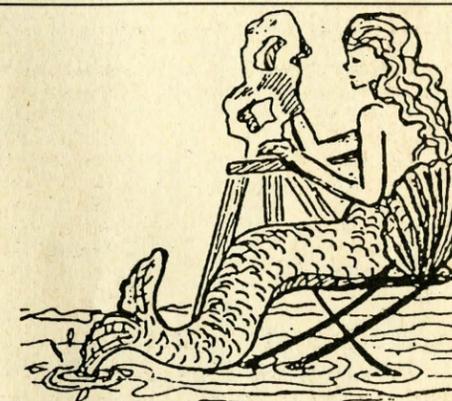
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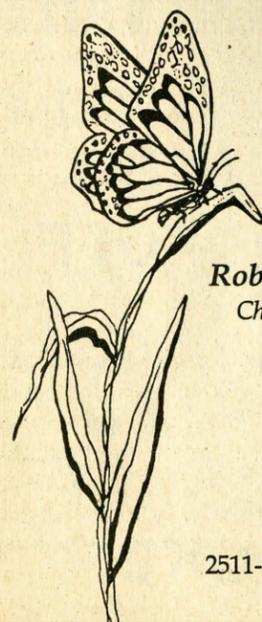
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both play tennis, he occasionally golfs. Sally likes to garden, decorate, still does some arts and crafts, loves to shop and collects recipes. Travel is important to both, so they try to make the most out of their long weekends off. And [haven't I heard this from small business owners before?], "Our biggest problem over the years is we really never had a vacation, so to speak. People think our trip to market is a vacation. Change of pace, yes, but we are really working hard and planning for

next year."

The Wrobleskis have two children. Sheryl is using her degree in architecture, working for a structural engineering firm in Houston. Son Gregg graduates from UT next spring with a degree in the biological sciences, zoology. His plans are to go to graduate school, looking to do something with the genetics research end of the sciences. Gregg worked two summers in the store, finding out how a pharmacy is run. Over the years, both Sheryl and Gregg got a

firsthand view of the trials and tribulations of what a small-business owner goes through! Sally says they have heard the good and the bad.

Easy-going Regis says the only thing keeping him working is the people coming into the store every day. This makes the long hours bearable — 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

Says Regis, "Work in general and especially owning a business is a major sacrifice. But even with all those social things we missed over the years, even with the frustration, we feel blessed with the positive things that have come out of owning the store, our good friends in Seabrook and the bay area."

*Mary Sue Anton is a freelance writer and a native Missourian. She publishes a quarterly family newsletter and is writing a family history for her maternal grandparents' descendants. She and her husband Arthur, who has practiced family medicine in Seabrook for 23 years, are parents of three grown children and grandparents of seven-year-old Marta Anton of Santa Fe, NM. Mary Sue is currently president of the Bay Area Writers League.*

# Seabrook's 1993 'Top Seed' Brad Emel

By Jayme Myers

In 1988, the Southeast Economic Development Commission (SEED)

established a Business of the Year award for each of its seven member communities: Seabrook, La Porte, Deer Park, Pasadena, South Houston, Pearland and the Southbelt-Ellington area. Businesses are judged from both economic involvement and previous "track record" experience. Items of particular consideration are:

- 1) Number of employees and/or related jobs created;
- 2) Overall economic impact and importance to area;
- 3) Involvement by owner/management and employees in local chamber, civic and other worthwhile community projects.

Previous Seabrook entrepreneurs

honored with this award were: Emery Waite, Emery's Seafood, 1988; Frank and Nancy Jureczki, Frank's Shrimp Hut, 1989; Marian

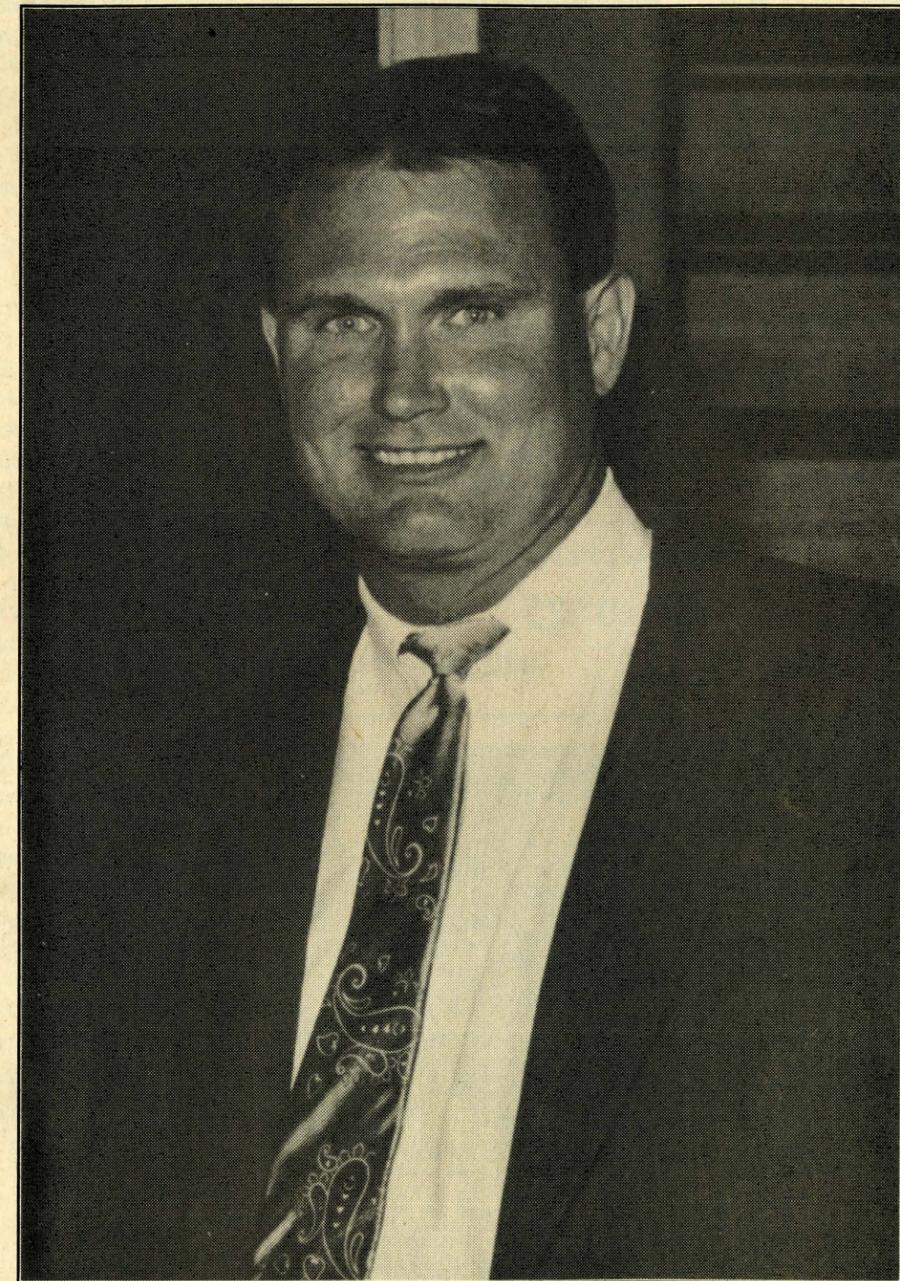
Kidd, Kidd Properties, 1990; Bill Loomer, Clear Creek Equipment Co., 1991; and Barbara Myers, Seabrook House of Flowers, 1992.

