

LULING NEWSBOY



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VOLUME 145, NUMBER 13



& SIGNAL



GOOD TIMES ARE HERE AGAIN!

Three-year-old Zariyah Jones enjoyed splashing around opening day at the City Pool, now open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Children under 6 can enter for free but must be accompanied by an adult at all times. The entry fee for those over 6 is \$2.50, payable in cash with passes available for the season.

Photo by Nicole Smith

80 years since D-Day

BY NICOLE SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The largest amphibious invasion in history commenced June 6, 1944, as Allied forces launched a massive assault on the beaches of Normandy, France.

Known as D-Day, this pivotal operation marked a crucial step toward the eventual Allied victory in Europe. The stakes were immense and the impact monumental, making this single day stand out in history even though the war continued for another 11 months.

More than 1,200 aircraft dropped American and British paratroopers into the French countryside before dawn.

These airborne units, including the 82nd and 101st American Airborne Divisions, undertook critical missions such as capturing Sainte-Mere Eglise and securing vital routes to support the main beach landings.

As dawn broke, the sea-borne invasion began. More than 150,000 troops from the United States, Britain, Canada and

► See REMEMBERING D-DAY page 3

Thump preparations under way

BY NICOLE SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Workers with the City of Luling are busy preparing for Thump 2024, scheduled June 27-30.

In one of the most visible signs of the coming festival, city electrical crews hoisted highway banners high over the main thoroughfares through town last week, while others gave the Thump Pavilion a facelift with a fresh coat of paint.

The Main Stage and Beer Garden performance schedules reveal a whopping 17 different bands descending on Luling for the four-day of event starting that Thursday.

June 27 also kicks off the celebration with the prestigious Champion Melon judging, along with the annual Queen's Coronation.

Friday afternoon will

► See THUMP page 3



Banners are hoisted high over the main thoroughfares through town, and the Thump Pavilion is getting a fresh coat of paint in preparation for one of Luling's biggest weekends of the year. This year's Luling Watermelon Thump takes place June 27-30.

Photo by Nicole Smith

Downtown plaza to be constructed

BY NICOLE SMITH
STAFF WRITER

A new plaza is in the works to support local entertainment and community events hosted on Davis Street.

Thanks to a collaboration between the Luling Main Street organization and the Economic Development Corp. board, a \$50,000 project will transform the space between Pecan and Davis into a gathering spot that compliments Rios Park.

"We hear all the time that we need a downtown plaza," said Derek Hall, the project's manager. "This will be a fantastic addition for all the organizations that host events downtown each year."

► See PLAZA page 3

If they could only see it now....

BY BOBBY HORECKA
MANAGING EDITOR

The year was 1962—precisely 62 years ago, in fact—when Frank Brown and Bill "Big Willie" George set out with a huge heap of supplies and a motorless John boat from the sleepy little college town of San Marcos bound for the coast, or so the story goes.

Their intended destination: Corpus Christi, some 500 miles down the sidwinding, backtracking and nearly always treacherous riverways better known as the San Marcos and Guadalupe, all just as the hottest days of the year began to set in.

Well, they made it. Finally. Even if it did take them right at 30 full days to pull it off. Or it might've been 20. Records vary, even on their own website. Whatever the actual number, one

► See TEXAS WATER SAFARI page 4



Find yourself bored some day, go do an image search online for the seeming millions that must exist for the Texas Water Safari, otherwise known as "the world's toughest canoe race." That's precisely what we did for this story, and we decided to share a few of our favorites, giving credit where it's most definitely due as best we can. This image was part of an amazing series of nighttime shots done in 2011 by Mens Journal.

