

THE HOUSTON HAPPENINGS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Houston Orchid Society, Houston, Texas

Holiday Party, Marvin Gerber and the Annual HJC Plant Auction

By Don Ghiz, President



December brings a sense of excitement as the Holiday's draw near and the weather cools to remind us that it's winter. The HOS has, for the past several years, held its own pre-holiday and pre-new year celebration with a lively plant auction. The proceeds will benefit the Houston Judging Center and the auctioneer is nobody other than the REMARrkable Marvin Gerber.

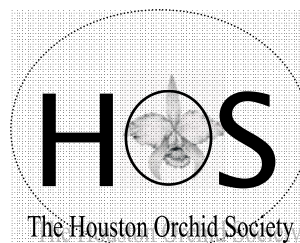
Marvin has served in almost every known office of the HOS. He is a accredited orchid judge, past HOS president and is one of two of our members to have been president of the American Orchid Society. Marvin and his wife, Renee, have made their home and their lives open to all levels of orchidom. Few can ever forget a visit to their home and their true hospitality which is seldom found in the busy lifestyles we lead today.

Marvin has shipped in a number of very select plants from his favorite growers so bring lots of generosity and and bid high on these wonderful additions. They are guaranteed to add quality and variety to every collection.

Come help us close another successful year of the Houston Orchid Society by bringing your favorite dish and join the Holiday social. In addition to the auction and social, the newly elected officers will be inducted into office as we prepare for the 2008 calendar year.

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The Houston Orchid Society was established in 1945 and is a recipient of the AOS Distinguished Affiliated Societies Service Award.



AOS Calendars will be available at December meeting!!

Melba Butler has received her shipment of AOS 2008 Calendars and will be selling them on a first-come, first-serve basis at the December meeting.

The cost is \$10 per calendar and 40 will be available.

It's time to renew your membership in HOS!

Please fill out the enclosed application and bring it to the next meeting or mail it to Donna Williams.

President's Post

By Don Ghiz, President

Alas, my term as President draws to a close. It's amazing how fast the year has gone. And just as I'm starting to get comfortable with the job and make some headway, it's over. It's been a lot of fun and, for that, I thank everyone in the society for his or her spirit and enthusiasm - and hard work.

I think we've learned a lot this year.

We've learned that Workshops are fun and can be profitable if held at the right place.

We've learned that Houston won't support the large venue orchid show that we are capable of putting on. And so we will move on to another, as yet undecided, venue in the future. I assure you that the new officers and Board will give this their every consideration.

We've learned that there are lots of conservation opportunities for us out there. And I think it's important that we take on some of these. It's our duty and responsibility to nurture the foundation of our society. We are more than just a monthly flower club.

What I think we still have to learn more about is how to grow and stay a healthy organization in the electronic world that we live in. Times are changing and we have to change with them. To be honest with ourselves, it really isn't necessary to set aside an evening once a month to learn how to grow orchids. The Internet is full of free information and offers to sell orchids to us.

These challenges are not unique to the Houston Orchid Society. All societies seem to have the same problem of decreasing ranks, including the American Orchid Society, the mother of all orchid affairs in this country.

Lastly, I'd like to get back on my soapbox about volunteerism and accepting new responsibility. More than 25% of our membership are newcomers. I'm very impressed with the enthusiasm that our Newcomers group exhibits, but, at the same time, I want to encourage new (and long standing) members to step up to bat. We are always looking for new talent and leadership. It's fun to give back. If you wait until you think you know enough about orchids to be a leader in the Society, you'll never be one. The more my personal knowledge grows, the more I realize how little I really understand.

I close here, offering my best wishes for a safe and Happy Holiday season. And my best wishes to the new officers for a successful 2008 at HOS.