It is with pride that the Seabrook Association presents to you the 1993 SEED Business of the Year — Brad Emel and the Classic Cafe.

★★★

One would have to agree that the Seabrook Classic Cafe has quite an impressive following, with guests like Teri Garr, Gene Hackman, Lou Ferrigno, Richard "Racehorse" Haynes and Dr. Red Duke, just to name a few.

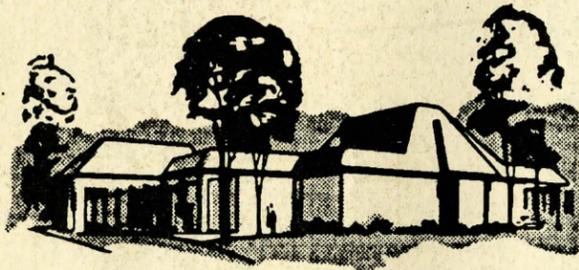
What attracts these personalities, along with the rest of the public who frequent the Classic Cafe on a regular basis? Some might say it's the food; others, the atmosphere — but most would agree that the owner, Brad Emel, has everything to do



*'The beauty of my business is the people I have met; these people bring in others... I have thousands of people I would consider my friends.'*

— Brad Emel

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That's not a surprise when you look at Brad's 18 years of experience in the restaurant industry. He has been trained by some of the best, including Frank Tolbert of Tolbert's Restaurant, and has trained some of the best (Brad helped teach Neal of Neal's Ice Cream how to make homemade ice cream!) And now Brad owns and manages 1993's Business of the Year! But it didn't happen overnight.

It all started in college at Okla-

homa University when Brad began to realize the prospect of business suits and 8-5 hours was not for him. He accepted an invitation to move from Oklahoma to Dallas, where he was first introduced to the restaurant business.

"Some friends were building a new theme restaurant with a huge bar, dancing and live entertainment." Brad began working at the restaurant, making minimum wage and living in an efficiency. He reflects, "I learned so much there, not just about

restaurant work, but about being on my own."

The bar manager, the chef and the floor manager became his best friends. "I couldn't have had better teachers; that's really how I learned the business. Since my car wasn't running," Brad laughs, "I was pretty much confined to the area. This was okay, though, because I could walk to the restaurant where I wanted to spend all my days off, anyway!"

He would spend hours in the kitchen. "I was fascinated by it," Brad recalls. "I started as a busboy, then became a bartender; and as my career progressed, the kitchen is really where I got involved."

Brad eventually went to work at another restaurant, and from there met a man who was building a restaurant, very similar to a Chili's. Brad was hired to manage the kitchen. "I didn't know exactly what it would entail," Brad admits, "but I did it, and it worked! That's when I decided there was more to this industry than what the public perceives."

While constructing a restaurant in Carmel, Brad realized his expertise was in being able to take the layout of a kitchen and a menu, and design that kitchen for the menu. He explained that this involves knowing your equipment, space and monetary limitations (and being able to tell the owner of the restaurant tactfully that certain things just aren't possible). "The trick is, limit a menu to where you're using five or six main items. For example, use chicken, pork chops, beef and shrimp to create 50 different entrees, instead of using 15 to 20 items. This saves space in the kitchen and makes it easier to get the food out in a timely manner."

Brad was able to experience owning his own restaurant back in Oklahoma, before relocating to Houston and returning to school. But he couldn't stay away from the restaurant business for long, and ended up working a shift at a Chili's restaurant. Ultimately, Brad and the manager at Chili's relocated to League City where they opened the 402 Main Street Grill. The 402, with its burgers, fries and chalkboard menus was a success, and in May of

1985, Brad, his partner and By Baldrige embarked on a new prospect that was to become the Seabrook Classic Cafe.

The Classic Cafe opened its doors on October 1, 1985. Originally the menu consisted mostly of Cajun dishes with chips instead of fries, and handheld menus versus chalkboards — this lasted about two months. "People went berserk when they realized the Classic wasn't another 402!" Brad exclaims. Because he and his partner realized you have to be flexible and willing to change to provide what people want, they made some adjustments to meet the public's demands. And the rest is history.

In 1988, the Classic's business "exploded." According to Brad, any restaurant needs about three years to build a customer base, "then once you get busy, it's easy! The food is fresh because you're turning it over, and the service is better because seating tables at a steady pace (versus 10 all at once) is easier on the kitchen."

"The first three years were more than tough. Every month we were

hanging on by a shoestring. The economy was awful!

"I know now there is no way I could have kept the doors open without the business savvy of my partner By Baldrige," Brad continues. "By's hard-nosed business sense and trouble-shooting abilities left us in the black month after month. The Classic is as much his success as mine. Without him, we would not have made it. Even during the good times, he and Judy Young, our bookkeeper, did not ever let me forget this is a business and must be maintained as one."

Brad realizes that investing in a restaurant is a risky business but, he points out, "People do eat — they'll always eat!"

When asked what he thinks makes the Classic Cafe such a success, Brad credits the location and menu, but mostly the restaurant's easy atmosphere and consistently good food. What Brad hears the most from his customers is that after a hard day, the Classic is a hassle-free, dependable place to go because they

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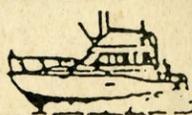
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know they can expect good food every time.

"People eat out more often now than in the past," Brad comments. "There are regular customers at the Classic, some that eat four to five meals a week with us."

Brad analyzes the menu on a regular basis to be sure he is meeting his customers' preferences. According to Brad, the trend has definitely moved toward chicken and pasta — lighter dishes. The Classic's menu does include light choices for those customers who are trying to eat healthier. "But," Brad laughs, "the two most fattening things on the menu are always the biggest sellers." (You guessed it — the chicken-fried steak and fried shrimp!) The restaurant also has a bar, known as the Back Door Bar because of the entrance at the rear of the restaurant.

Brad adds that the relationships he has with his customers truly make the Classic Cafe what it is. Anyone who eats there knows they can probably expect to see Brad from time to time, making his way from table to table to visit with each of his guests. Brad admits that while he may not know everyone's name, he does remember where they sat, what they ate and what he talked with them about. "It's so important to have a relationship with the customer. That way they will talk to me if there is ever anything wrong; then I can fix it!"

According to Brad, this goes for his employees, too. "My theory is that if your employees are happy (I currently have 48 employees at the restaurant), then your customers are happy. I think my employees know they can come to me if they ever need anything."

Brad sums up his business philosophy by explaining, "To make things work in a business, you have to be available. You have to have a leadership quality that enables you to give people the right answer (which may not necessarily be what they want to hear), and at the same time, remain friends so that you can still listen to what they have to say."

The Classic Cafe is actively involved in the community of Seabrook. When asked about the

Classic's activities, Brad is quick to respond: "Every December the restaurant is closed so that a huge meal can be prepared and served buffet-style to the community. There's no charge, but donations are collected and passed on to the Ed White Youth Center." Brad thinks this is probably the staff's favorite community service. "We all get dressed up for the dinner, and then afterward the employees have their Christmas party."

But what about the Mullets?

"The Mullets," Brad chuckles, "is a civic group made up of Back Door Bar regulars who wanted to do something for the community." More formally known as the Benevolent Order of Mullets (BOOM — which Brad points out is appropriate since most of the members are baby-boomers), the group has adopted a piece of the highway, participates in the Toys for Tots campaign, and is currently working on a clothing drive for kids returning to school. Apparently this group, which evolved from regular gatherings in the bar, has become quite a reputable organization!