LULING'S SEVEN-DAY FORECAST



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
HIGH LOW 94° 76° SUNNY	HIGH LOW 94° 75° SUNNY	HIGH LOW 94° 76° SUNNY	HIGH LOW 96° 76° SUNNY	HIGH LOW 89° 72° RAIN CHANCES 30%	HIGH LOW 90° 71° SUNNY	HIGH LOW 89° 69° MOSTLY SUNNY

CALDWELL COUNTY'S MEAN KEETCH-BYRAM DROUGHT INDEX FELL TO 217 LAST WEEK. BURN BANS AREN'T ANTICIPATED SOON, AS FIREWORKS SALES WERE JUST APPROVED. FIRE OFFICIALS WON'T USUALLY ENACT BURN BANS UNTIL THE KBDI IS 500 OR GREATER.

newsbits

KSAT-12 looking to dispel rumors after retirements

More than a week after six veteran newscasters announced they were retiring from KSAT-12 in San Antonio, the station's vice president and general manager penned a letter to the public to quash rumors about looming closures soon.

Announcements came last month that Mark Austin, Mike Osterhage, Ursula Pari, David Sears, Jessie Degollado and Marilyn Moritz will retire from the local ABC-affiliate on July 1.

The six broadcasters held a combined 180 years at KSAT, sparking many to speculate on what such an exodus might mean, all at a time when journalism jobs are ever more tenuous.

Writers for the San Antonio Express-News noted that the news came amid several reports linking the slew of retirements to what appeared to be numerous buyouts impacting KSAT's parent company, Graham Media Group, which includes sister station KPRC in Houston, that city's first TV station serving the second-largest television market behind WXIA-TV in Atlanta, Georgia, that's not network owned.

GM Ashley Parker, whose career with the San Antonio TV station spans 20-plus years of her own, confirmed that the station had extended a retirement incentive offer to its senior-most staffers, but she stressed the voluntary nature of the departures, going so far as to say that "no one was forced out."

"While bidding farewell to these giants is bittersweet, it only renews my resolve to honor their legacy by upholding the core principles they embodied," she wrote in her letter, posted to the station's website.

"At KSAT, our dedication to serving San Antonio burns eternal," Parker added. "We owe it to those departing to carry that torch with the same passion that defined their tenures. You have my unwavering promise: At KSAT, you can always expect our utmost in service to better the place we all call home."

In addition to serving San Antonio proper, KSAT 12 also serves as the primary ABC affiliate for this entire region. Its news programming, sports presentations and popular lineup of shows is the ABC channel shown by most area towns' cable providers, and it is typically featured as one of the base channels offered to satellite TV users in our area.

KSAT is one of a dozen so-called "full power" TV stations broadcasting out of San Antonio, but there are officially 33 TV stations broadcasting 161 digital TV channels in the city.

MEMBER
2024

TEXAS PRESS
ASSOCIATION

AWARD WINNER



TEXAS WATER SAFARI FROM PAGE 1

certain: Those boys weren't in it for the speed.

Still, so impressed were they on the overall experience of it all, they just knew that this was an experience everyone needed to try at least once.

So, the following year, in 1963, they set about organizing the first ever Texas Water Safari.

Billed as "the world's toughest canoe race," it sent participants down the same 500 miles they traversed. Or 330 miles, they'd later discover when somebody bothered measuring the course.

That's despite it feeling more like a million miles, once you made it past all the rapids, multiple portages and those awful final miles across wind-whipped bay waters, all in "the relentless soul-sapping Texas heat," to borrow a phrase from Larry Rice, writing in July 2009 for readers of Canoe & Kayak Magazine.

Any style of boat could be used. Just one rule got enforced: No motors. The only two-stroke propulsion allowed came courtesy of the good Lord Himself and the two arms he supplied you with.

Well, that, and you better like the taste of river water. Seems of' Frank and Big Willie had to swill plenty of the stuff themselves. We're supposing they wanted to ensure everyone derived the same thrill of dysentery



Blogger Pam LeBlanc got down and dirty to capture this image because the only way she could have gotten it is bound to look an awful lot like that same pose, just in reverse. She's put together a fabulous collection of images at her blogsite, pamleblancadventures.com. Do check out her work, and let her know it came highly recommended by the Luling Newsboy when you do.

in the wilderness that they picked up along the way.

OK, so maybe it was three rules, but who's really counting anyway? The third: Life jackets were mandatory, I don't care how hot it got.

Makes you want to rush right out, doesn't it?