Houston Judging Center

By Margaret Putman

November 17, 2007 -

There were seven plants entered for judging with one award: *Dendrobium alexandrae* 'Holly' (species) HCC 79 owned by Holly Miller, Houston, TX

Winners' Tips

from November 2007 HOS Plant Table

Hybrid Winner: Blc. Sanyung Ruby 'Kuang Lung' AM/AOS grown by Calvin Starr



The plant has been outside since last spring. It hangs under a tree and gets a little morning sun and bright light the rest of the day. Because of all the rain we had this past spring and summer it did not get watered and fertilized on a regular schedule as it normally would. It is now in the greenhouse where it will stay until next spring.

Species Winner: *Paph. curtisii* grown by Rick Hepler



Paph curtisii; low light, Peter's professional 20/20/20 every watering spring through fall at 100 ppm

HJC Continued

There were 16 Accredited Judges, 2 Probationary Judges, 3 Student Judges and 1 Clerk present with a total of 29 people attending. The next regular judging will be held December 15, 2007 in Jerebeck Center, Room 202, University of St. Thomas, 2000 Mt. Vernon St., Houston, TX. It is requested that all plants be entered before to 11:30 A. M. so that they may be properly researched prior to judging. Please bring a covered dish for the Christmas party lunch.

Cyp. kentuckiense Restoration Project Announced

By: Doug Harris

Having an article in the Houston Happenings then in the AOS ORCHIDS magazine featuring Greg Scott's recounting of *Cypripedium kentuckiense* and his long held desire to see it growing in a Texas forest which came to fruition last April was only the start. Now, following a pattern of the CLOS article presented in the same AOS issue, HOS is embarking on its own restoration project.

Since April we have done research, contacted both Texas and Federal botanists, applied for financing and best of all, managed to actually have seed collected so that we can get small seedlings from flasks. It took six years to find a seed capsule in Louisiana. In October, a trip to six or seven sites in Texas yielded 3 pods containing seed. One pod came from the site featured in Greg's article, and probably was a result of our pollination efforts last April.



Ours is nowhere near the first such project. Besides the Louisiana restoration efforts, ongoing restoration for *Cyp. acaule* in Georgia, *Cyp. montanum* in Oregon and Washington and *Cyp. kentuckiense* in Arkansas are doing well.

Just what does the term "restoration" mean? The concept of places where plants once grew and were recorded and are now reduced as populations in cities have expanded plus farming and timbering have reduced habitats where plants can survive. Wholesale clearing of forested areas was once the practice of timber harvesting. But the practice of "clear cutting" has been largely discontinued as knowledge of the detrimental effects of such practices that leads to erosion and pollution in streams from run-off rainwater. Reintroduction of native plants and tree species is becoming more prevalent and offers the opportunity to stabilize the soils to prevent land loss.

Special Event at Clown Alley Orchids

Friday, December 21 2:00 till 7:00

Saturday, December 22 from Noon to 6:00

FREE Wine & cheese tasting and Orchids for sale

Blooming orchid plants make great gifts for hosts, hostesses, housewarmings, birthdays or holidays

Receive 20% discount on orchids with this HOS ad

Open 10:00 to 5:00 Monday through Saturday

3119 Lily Street, Pasadena, TX 77505

Phone (282) 991-6841 Mobile (832) 693-8140

Five blocks west of Beltway 8, 1/2 block south of Spencer Highway

AOS Corner

By Melba and Jim Butler

Orchid Trivia (from Norman's Orchids Web site Orchid Tips): Use Yellow Cups to Catch Insects- smear plastic yellow cup with regular Vaseline and place in your greenhouse. The yellow color will attract all kinds of insects and they will be caught in the Vaseline. This works for aphids and mites. While browsing the AOS Web site <http://www.aos.org/aos/>, the Quick Reference Menu at the bottom right side again caught our eyes and may be an easier or faster way to find information. This is a copy of that menu:

Quick Reference Menu

- • Directions
- • Hours and Admission
- • Wedding Rentals
- • Culture Sheets
- • 2006Orchids Magazine Indices
- • Show Schedule
- • Judging Centers&Dates
- • Speakers List
- • TaxonomicAuthorities
- • Find an Orchid Society NearYou
- • Members MeetingsCalendar
- • CITESRegulations
- • Hybrid RegistrationForm
- • USDA ImportPermits
- • Monocot Checklist
- • Pay Award Fees Online
- • Sitemap

The other spots to "click" on the AOS front page will get you to some of the same locations, of course. Probably taken too much for granted, the AOS Web site provides a great wealth of information for the orchid hobbyist.