So what's next, Brad?

"I really like to do this," he responds, waving a hand at the newly remodeled interior of his home. For someone who doesn't know Brad, seeing the impressive remodeling would lead them to believe he is a professional architect rather than the owner of a successful restaurant.

He admits that a career change at this point in his life is not out of the question. "I'd like to do carpentry work for other people. I have built every restaurant I have owned, or remodeled it somewhat. With the friends and contacts I've made over the years, maybe I'll try out the contracting business." But he's quick to add that he will probably always keep the Classic Cafe. "It's like my child; I literally built it with another carpenter. I was there for the placing of every ceiling tile, every piece of wood — I don't think I could ever sell it."

When asked if he has considered opening another Classic Cafe in a different location, Brad replies that,

no, he doesn't think he'll open another restaurant. He admits that consulting or building a restaurant for someone else is a possibility, but the Classic Cafe is enough. Brad explains that the monetary gain isn't important enough to him; what is important is to always be able to remain creative. Reflecting on the events of his life, Brad realizes that whenever he has been backed into a corner, he has enjoyed his work the most. "I guess because I was challenged to be creative and be my best."

Brad has definitely shown his talent for identifying a need and satisfying it. So whether you need a consultant for some remodeling or a source for a good chicken-fried steak, you can always turn to Brad!

*Formerly a 16-year resident of Seabrook, Jayme Myers now lives and works in Dallas, Texas. A 1991 graduate of Texas A&M University, Jayme is a corporate health benefits administrator at Texas Instruments. While her job and activities in Dallas keep her busy, Jayme returns to Seabrook often to see her family.*

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# MISS LAURA'S STORIES

By Sue Harral

First began to hear them as we sat for hours waiting for the eight to 10 voters to come and cast their ballots in a Harris County School Board election in the 1970s. We were there for about 12 hours with little to do but talk about her favorite subject — Seabrook of long ago. We served as clerks for several years, and I must say I really looked forward to those cold January days and those stories. Miss Laura Palm's stories were a real treasure from Seabrook's past.

I was new to our community, but I had a real interest in learning about the town I was to call my home. Miss Laura, sometimes called the "bicycle lady" by local residents, was kind enough to answer my every question. She had long been a part of Seabrook, and had seen this community grow from a tiny bayside resort to a city of over 5,000 residents when she died in 1983. Miss Laura had a clear, sharp memory and personally knew the families of many of Seabrook's oldest residents.

At first I didn't do much but just listen. The stories were fascinating ... it was hard to picture such a quiet community, yet through Laura's eyes I could see the richness in the daily lives of the people who chose to make this their home. When she began to tell her stories, each event or person seemed to come alive. At times, I guess, she lived more in the past than in the present or in the future.

As I said, all I did at first was listen. The next January I came prepared with paper and pencil. I later was able to tape some of her conversation. Those long, cold January days that we spent passing the time away were my introduction to Seabrook history.

The Palm family owned a store, the first store in Seabrook. Laura worked in that store and came in

contact with many of the early families that helped to build our community. The Palm family came from Louisiana in the mid-1800s. Laura's visits to relatives there brought her much pleasure. One of her grandfathers worked in the mint in New Orleans. At one time she showed me a small set of weights her grandfather had used in his job at the mint. When Laura's family chose to move to Seabrook, they had great hopes for the future of the area. They later shared with Laura that the family could see the beginning of a large port city here. Imagine, that dream even before the city of Houston became what it is today!

The Palm brothers' store was located at the present-day site of Frank's Shrimp Hut. A two-story structure, at one time it housed the local post office. The Palm brothers sold goods to the local residents, and also rented transportation to those who would disembark at the local Seabrook train station and travel to the bayside resort establishments. Laura's father built a large two-story home near the railroad tracks behind the store's location. Laura grew up in that home and lived there until her death. A fire destroyed the home in the 1980s. Laura's aunt and uncle also owned a residence near by.

Laura's mother was a school teacher who came here in 1898. For a while she boarded in El Jardin (Red Bluff) in the Seureau home. She walked from this home to the school in Seabrook. Doc Nicholson eventually loaned her a horse to help her through the saw grass, making it easier to travel to school. Laura's mother and one of the Palm brothers were married, and Laura was born around 1900. Growing up in the two-story house on the railroad track, she played with many of the children of the seasonal residents who came from Houston to spend the summer.

Laura must have been a capable student. She attended public school for a while, but was also home-

<sup>Sue</sup> schooled by her mother. Eventually she traveled daily to a high school in Houston on the Suburban. The train schedule was still in her memory after some 60-odd years. According to Laura, the schedule was something like this:

- 6:20 a.m. - Early morning train  
President's Train
- 8:00 a.m. - Leisure Trip  
One came up from Galveston about 8:00 a.m.
- 12 Noon- Made a roundtrip  
Train left Houston at 5:15 and arrived here at 7:00
- 8:00 p.m. - The night train came at 8:00 and it was a straight route

It is difficult to imagine a daily train ride into Houston. Although Laura seemed to really enjoy this touch with life outside of Seabrook, at times it must have been trying. After the high school she attended burned down, she had to travel much farther. She remembered traveling in sleet and in rain.

Laura also carried local products on her trips into Houston. Mr. McGuire was a conductor on the Interurban and he really liked fresh eggs ... Al Palm had chickens. Mr. McGuire wanted one dozen eggs, two times a week. For two years Laura took great pride in carrying this local product to Houston — during that time she never broke an egg. Laura remembered that she got off the train at San Jacinto and Congress. As she came up San Jacinto to Congress across from the courthouse, there was a pawn shop. It was there she left those eggs for Mr. McGuire.