To sweeten the deal, Frank put together a rather handsome prize package, even by today's standards. Winners could walk away a boat (this

one WITH a motor), a turkey feeder, a camper, town lap prizes and more \$6,000 in cash.

So, how many suckers — we mean, brave and daring individuals — would sign up?

Believe it or not, 126 men and one woman signed on as 58 teams that first year for what they anticipated would be a 12-day race.

It proved every bit as challenging as they said. In fact, just two of the 58 who started the race would even cross the finish line.

When the winner of that first race was announced, it went to the team of Lynn Maughmer and Jim Jones with an official time of 110 hours 35 minutes. That's about 4 ½ days, for those keeping track. Fred Hurd Jr. and Sam Hare, using a sailboat, took second place with a flat 145 hours on the clock (a bit more than 6 days).

Tomorrow, as teams gather for check in at the 61st official Texas Water Safari, it will see well over 300 racers participating as 172 teams, plus scores of support personnel who are tasked with keeping tabs on their team and supplying their paddlers with fresh foodstuffs, water and ice.

Seems the dysentery didn't go over quite as well as they might've hoped. Of course, the prize packages are long gone, too, even the turkey feeder.

Nowadays, they do it just for the bragging rights. And not just once a

tain nobody's heard of? Never fear: The race attracts a literal who's who of writers, photographers and publications these days. It's been covered by everyone from the New York Times to Texas Monthly, Men's Health Journal to Vanity Fair, The Guardian in the United Kingdom to the Examiner in San Francisco, and Der Spiegel in Germany to Telemundo out of Brazil.

Much as they always have, racers will launch Saturday morning from the headwaters of the San Marcos and make their way to the coast, though these days they now target the coastal town of Seadrift, some 260 miles downstream.

Even with the more truncated version, it's no less challenging than it ever was. Somewhere around Mile 5 of the race, they hit the confluence of the San Marcos and Blanco rivers, not far from San Marcos proper. Then, it's on to any number of portages, dams, bridges and low water crossings to the unpredictable Guadalupe, some 81 miles into the race just outside Gonzales.

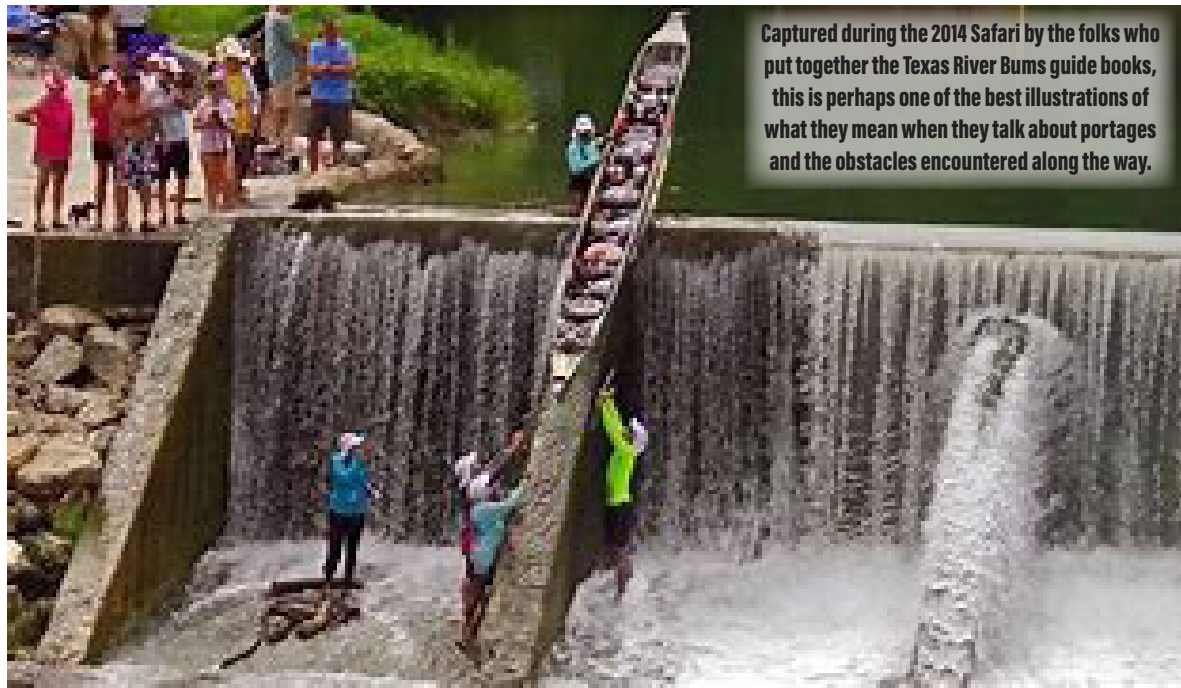
The truly disheartening part at this point has got to come with the knowledge that you're only half done, and ahead are some of the loneliest, most desolate stretches of river most have ever laid eyes on. It's a trek that passes through colorfully named places like Westerfield Crossing, Cottonseed Rapids, Scull's Crossing and Cornfield Cut, places only true river rats even know exist, along with a seeming endless list of towns and barely-still-there bergs: Staples, Fentress, Prairie Lea, Stairtown, Ottine, Palmetto, Sladen, Hochheim, Cheapside, Thomaston, Nursery, Coletto Creek, Tivoli and Traylor Cut, to name but a few.