Culture Q&A

HOS Culture Q&A Panel: Ted Baenziger, Jay Balchan, Dolores Fields, Joe Fields, Marvin Gerber, Renee Gerber, Doug Harris, Rick Hepler, Julius Klehm, Nina Rach, and Greg Scott.

Q: Leaf loss. How much is normal? I know that all plants lose some leaves, but since orchids have sparse foliage to begin with, it worries me to lose one single leaf. What are the signs of a problem amount of loss? Spots vs. stripes, tips vs. edges, top leaves vs. lower ones? What should I do when a plant seems to be showing no signs of stress other than leaf loss?

A: There is no complete answer, but here goes a partial one: a) some orchids, like *Eulophia*, *Calanthe*, *Cyrtopodium*, *Galeandra* and most of the deciduous *Dendrobiums* (especially the *nobile* type) drop their leaves to conserve energy and transform sugars and starches to get ready to bloom. In some cases, without a 'rest' period, the plants will never bloom. Therefore, withholding water while misting occasionally is quite normal and we should have a spot in the growing area that is bright and dry, where we can keep the resters; b) some others are cold, dry and deciduous, like *Pleione*, and many of our native *Cyps*. These are best kept outside in a sheltered area. c) there are some *Dendrobiums*, as in the *phalaenopsis* group (hard cane with fleshy leaves) that are very cold sensitive. In my downtown Houston experience, about 50 degrees F. will make the leaves yellow and fall off. Of course freezing temps will kill them, but the occasional leaf loss is generally not fatal. Put them to rest, however, keeping them relatively dry until the new growth begins in the spring, and then water the roots, not the new growth, which rots easily. Naked pseudobulbs will often bloom again from another node, so do not cut back unless there is rotting. Without leaves, the Dends will be later-blooming for the next season. d) *Phalaenopsis* will lose leaves if the medium is old or soggy, too hot or too cold. Beware the nearly always fatal Crown Rot which can strike at any moment: all the leaves will die, and usually the plant. Cold water in the crown is a no-no. Caught early, this fungal killer is deterred by cinnamon, which forms a shield against moisture and seems to have anti-fungal properties. In my experience, almost all leaf loss is due to root die-back (over-watering) and takes place outside... in the summer! e) most of the *Cattleya* hybrids and species are quite cold hardy (exception: *C. volacea*), but even they will hate cold AND wet. Our recent very wet June/July caused a lot of black growth on new pseudobulbs and leaves. If kept dry they can often take near freezing temps, however. Aside from overwatering, the major cause of leaf loss for me is scale, a Houston plague for anyone growing outside, because the ants bring the beasties to the plant and cultivate them for their nectar. f) if you are growing inside, as I do for my *Paphs*, spider mites will move in, invisibly, and cause tremendous damage through leaf loss. If the surface becomes

mottled or pebbly, you can see the evidence of mites. Another clue is very fine webbing on the leaf, especially the underside, although some mites leave no silk behind. The only cure for me has been chemicals, for the whole collection, repeated after a couple of weeks.

Now, a piece of advice on dying leaves. The one really unnatural and totally dangerous thing to do is to CUT the leaf with an unsterilized blade. If the leaf does not come off easily when you apply finger pressure, let it go for a few days until it dries (this is especially true for *Paphiopedilums*, whose new growth is often hidden by the dying lower leaves and those baby plants are very easily broken by digging or cutting). *Cattleyas* are very easy: their spent leaves pop off with the lightest pressure. Remember, on orchids that have new growth from the side or the lead, that the lower (brown) leaves are a protection for pups, and that the back bulbs (leafless) are an essential source of stored nutrients. Put the knife and scissors away.