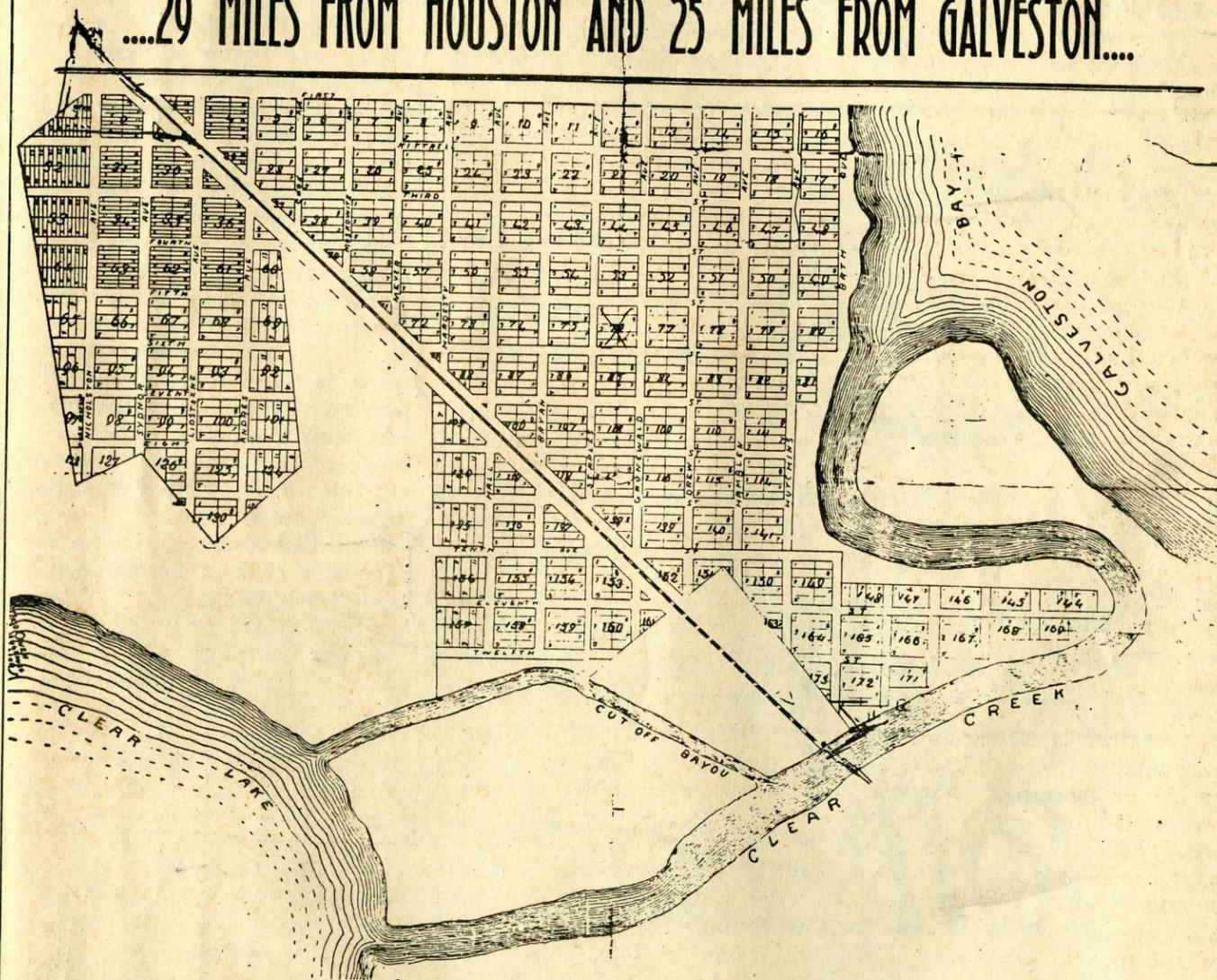
Laura's mind held so many memories. Once I took a copy of the book *Arrows to Astronauts* by Doris Kenyon to one of our visits; she had detailed stories to tell of many of the pictures.

Seabrook had many old large homes. The old Sage home was

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located on property that is now owned by Lakewood Yacht Club. The front part of the point of land where the house once stood has been completely washed out. The Rutgers Hotel, built after 1900 by Charles Christian Rutgers, was also located where the Lakewood Yacht Club is. The large oak trees that stood in front of the old home site were brought as acorns from the city park in New Orleans. The hotel was used for a while and then it closed, remaining vacant for a period and

then used as a boys' home. When the hotel closed there was a large fish pond on the grounds full of goldfish. Many Seabrook children were given a goldfish from that pond.

Seabrook once had a park with a pavilion long before there was one at Sylvan Beach, in LaPorte. It was located near the present-day Miramar Park swimming pool. Situated in the middle of the park with a fence surrounding the area, the pavilion was used for dancing

and soft drinks were served. Entertainment was needed and it was not supported by the local people. The pavilion built by the Palm brothers was closed long before Sylvan Beach began its fun-filled days.

I had no idea that a battle was fought in Seabrook, a mock battle that is. This special battle occurred during World War I when soldiers were stationed in the area between Galveston and Texas City. The mock battle took place in March; the Galveston group drove to Texas City and brought the entire group to our area. The weather was very rainy and cold, and the local area was covered with pup tents. A soldier who was sick with the flu asked if he could stay in the Palm's barn. Laura's father agreed, if the young man would not smoke. When Mr. Palm went to check on the fellow, he found 50 soldiers camping in the warm dry barn. When the practice battle took place somewhere near Red Bluff, bridges were burned by marking them with blue or red chalk. It seemed as if every little boy in Seabrook was there.

Miss Laura was one of the last secretaries of the original Seabrook library that was built in 1910. She very carefully kept all the records which contained all receipts, plans and membership lists. Laura loved books and could remember the names and colors of the books that were placed in the library. We have these records today because she so generously shared them.

Seabrook continues to change — the Seabrook of today is not the Seabrook of Miss Laura Palm's time. Miss Laura's stories have given us a picture of early days, which is important in preserving our local heritage... Thank you, Miss Laura!

*Sue Harral is a fourth-grade teacher at James F. Bay Elementary in Seabrook. Born in Oxford, Mississippi, she has lived in Seabrook for 18 years. Sue loves Texas history and does genealogical research in her spare time. She is a member of the Seabrook Association and a charter member of the Clear Lake Heritage Society and the Bluebonnet Trails Chapter of 17th Century Colonial Dames.*

# Seabrook Police Department

## Short On History... Long On Expertise And Dedication To The Community

By Carolyn Pepping

High quality of life in a community — something everyone wants. Few would disagree that the quality of life in any growing community can be greatly enhanced by skillful law enforcement that lends invaluable support to the everyday life of each member of the community.

Because of the positive police protection that is at the beck and call of each citizen, we sleep well at night in 1993 Seabrook, and feel comfortable going for an evening walk through the city or neighborhood. The news media shouts daily that this is not the case in every community. But Seabrook, over the years, has worked to maintain treasured personal safety, even after the population explosion experienced upon the arrival of NASA in the bay area in the early '60s and subsequent growth.

### Early Law Enforcement in Seabrook

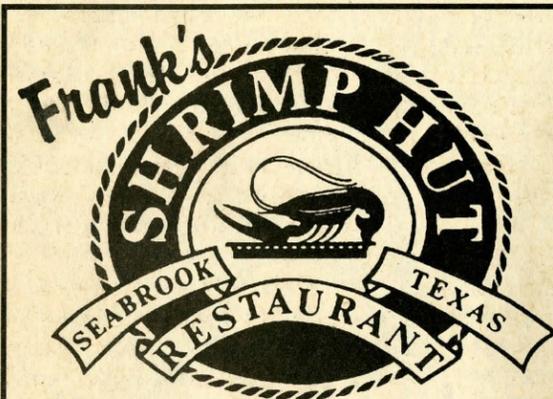
Prior to 1962, Seabrook's law enforcement was provided by the Texas Highway Patrol along Highway 146 (Gus Wolf and G.I. Weatherford), the Harris County Sheriff's Department and the state Constable's office in La Porte (Jake Bussey), Harris County Resident Deputy Ellis Ebarb, several citizens authorized as sheriff's deputies such as John Ballentine Sr., part-time Constable's Deputy Al Williams, and the citizens themselves.

The tiny unincorporated community of Seabrook was such during the first 60 years of this century that everyone knew everyone else. Strangers were easily recognized and mostly came down to the bay on weekends. Families helped each other out and socialized at festivities such as Saturday evening dances (sometimes held in the library build-

ing, where Brown's Antiques is located today). They went fishing together. They met at the library and at church. They reared their children together, had one elementary school in town and sent the children down the road to Webster for high school.

As Sally Woodard remembers, "Everybody looked out for each other's children. We had family nights at the Community House and never locked our doors at night. We could even vacation and not lock up our houses. We were such a nice little town, we didn't need a policeman."