Then, with 259 miles at your back, it's the final leg. Six grueling miles across San Antonio Bay, with arms that feel like they're jelly, clothes that haven't been dry since this race began and parts of you chafed that you didn't even realize you had as you battle winds and waves and unseen tidal currents. And what do you get for all these efforts?

Mosquitos. All of them. And about a million more besides. Even if you came prepared for such an onslaught, the hum of their collective wings alone is near maddening.

If that weren't daunting enough, there's also a clock ticking. Each destination has a deadline that paddlers must keep to continue. Miss one, and it's so long, buddy, better luck next time. You could probably soldier on, but what's the point, really? Sure, you may cross the finish line, but you're disqualified just the same. In fact, they'd rather you didn't.

It is, after all, a race, even if few are those who even try to win. They strive instead, simply, to finish. Not surprising, really, when you consider the current record holder finished that race in just 29 hours and 46 minutes. That was back in 1997 and involved Bryan Mynar, Fred Mynar, John Dunn, Jerry Cochran, Steve Landick and Solomon Carriere. Ab-solute machines, every one of them, considering they reduced a month-long venture to just over one full day. To cover that amount



TEXAS WATER SAFARI FROM PAGE 1

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Texans Parks & Wildlife's Chase Fountain—shooting for the magazine—captured the above image in 2017 just an hour and a half into that year's Texas Water Safari. Judging from the faces pictured, it looks as though the exertion is already beginning to take its toll. Speaking of chasing fountains, your canoe should not resemble one, in case you were wondering. We spotted the poor fellow in the round, at left, as an open license image in a 2022 album on the photo sharing site Flickr.com. Of course, it probably helps not all that the fellow steering his boat, typically the paddler at the back of the canoe, is not even visible. At right, another Flickr image of celebrants at the finish line.

of ground — 264.7 miles, to be exact — they had to maintain a constant forward motion of roughly 9 mph for the entire 29 hours and change it took them to cross the finish line.

Now the average man, aged 18-30 years, will take about seven and a half minutes to run a mile, four laps, at the track, which is a speed of roughly 8 ½ mph. For women of the same age, that average falls to 8 minutes and 43 seconds, or about 6 ½ mph.

OK, when was the last time you might've done that run? Remember how you huffed and puffed as you completed that final lap? Well, neither of those times is fast enough to even replicate their speed, and they did it for 29 hours straight, all while having to stop regularly to get past a dam/bridge/drowned tree.

If you could run a 4-minute mile, you'd be moving at about 15 mph. That speed could beat them, so long as you kept it up for 29 full hours. Nonstop. And managed to hydrate and replenish what's bound to be massive exertion of basic nutrients, all simultaneous. Good luck!

Still, it can't be that hard, right?