One other consideration for *Cattleyas*. The leaf-like sheath is a protection for the growing buds. Drying sheaths will turn brown, and this is normal. Black growth indicates rotting from too much water. Here, I will use a sterilized ravor blade to cut it off, especially if the buds are visible. Watch out for *C. labiata* and its hybrids: there is often a double sheath. -- Ted Baenziger

A: I hate to generalize, but generally, leaf loss on plants with canes (*dendrobs*) and large pseudobulbs (*cattleyas*) is not a big deal. Especially on the older growths, some leaf loss is normal and only the best of the best growers can keep leaves on the very old growths of these types of plants. The plants you really need to worry about losing leaves on are those without a lot of energy storage capacity. These include *paphs* and *phals*. Once you see significant leaf loss on these (beyond a single leaf every so often), then most often you have a problem with the roots of the plant. Generally, they are rotted from overwatering or a breakdown of the mix. The only way to tell is to unpot the plant and see what shape the roots are in. If the roots are bad, trim off the dead roots, repot the plant (in a courser mix if you want to keep the same watering schedule), and put it in a lower light location until some new root growth starts.

Spots and stripes on leaves can be lots of things from fungus to virus to nothing. You'll need to read some more in general orchid books to narrow it down. Leaf tip burn is generally due to too much fertilizer (wash out the plant a few times with just plain water). -- Jay

A: Are we talking about a *phal* with 3 or 4 leaves, or a *dendrobium* with 10? Losing a bottom leaf or two is not a problem. unless the plant is a *phal* with few leaves to begin with. - Marvin

A: The most obvious thing to me when this happens is to look at the roots. However be careful that it is happening to only one leaf or several, has the plant be in an unusual location (a cold draft etc) or has it been attacked by some kind of sucking insect. If more than one leaf is affected, usually something is happening in the root zone which will not be evident early on by observing the upper part of the plant. The plant drops leaves when it can no longer support them with nutrients passed up through the roots (of course, there are some orchids that do drop their leaves and one needs to be aware of which plants they have in their collection). Sometimes it is clear what the problem is when the plant is taken out of the pot and one can see the roots—often it is not though. However, if this does appear evident, cleaning off the dead roots, washing the plant in a mild fungicide solution and repotting will sometimes revive the plant. Do not put it back in its regular area for a few days and do not water for one watering cycle—maybe even two. Sometimes one might even want to quarantine the plant from the others for a few days. Hopefully this rejuvenation will help the plant survive. - Julius Klehm

A: Leaf loss with Paphs is a normal thing in most cases. Especially if seen in late fall and early winter. Normal loss is as follows: Lower leaves slowly turn yellow then dry up to brown; one or two at the most per growth of the entire plant. Typically, summer growth on top of the plant is doing all the work to maintain a healthy plant and the lowest leaves are no longer useful. Lower leaves will be shadowed by upper leaves and other plants and not get the proper light levels needed for good health.

Now for problem leaf loss, multiple leaves from one side or both in rapid secession would indicate root loss or basal rot. Unpot plant and check for rotten roots/media. If found, clear off all spoiled areas and dip plant in cinnamon or another favorite "anti bacterial" cocktail. Repot into fresh media, water and watch. Dehydrated yellow leaves usually mean the lack of proper watering. If there is no root loss problem and the plant is set into the media at the proper height (proper height means base of plant deep enough in mix so that new roots emerge into the mix and not the air) then increase your watering. Another form of rot is also from the base but on the outside of the plant where you can see it clearly. I always pull these leaves off as much as possible and dust the raw edges with cinnamon. Most leaf loss due to rot in Paphs accrues during low or lower light levels then the plant is accustomed to, high humidity and too much water at the roots. The temperature can be high or low and the same for the air movement, high or low. Of course, it's always good to have strong air movement to help prevent rot.

To avoid rot problems back off on the water and/or fertilizer. Let plants dry out more in conditions such as low light and high humidity like our sometime "nonstop" rainy summers. Good Growing! - Rick Hepler

A: Joe Fields provided a very good answer which was unfortunately too long to include here. It will be published next month in its entirety since this is a subject that seems to have elicited great interest.