John Ballentine Jr. remembers that his dad (a reserve deputy sheriff) helped out on occasion if there was a problem (such as a rare scuffle at the Saturday night dance). He also remembers that telephone communication from Seabrook to La Porte (where Constable Bussey could be reached) was an interesting experi-



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Seabrook Police Department 1969: Dispatchers Jack Hastings, George Williams, Marlita Jones; Relief Patrolman Bert McAbee; Dispatcher Ethel Robinson; and Chief Tommy Lee. Back row: Patrolmen Bob Heitman, Bob Sisson, James Jackson, John Cook and J.B. Cucco.

ence via a party line to about eight people. Also, the phone lines were of bare wire, traveled only short distances, and if wet from rain or fog were full of static or dead. "Seabrook did not have telephone service that was good until around 1945," states Ballentine.

Jake Bussey, former constable working from La Porte for 36 years (Shriner, 33rd-degree Mason, Salt Grass Trail boss and participant), remembers Seabrook as "a really nice small community blessed with a nice flock of pelicans . . . dignified birds."

Longtime residents of Seabrook all seem to remember Jake Bussey, as he was a "top gun" in the area . . . and is even today, their friend. They could count on him. Jake was on call 24 hours a day as Harris County sheriff's deputy and then as a state constable. Constable Jake Bussey grew to be, as one of his many award certificates says, "an institution" in the area. Over the years, he volunteered his time to lead funeral processions, has been known to babysit a Seabrook resident's three small children for a short while by riding them along the waterfront in the back of

his patrol car, and says that the most trouble Seabrook ever gave him was during hurricanes. He was always available during storms to direct traffic and lend support and protection.

"The native people of Seabrook never knew what a law was," Jake says. "There were no (city) laws there, and they didn't have to have them. If a man wanted to get drunk, well, he got drunk . . . as long as he was nice. But if they ever got out of line and got to be an aggravation, some of the natives took care of it. They didn't need any laws. They took care of their own business pretty good. There were some ladies that were pretty good along those lines," he muses.

But law support was available during the times it was needed, and everyone knew it.

### Seabrook's First Police Department

Seabrook incorporated as a city in 1961, and the Seabrook Police Department was established in 1962; James P. (Jim) Richards Sr. was named Seabrook's first police chief. Already a longtime Seabrook resident, 27-year-old Jim was a Korean

War veteran and a seasoned accident investigator with the Houston Police Department. Jim Richards remembers that Webster named Doug Poller to be its first chief of police that same year.

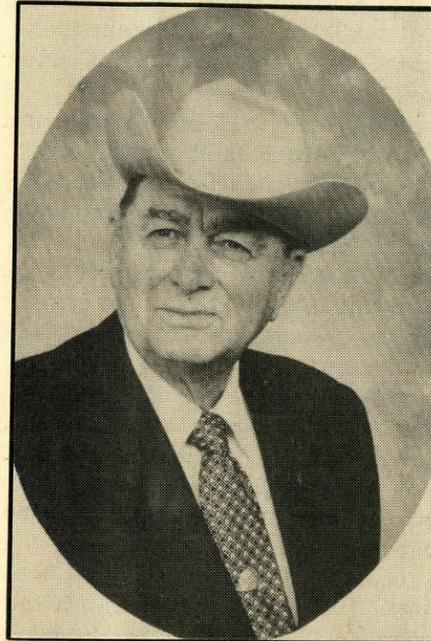
What was it like to be first police chief? Jim Richards at first worked alone using his personal car, accompanied by his K-9 dog, Duke. His office was the one room on the corner of the Community House (now next to the Fire Department building). As his car had no police radio, all communications went to his home. Seabrook (population about 300) was recovering from Hurricane Carla's September 1961 damage and NASA Road 1 had not been raised. All was darkness between Seabrook and Webster at night except for the county park and the Harris County Boys Home, which was across the street from the park. What is now the city of Nassau Bay was a Charlais cattle ranch.

There was only one traffic light in Seabrook in 1962, located at Red Bluff Road and Highway 146. Red Bluff, past Taylor Lake, was a "hump-back wagontrail" road that residents knew to avoid after dark, as it was just country pasture area and there was not enough traffic that one could get help, if needed. Richards saw the traffic signals at Highway 146 and NASA Road 1 change from a four-way stop to a two-way stop, and finally, to a stop light. The Clear Creek Channel bridge was still a drawbridge, and Seabrook had two gas stations (one Texaco and one Humble).

Jim Richards recalls wonderful support from Constable Jake Bussey, Deputy Ellis Ebarb from the Shore Acres area, Deputy Sheriff Lee Norman from Galveston County, Cooter Gale, Sid Brummerhop and many, many other citizens. During the early days of his office, citizens often volunteered to ride with him on duty, something Jim considered to be extremely helpful. Eventually, Richards was provided a police car with a "genuine" Motorola radio in it. It could communicate to La Porte and a little beyond. Any prisoners had to be transported to La Porte as

Seabrook had no jail facilities.

One day in 1964, Chief Richards, department heads from the FBI, the Texas Rangers, Houston officers, officers from Beaumont, and Deputy Sheriff Lee Norman from Galveston County gathered in the tiny one-room office in the corner of the Community House to plan the capture of a safe-cracking and burglary team responsible for crimes over a three-state area. The *Galveston Daily Times* declared it "a story of a



Former Constable Jake Bussey provided law enforcement services to Seabrook over a 36-year period that began in 1945.

Sherlock Holmes-type investigation coupled with a James Bond spy thriller." Chief J.P. Richards touched off this massive investigation. After a grocery store burglary here in Seabrook, he kept tabs on the gang's activity throughout the state for four months by noting the locations of unsolved burglaries having similar characteristics, on a state highway map. The crackdown resulted in the arrest of the eight ringleaders who had done \$300,000 to \$400,000 in property damage while trying to rip into safes to obtain over \$100,000 in cash and checks.

During the influx of NASA in 1963 and 1964, Chief Richards worked closely with NASA and its people,

helping to resolve problems such a rapid increase in population was bound to create. Also, even at that time, there were drugs being flown in and stashed in "safe" houses.

### Change

By the time Jim left the department in 1965 to work for U.S. Industrial Chemical Company (eight hours a day), he had a secretary whom he still praises highly (Mrs. O.L. Morrison); and two assistants, Al Cordani and A.L. (Bill) Wilcox.

Wilcox became Seabrook's second police chief.

During Chief Wilcox's term, the Department moved from the Community House to its present quarters (the former Water District building) where three cells were later added.

Following Bill Wilcox as chief were Chief Tommy Lee, Chief Joe Huntley and Chief Andy Anderson. Each added his own special expertise to the department, providing Seabrook with protection that allowed the city to maintain its

**KNOW YOUR CITY POLICE OFFICERS - THEY ARE YOUR FRIENDS!**

**SEABROOK, TEXAS**

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The Seabrook Police Department and the Citizens of Seabrook are concerned with your safety. For this reason these safety booklets and safety materials have been made possible for your use through the courtesy of the business firms whose names are listed on the covers.

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If you have a problem consult your Police Officer he is your friend and glad to be of service to you.

Sincerely,  
A.L. Wilcox  
Police Chief

Seabrook's second police chief, Chief A. L. Wilcox, and others in his department. This was part of an educational brochure distributed in the Seabrook schools in the late '60s.