In response, I leave you in the capable hands of Roger Zimmerman, one of the original 126 men to sign on for that first Safari back in 1963 He was even crazy enough to

attempt it solo.

Interestingly, although keeping in touch with the group and volunteering, his name never again graced the lists of entrants in any of the subsequent year's races. He apparently had his fill that first time. The following is his account, in his own words:

The boats started in San Marcos on April 29. There were over 50 log jams on the San Marcos River, many of them tall and massive. There was a mandatory portage "from the downstream vicinity of the Tivoli bridge into Hynes Bay" after a 3-mile log jam below the bridge. A white flag was hung below the logjam on a tree limb marking a 2.2-mile portage into Hynes Bay, increasing the portage to 5.2 miles total.

The white flag portage led across waist deep swamp water, knee deep mud and mosquitoes so thick you could hardly breathe. A number of teams quit during the swamp portage. Only 20 out of 58 teams clocked into Austwell before the official sunrise start of Leg 2 on May 8.

All the bay legs were from official sunrise to official sunset under Coast Guard supervision. The Leg 2 deadline was official sundown at Mills Wharf on May 8 where only 13 teams clocked in. May 9 proved to be the worst day of the race when 13 remaining teams left Mills Wharf at sunrise with small craft warnings flying.

Facing 30-40 knot winds with 6-8 ft waves forced 9 of the 13 teams out of the race in the bay off Rockport with several Coast Guard rescues required.

Only four teams remained in the race at the inland portion of the intracoastal canal leading to Ingleside. Facing 30-40 knot winds as well as strong tidal currents against us in the barge canal that afternoon, two teams including me could make no progress paddling.

We were wading and pulling our boats down the barge canal when time expired. Team 102 used oars and made it to Ingleside with moments to spare. Team 163 used a sail and were able to sail almost dead into the wind down the canal. Both teams finished the fourth leg into Corpus Christi without problems on May 10.

The 1963 Texas Water Safari was the most difficult and challenging thing I have ever attempted. And I almost finished it solo, without any food from Victoria except for what I could find. I still regret not making that three miles into Ingleside.



Caldwell County Community TIRES ONLY

..... Collection Event

WHAT TO BRING FROM HOME

Only these items will be accepted:

Passenger/Light Truck Tires

Tires with rims will **NOT** be accepted.

Skid Steer, Semi-Truck, Tractor Tires will **NOT** be accepted.

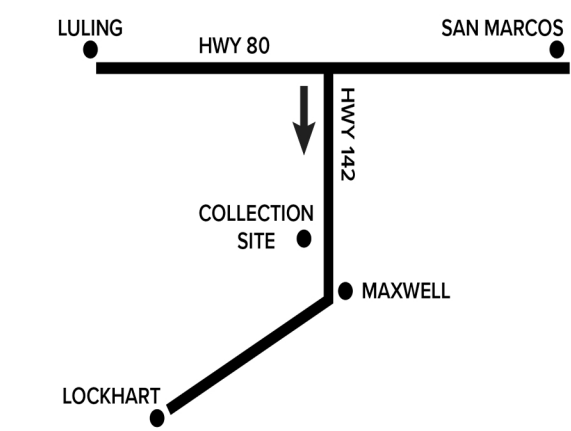
No more than **twenty-five (25) tires** per vehicle will be accepted at the gate.

No Tire Shops

MUST BE A RESIDENT OF CALDWELL COUNTY

Please bring proof of residency such as:

Utility Bill, Property Tax Statement, or Driver's License.



June 8, 2024 Maxwell · 9675 Hwy. 142

Saturday, 7:00 am-12:00 pm (or when the trailers are full)



THE NEWSBOY'S thisweekinsports Mavs, Celtics start NBA finals tonight

BY ERIC L. LUGO SPORTS COLUMNIST

We begin this week with one Texas-based professional team having qualified for their league's championship series and another eliminated from theirs.

We'll talk about the NHL's Dallas Stars in a moment, but first, the good news: The No. 5 seeded Dallas Mavericks eliminated the No. 3 seeded Minnesota Timberwolves in the best-of-7 Western Conference Finals, 4-1, to become the NBA's 2023-24 Western Conference champions.