Cyp. Kentuckiense Continued

The restoring concept has managed to increase populations in natural settings which represent niche locations with necessary environs of soil, water and surrounding shade conditions provide a suitable place to reintroduce plants. Protected areas in private holdings, plus state and national forests and grassland prairies where suitable habitats still exist offer us the ability to increase populations of rare or endangered species of both plants and wild animals.

The southern lady slipper as our present single native slipper is also called has a population of just over 200 plants in the whole state. We are proposing to increase its chances of being here for our grandchildren by providing between 1000 and 2000 seedlings grown to a survivable size by HOS members then transplanted back into suitable locations where it can survive and prosper.

This will not be a short project. It will take until around March of 2009 before we even receive seedlings from flasking labs where our seed was sent. We will grow them in protected conditions for about 9 months to prevent loss from snails and feral hogs. Then they will be moved back where temperatures over the winter drop to freezing to go dormant during the cold season for 3 months or so.

Then the true restoration begins. Transplanting along remote streams on slopes somewhat hard for people to reach will be done in early 2010. If more seed is available next year, we might encourage further flasking by HOS and other orchid societies to produce greater numbers of this special slipper. Who knows, we might even tackle other species of orchids. There are others which only grow in one or two locations in Texas and only four sites in all of the USA, numbered as few as 100, 50 or less plants. Stay tuned to this newsletter for developing information. Meanwhile, consider helping in this project.

Recap: November 2007

President Don Ghiz asked for and accepted the vote for the 2008 slate of officers as presented. He then introduced Laura Weisman, webmistress of the Houston Chronicle, Houston Gardening web. Laura encouraged us all to participate in the blog and gardening area found at www.chron.com/houstongardening/ and she passed out flyers introducing the new channel.

Doug Harris gave us an update on the Cyp. Kentuckiense restoration/augmentation project which the HOS is undertaking. (See the article he wrote announcing the project starting on page 3. It is estimated that there are currently only 200 plants in Texas and we will have approximately 2,000 after the seeds gathered are deflasked in early 2009. Members will be asked to grow these seedlings to planting size before they are restored to appropriate wild areas.

Then Fr. Ted entertained and educated us all on the AOS judging system and the meaning of the various awards available to growers.

The Living Orchid Collection

By: Mark Sullivan, Administrator of the Orchid Conservation Coalition

Ex situ (Latin) means out of place. Whenever we grow orchid species out of their normal growing habitat we are growing them *ex situ*. *In situ* orchid conservation and habitat preservation are the first line of defense for safeguarding orchid species for the future. A strong conservation effort would result if orchid growers would pledge not to buy newly discovered orchids like *Phragmipedium kovachii* until after the orchid and its habitat have been safeguarded *in situ*. Given the realities of our world, *ex situ* orchid conservation is important.

Orchids and their habitats continue to be destroyed by logging, farming, collection and climate change. *Ex situ* conservation can start by just growing your species orchids well. The next step is to propagate them from division and seed, and then distribute them to other growers. Our current *ex situ* conservation efforts are unorganized and without clear direction. This could lead to problems for species *ex situ*. One of the problems is preserving genetic diversity of a species. Another is knowing how many individual plants of a given orchid species are *ex situ*.

For a long time *Paphiopedilum delenatii* was considered extinct in the wild. All *Paph. Delenatii* from 1910 to 1991 were bred from a few plants found in the 1910's and 20's. This led to line breeding for about 60 years resulting in little genetic diversity and growth vigor. In 1991, new populations of *Paph. delenatii* were found. This increased the genetic pool of *Paph. delenatii* giving greater diversity and vigor to the *Paph. delenatii ex situ*.