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*Patsy Taylor*

*Betty Shaws*

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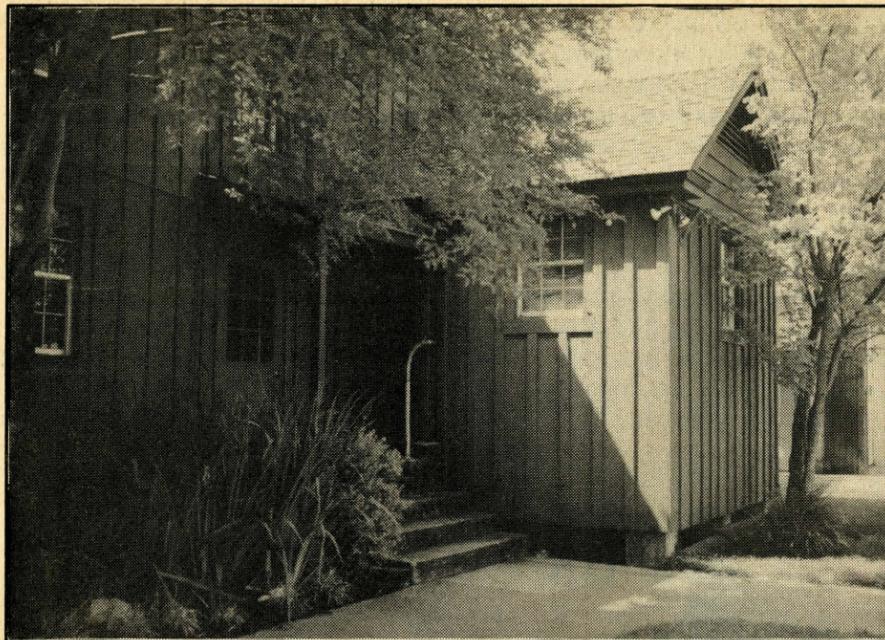
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The first police chief's office was a room in the corner of the Community House.

peaceful, laid-back style. Seabrook grew, surrounded by the Clear Lake area which grew even faster. Traffic increased, new businesses were established, new homes and two more schools were built in Seabrook.

### Into the Present

Seabrook's present chief, R. W. "Bill" Kerber, became chief of police in 1979 at age 29. Chief Kerber's key motto around the Police Department is: "We are a full-service department." He states, "We'll do anything that's within our powers and within our abilities within the law to assist citizens in doing what needs to be done."

Bill Kerber puts major emphasis on creating law enforcement with a positive impact. "Number one is positive public relations," he comments. The chief mentions that because of the nature of the job, about 99 percent of the time when an officer meets a citizen, it will be in a negative situation of some type: traffic citation, dog, noise, drug or vandalism problems, etc. "It just takes a real effort to turn that (situation) around," he says. "I tell my people if they can have somebody sincerely thank them for issuing them a ticket, then they've done their job. It's difficult to do, but it can be done."

As the old saying goes, the proof

of the pudding is in the eating. The success of the Seabrook Police Department's "full-service" policy can be discovered by talking to Seabrook citizens, and by observing happenings throughout the years that could have been completely negative for the community but for handling by a positive force and the people of Seabrook.

From 1979 until approximately 1983, Seabrook witnessed problems among fishing interests that involved



Current Seabrook Police Station.

Vietnamese fishermen, the Klan, rallies, boat burnings, cross burnings, etc. "We had a lot of good people working on it," states Kerber, "but because of time and the temperament of this particular community, we haven't had the violence other communities have had."

His department has had officers in shootouts, has captured people robbing stores with machine guns, and investigated murders such as at the List mansion and another in which, when faced with needing more clues to carry the investigation as far as humanly possible, a psychic was called in for help.

Many tides have ebbed and flowed in Seabrook since the first chief made his rounds. The city's present population is estimated to be 8,032. Each month, the Seabrook Police Department responds to an average of 1,500 calls, averages about 9,000 miles, investigates 18-20 accidents (mostly traffic), and issues from 100 to 150 tickets. It incarcerates about 60 people a month (most are municipal court cases) and handles 40-45 index crimes (homicide, rape robbery, assault, burglary, larceny) per month.

The department has 25 officers (who work 10-hour overlapping shifts) and 15 to 17 vehicles, each equipped with the latest radio equip-

ment, video cameras, radar units and cellular telephones. The Patrol Division has the most officers, but Bill Kerber emphasizes the vital roles also played by the Communications Division, the Investigative Unit (which includes youth services), the Identification Unit (fingerprints/photographs of crime scenes), the warrant officer and the property room officer. He points out that one officer might serve in two or three of these departments.

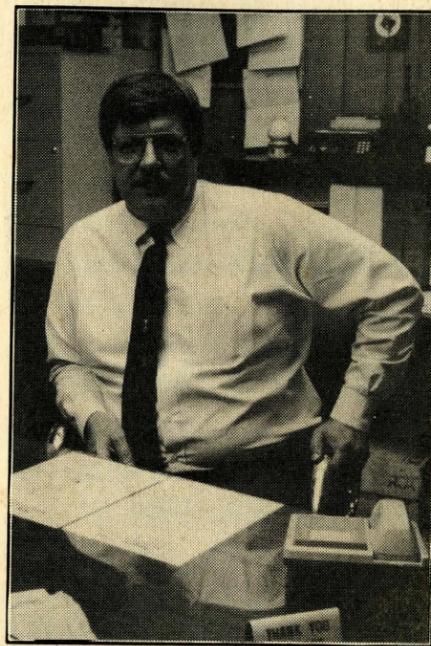
The Seabrook Police Department provides the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program in Seabrook's three schools and has a Vacation Watch program (officers, at a resident's request, check on property while the resident is on vacation and give a full report upon the resident's return). A Community Watch program (to encourage residents to meet their neighbors, get to know them, and call the department when something is wrong in their own areas of Seabrook) is promoted by the department.

This May, the Seabrook Police Officers Association officially kicked off its Partnership Project '93. The project parallels the operation of the Houston Hundred Club, but it is much smaller and dedicates its total activity to projects within the community of Seabrook. Funds collected will be injected into the community of Seabrook through the Seabrook Police Association's participation in and sponsorship of various youth programs such as D.A.R.E. and organized sports at the Ed White Youth Center, and disaster relief programs.

When asked, citizens are quick to recall special involvement from the Seabrook Police Department with praise and appreciation. Besides praise for the D.A.R.E. program (said to really open the students' eyes and give them needed information and counseling), programs such as public self-protection seminars, Public Awareness Day, police station tours for the public, and police presence/participation in PTA-sponsored events such as the bicycle rodeos have created treasured relationships between the community and the department. Officers have donated

time to teach bike safety and control and to provide identification numbers for each bike. Daisies (kindergarten-age Girl Scouts) and other school children have been invited to tour the police station and experience special police car demonstrations.

One citizen remembers calling Chief Kerber a few years ago, frus-



R. W. "Bill" Kerber has been Seabrook Police Chief since 1979.

trated about how difficult it was to see the line markings on Highway 146 in Seabrook on a rainy night. The wet, dark pavement coupled with the glare from lights to make the markings all but invisible. The next day, to the citizen's great surprise and delight, Chief Kerber called back to say he had that day received a notice from the state authorizing road work on Highway 146 in Seabrook and

that the work included lane-marker reflectors. Again, "full service" and much appreciated. He took the time.