The Mavs now face the No. 1 seeded Boston Celtics, the Eastern Conference champions, who swept the No. 6 seeded Indiana Pacers in their best-of-7 Eastern Conference Finals series, 4-0.

With the wins by both the Mavericks and Celtics, it's officially now 0-156 for teams that go down 0-3 in any NBA playoff series.

The 2024 NBA Finals promise to be an exciting best-of-seven series between the Mavs and Celtics, and they begin in Boston tonight, (Thursday, June 6). ABC Sports (KVUE/KSAT) is the exclusive home of the NBA Finals, and ESPN radio is a good source if you happen to be out and about and want to hear the games on the radio.

Stars fall in semifinals

The Dallas Stars were unable to overcome the excellent execution of power play opportunities by the Edmonton Oilers on the ice rink last week. They were thus defeated in the best-of-seven NHL Western Conference Finals series 4-2. With the loss, the Stars fell one step shy of playing for the Stanley Cup for the second consecutive season.

In the Eastern Conference, the Florida Panthers defeated the New York Rangers in their best-of-seven series 4-2, and will take on the Oilers in the 2024 Stanley Cup Finals.

The Panthers look to avenge their 2023 Stanley Cup Finals loss to the Vegas Golden Knights. The best-of-seven series will begin Saturday, June 8, and, like the NBA Finals, will be exclusively televised by ABC Sports.

NASCAR standings

Congratulations to Austin Cindric, the winner of last weekend's race at Madison's World Wide Technology Raceway and the Enjoy Illinois 300. It is his first win of the 2024 NASCAR season.

This week the drivers will be heading to California and the Sonoma Raceway for the Toyota/Save Mart 350. The race is broadcast by FOX Sports (KTBC/KABB) beginning at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, June 9.

Pro Soccer plays

Austin FC played their 16th and 17th games of the 2024 season on Wednesday, May 29, and Saturday, June 1,

respectively, and unfortunately dropped both matches.

The Verde were defeated 2-0 by the Portland Timbers in their Wednesday match at Q2 Stadium, then they got beat 5-1 on the road by Western Conference leader Real Salt Lake in their Saturday match.

The losses leave the Verde at 23 points for the season, good for sixth place currently in Major League Soccer's Western Conference, 2 points behind the Vancouver Whitecaps FC in fifth.

The Verde will have the week off before returning Saturday, June 15, when they face the Colorado Rapids on the road. I'll have broadcast information for this match in next week's column.

Major League Baseball

The Houston Astros, after recent success, had a down week as they continued their battle back to the top of the American League West Division in Week 10 of the 2024 season.

The Astros were 26-34 as of press time and still in third place, now 7½ games behind the Seattle Mariners for first place in the American League West.

The defending World Series champion Texas Rangers had a very successful week, improving their record to 29-30 as of press time which puts them in second place, now trailing the Mariners by four games for first place in the A.L. West.

This week the Astros start by hosting the National League's St. Louis Cardinals at Minute Maid Park before hitting the road to take on the Los Angeles Angels in a weekend divisional series. The Rangers will spend this week at Globe Life Field taking on the Detroit Tigers and the National League's San Francisco Giants.

United Football League

Week 10 of the UFL saw the San Antonio Brahmas lose the XFL Conference divisional championship 13-12 when Brahmas kicker Ryan Santos missed a 51-yard field goal with 8 seconds left.

The loss dropped the Brahmas overall record to 7-3 for the season, with the good news being that they will have a chance to avenge their loss when they travel to St. Louis on Sunday to take on the Battlehawks in the inaugural UFL championship game will be on the line.

Other scores for UFL Week 10 were: Birmingham Stallions 20, Michigan Panthers 19; Arlington Renegades 32, DC Defenders 31; Memphis Showboats 19, Houston Roughnecks 12.

The UFL Conference Championship week-end playoffs schedule will be: USFL Conference Championship game—Michigan Panthers at Birmingham Stallions, 2 p.m. Saturday, June 8, on ABC

► See NCAA page 8