Chief Kerber believes in high educational standards for himself and his officers. A graduate of Lamar University and the FBI Academy in Virginia, Bill Kerber hopes to complete studies at the Law Enforcement Management Institute early next year. "If I ever come to work and don't learn something, then I don't need to be coming to work anymore, because as we speak right now, there's some court somewhere making a decision that has an impact on how we do our business down here," states Kerber. The more training (this department) gets, the better off Seabrook will be. Whether that training is here locally or is done in downtown Houston or Baytown, across the state or across the United States, it's only a positive thing for the city to have a representative there."

Though a person does not need a college degree to be an officer, Kerber reminds, "Most people you talk to will agree that you're going to get a better qualified person if you get a person with a good education. The more education, the more well-rounded the employee. It would be nice to be able to require 60 hours of college as some of the larger departments do, but when you do that, you have to pay for that. There is a big range possible, depending on what one can afford."

In Seabrook's Police Department, three officers have bachelor's degrees, two have associate's degrees and one a master's degree. The department provides education incentives.

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**For the Future...**

Bill Kerber recalls that upon graduation from Lamar College in 1972 he talked to Seabrook Chief Joe Huntly about a job on the force. "I was told that (Huntly) didn't think he could hire me because I had a college degree and he felt like a person with a college degree would not stay with a small agency this long. So," grins Kerber, "I find it kind of funny that it all started here and it looks like it might end here. I don't plan on going anywhere unless they run me off."

Seabrook continues to grow. According to the latest *City Update*, "During the first four months of 1993, 52 building permits were issued for single-family detached homes with a total retail value of \$6,857,894." One commercial permit was issued for construction with a retail value of \$300,000. Building and trade permits totaled \$11,915,194.

The Seabrook Police Department is presently housed in the aging converted Water Department building on Meyer Road, which is limited in

office space, contains only three cells, and has served the department since the mid-'60s. However, the City of Seabrook is considering a new municipal building to house expanding city offices as well as the Seabrook Police Department, to be built on the present City Hall site. Citizen input has been invited.

A young Boy Scout in Seabrook, Robert Carrell Jr., recently made his feelings about the worthiness of Seabrook's Police Department very clear. When faced with a special project of his own choosing to earn his Eagle Scout ranking, he chose to recognize the Seabrook Police Department in a special way . . . by organizing a group to landscape the front of the department's building, complete with a handcrafted wooden bench for the weary. Robert states, "I thought maybe they really did need a lot more work (on the building) and didn't feel that they are recognized as much as they need to be."

Treasuring the young as our future, Chief Kerber feels the same way about the really fine youth of our community, and asked the City Council to publicly recognize Robert's civic support with a certificate of appreciation.

Because of the leadership provided by Chief Bill Kerber, the efforts of his officers, and the contributions of prior chiefs and officers, and community support, in 1993 Seabrook enjoys up-to-date experienced expertise from a very positive-oriented police department . . . truly "full service!"

The author wishes to thank James P. Richards Sr., John Ballentine, Sally Woodard, Jake Bussey, Chief Bill Kerber, Robert Carrell Jr., and the many others who contributed information and made interviews possible.

Other references: *The Galveston Daily News*, March 22, 1964, Sect. B, p.1; *City Update*, by City of Seabrook, Vol. 2 No. 1, May 1993.

*Freelance writer Carolyn Pepping has been a Seabrook resident for 27 years. She and husband Lee have reared a son and a daughter, with pride, in Seabrook.*

**ADVERTISERS INDEX**

Ad Gifts .....	12	Susan Edmonson, PC, Attorney at Law..	34	Janice Owens-Re/Max Space Center .....	22
Advent Properties Inc.....	12	Espey, Huston & Associates Inc. ....	38	P S Yachts/Boat Stuff .....	14
All American Automotive .....	26	First Interstate Bank .....	15	Phillip's Performance Diesel.....	25
Angel's Self-Service Station .....	25	Fluffy Stuff Boutique .....	17	Pine Knot Pharmacy-Gifts.....	36
Avant Hair .....	29	Forest Lake Animal Clinic.....	14	Joe Pirtle, Attorney at Law.....	14
Back & Neck Pain Relief Clinic.....	36	Mark Fox Landscaping & Nursery.....	22	Play By Play Sport Bar .....	36
Bancers Marine .....	35	Frank's Shrimp Hut.....	50	Play By Play Quarters.....	36
Batavia Services Inc. ....	25	Jan Garber Studio.....	41	Thomas G. Richards, CPA .....	41
Bay Area Body Shop .....	35	Glory To God Antiques.....	14	Rick's Turtle Club.....	31
Bay Area Electric .....	9	Gregg & Mieszkuc, PC, Attorneys at Law	14	Jack Rowe Funeral Home .....	42
Bay Area Pulmonary Associates.....	57	Gulf Coast Limestone Inc.....	12	S.W. Scale Company .....	25
Bay Area T.V.....	12	Neala Gunderson Catering.....	35	Savages Restaurant.....	47
Bay Chiropractic Clinic .....	46	Hair Artists.....	26	Science Applications International Corp.	C2
Bayshore National Bank.....	31	Honey's Classic Cajun Restaurant .....	16	Dee Scott Insurance Agency .....	35
BFI Waste Disposal.....	28	Tim Hosler, Artist .....	28	Seabrook Check Cashing.....	35
Bill and Marie's Place .....	27	If It's Wood .....	23	Seabrook House of Flowers.....	20
Blue Seas Travel .....	53	Kemah Kopies & Desktop Publishing.....	38	Seabrook Machine .....	25
Boat Shoes Unlimited.....	12	Larry King, Mayor of Seabrook.....	12	Seabrook Montessori School .....	34
Bosone Automotive/Body Shop/Neon		Kiwo America Ltd.....	25	Seabrook Muffler & Brakes.....	40
Warehouse.....	18	Lakeside Dental .....	29	Seabrook Paints Inc.....	34
Brake Masters .....	55	Lakeside Yachting Center .....	41	Seabrook Pet Supply .....	14
F. David Britton, DDS.....	7	Lakewood Landing .....	29	Seabrook Police Officers Association ...	C3
Buddy's Carpetmax/Wanda's Interiors ...	27	Lairson, Stephens & Reimer, CPAs .....	35	Seabrook Produce .....	14
Calligraphy by Lindy.....	37	Laredo's Mexican Restaurant .....	19	Seabrook Shipyard.....	C4
CarpetJoy Cleaning Service .....	17	Paul U. Lee Funeral Home.....	44	Snip's Hair & Nails .....	37
Chapman-Anton Clinic .....	34	Robin J. Lee, ACSW, CSW-ACP .....	41	Space City Graphics .....	20
Perry Christy, CPA.....	34	Joe Lee's Seafood Restaurant.....	12	Spinner's Pizza .....	37
Classic Cafe.....	40	Little Tumblers Gym .....	40	Stebbin's Gallery & Frame Shop .....	12
Clear Creek Equipment Inc. ....	24	Lois M Fashions .....	20	Steve's Supershine .....	35
Clear Lake Construction .....	25	Lone Star Driving School .....	34	Stone's Fitness Stop.....	37
Clear Lake National Bank.....	57	Mario's Italian Restaurant .....	45	Subway Shop.....	41
Coastal Storage.....	34	McDonald's .....	13	T-Bone Tom's .....	14
Competition Marine Service Inc. ....	34	Dick McKinney Insurance-State Farm .....	16	Taylor Boats .....	46
Compressor Supply Company .....	25	Meador Partners Ltd .....	31	Telltales Magazine.....	50
Corrigan Consulting .....	40	Miller's Machine & Welding.....	46	Texas General Store .....	20
Cosmic Wisdom .....	37	Movie Shack II .....	36	Tookie's Restaurant.....	42
The Crab House .....	31	Nam Son Chinese Restaurant.....	37	VZ's Cafe.....	36
Michael R. DeHart, CPA.....	13	Neptune Subs .....	22	Villa Capri Restaurant.....	53
Dennis Locks and Keys/Pack & Send.....	47	Merle Norman Gold Medallion Studio.....	29	Wakefield and Holloway, P.C. ....	46
Eagle Gas & Supply .....	31	Moore & Humphreys.....	35	Waterline Works .....	25
Edmonson & Associates, Real Estate ....	44	Old Seabrook Map .....	6	Ed White Youth Center .....	26

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TO: SEABROOK CELEBRATION COMMITTEE  
FROM: Bill Weaver, Vice President

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*Bill*

## Seabrook Association

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### Thank You . . .

While it's impossible to mention everyone who helped make the 1993 A Day At The Bay magazine a reality, we do want to especially recognize some individuals whose conscientious efforts and long hours contributed to its success:

Once again, airbrush artist extraordinaire "Big Tim" Hosler has produced a cover that displays our Seabrook pelicans at their frolicking best . . . truly indicative of our Pelican Party '93 celebration.

We are indebted to City Councilman and photographer Chris Kuhlman. As usual, Chris came to our aid, providing his professional expertise whenever needed.

Our talented writers — what would we have done without their hours of research and time spent compiling information from Seabrook's past and present? We extend our deepest appreciation to Mary Sue Anton, Rena Bracewell (what a memory!), Jean L. Epperson, Jack Fryday, Sue Harral, Jayme Myers, Carolyn Pepping and Andrew V. Sipocz.

I greatly appreciate Sally Wroblewski and Vinny Schillaci, who took time from their busy days at Pine Knot Pharmacy and Neptune Subs, respectively, to help me with the magazine's advertising sales. Also thanks to Debbie Britton, Jan Brown, Rosebud Caradec, Barbara Gilbert, Bill Loomer, Lynn Miller and Joan Pulley for their assistance.

And, of course, we thank Mike and Kay DuBois and their fine staff at Waterfront Publishing Inc. (Kemah Kopies & Desktop Publishing). Their expertise and technical guidance have again helped to make A Day At The Bay a publication to be proud of.

Certainly not to be overlooked are the area businesses who have supported our efforts. Without this advertising revenue, our magazine would not have been possible.

Thanks again to all!

*Barbara Myers*

Barbara Myers  
Magazine Chairperson

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# Seabrook Shipyard

ON THE "ISLAND" OF JENNINGS  
1900 SHIPYARD DRIVE SEABROOK, TEXAS 77586

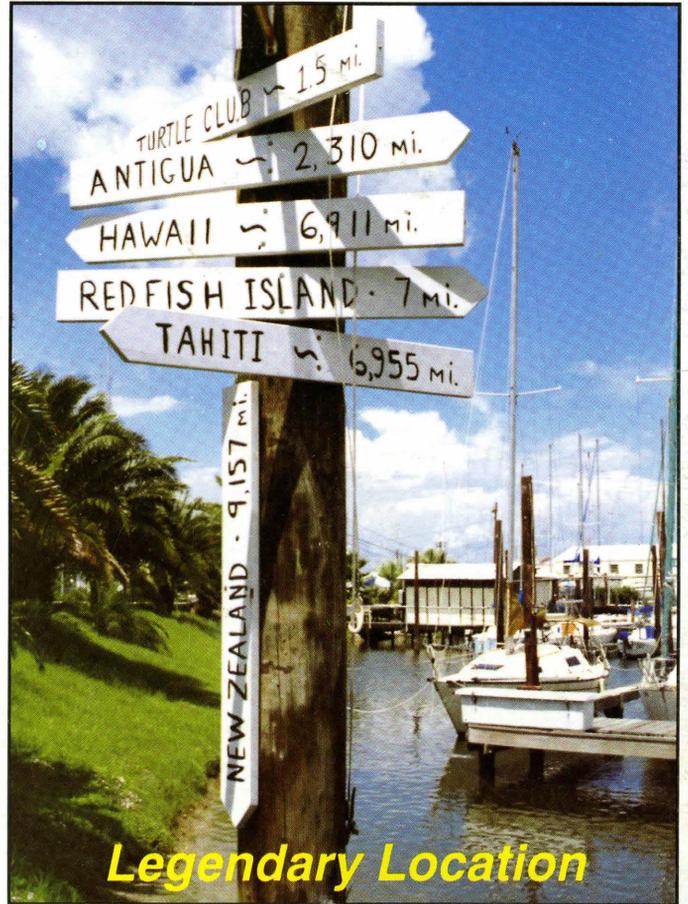
**MARINA OFFICE (713) 474-2586**

- Floating, fixed, covered slips (deep water)
- Storm tested levees
- On-site security
- 5 A/C bath houses
- Swimming pool/clubhouse
- Laundry & picnic facilities
- Ship's store • Fuel Dock
- Waterfront restaurant

**REPAIR OFFICE (713) 474-5186**

Since 1939... "You don't get to be the oldest without being the best!"

- Bottom jobs • Blister repair/prevention
- Fiberglass repair • Yacht restoration
- Carpentry and customizing
- Rigging and electrical installations
- We welcome your insurance bids!



*Legendary Location*

**NEW!!! 30', 40', 45' FLOATING SLIPS**

 <p><b>RON'S YACHT BROKERAGE</b> <i>Since 1983 Serving the Gulf</i> • Financing Available • Trades Considered • Motor Yachts • Trawlers • Sail</p> <p><b>GCRYB MLS (713) 474-5444</b> Fax 713-474-7024 1101 Shipyards Dr. &amp; Hwy. 146 Seabrook, TX 77586</p>	<p><b>Regatta Restaurant</b> <i>Since 1958</i> <b>Fine Food &amp; Cocktails</b> <b>(713) 474-3432</b></p>	<p><b>SACKETT'S Texaco FUEL DOCK</b> 100 Octane Gas • Beer Ice • Sandwiches Live Bait • Offshore Bait &amp; Tackle • CNG REFILLS</p> <p>OPEN 7 DAYS • <b>(713) 474-2719</b></p>	<p><b>BAY WATER SHIP'S STORE</b> <i>Complete Line of Clothing, Gear, Hardware</i> <b>(713) 474-5529</b></p>
<p><b>Seabrook Shipyard</b> <b>OVER 50 YEARS OF SERVICE AND PROTECTION!</b></p>	 <p><b>O'NEAL &amp; SON</b> YACHTS &amp; BOATS POWER &amp; SAIL</p> <p><b>GCRYB MLS (713) 474-2093</b></p> <p>TRADES, FINANCING, WARRANTIES</p>	<p><b>Boats Unlimited</b> Dealer for Newport Sailboats 24'-41' and Com-pac Sailboats 14'-27'</p> <p><i>Good selection of brokerage boats at Seabrook Shipyard.</i> CALL US TODAY <b>(713) 334-2559</b></p>	<p><i>There's Always A Boat Show At</i> <b>Seabrook Shipyard</b></p>

**Quality Endures & Experience Has No Substitute**