Preserving genetic diversity of a species is important for *ex situ* orchid conservation. A large group of individual plants of a particular species are necessary to preserve a species well *ex situ*. Species with few individuals have to be carefully crossbred to increase the health of species *ex situ*. *Ex situ* conservation must encompass a wide range of flower and other plant characteristics of a particular species and not be limited to award winning quality. Award winning flower quality is based on human perception and not on the natural pollinator's perception. Zoos have cooperative systematic breeding programs for mammal species in their care to maintain healthy populations and genetic diversity. We should do that with orchid species.

The Living Orchid Collection (LOC) is a beginning strategy for an organized, *ex situ* orchid conservation program in which everyone who grows a species orchid can participate. LOC is a collective, living orchid collection entered into a web database. Grouping orchid collections together as a virtual single collection will be a stronger *ex situ* conservation effort than separate individual collections. A grower enters their species orchids into the database. Each grower will continue to own, grow and have all rights over their orchid. A LOC identification allows growers to remain anonymous unless they want their identity to be known.

Welcome New Members

John Craddock
Thomas Gibbs
Ruth Kelly
Chris Liu
Hoang Phuc
Fran Walters

Welcome Guests

Laura Weisman

Thanks for Refreshments

Richard Bauman
Nina Rach
Deana Roberts

For Sale

Coated bench wire 1"x1"
3ft X 40ft \$40.00
Richard Champagne
281 277 4477

LOC could be used for producing pollen, seed, propagation for genetic diversity, research, replanting in natural habitats, and taking pressure off wild collecting. Researchers and *ex situ* conservation efforts can use the database and then contact the grower by e-mail. The grower can decide if they want to take part in a particular *ex situ* conservation effort.

Orchid societies are encouraged to enter as a group. This would allow society members that grow only a few species to participate more effectively in *ex situ* conservation. A society would essentially have its own Living Orchid Collection. For more information on the Living Orchid Collection: <http://www.livingorchidcollection.org>



Committee Bulletins

Newcomers Group

Chair: Katherine Brown (Ksbrown208@hotmail.com
318-243-3416)

Co-chair: Jill Smith (jsmith8146@houston.rr.com 281-
545-2023)

Sunday, November 18th was an outstanding meeting for the Newcomers! We were guests of Holly Miller at her home and beautiful greenhouse where we were all given orchid contributions courtesy of many of our seasoned HOS members who culled their greenhouses. We are most appreciative and grateful to Holly for her hospitality and to all those who donated orchid opportunities to our group. Thank you!

We took those new plants and spent the meeting learning the proper techniques for potting. Everyone brought his/her pots and the various mixes were supplied for us to create new homes for the plants. Nobody minded getting dirty hands since it was such a worthy learning experience. As we learn more about orchid cultivation, we know the Newcomers will enjoy watching their new orchid acquisitions thrive.

We were also proud to announce that a terrific threesome will be heading the Newcomers Group for the forthcoming year. They are Eddie Mitchell, Debbie Peterson and Radka Fibingerova. They have worked together before on several committees and we're certain that it will be another successful year for the Newcomers as they arrange venues for the meetings and plan out a schedule.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the HOS who has been so generous to us over the past year, hosting our meetings, sharing your knowledge and donating plants. And a special thank you as well to all the Newcomers themselves who brought such a wonderful array of refreshments.

Raffle Table

Chair: Johnny and Donna Williams

We will not have a raffle table for December due to the annual holiday party and HJC auction.

Membership Notice

Chair: Holly Miller (hollymil@earthlink.net)

Membership forms are included in this month's newsletter for your convenience and will be available at the HOS meetings. Please remember that you must renew before February in order to have your name included in the HOS directory for 2008.

Houston Orchid Society 2007 Officers and Committee Chairs

Officers

<i>President</i>	Don Ghiz
<i>1st Vice President</i>	Deana Roberts
<i>2nd Vice President</i>	Holly Huston
<i>Recording Sec.</i>	Beverly Starr
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jay Balchan
<i>Membership</i>	Holly Miller

Chairs

<i>Guest Hospitality</i>	Maureen Ferrara
<i>Happenings Editor</i>	Susan Taylor
<i>Librarian</i>	Sarah Bentley
<i>Newcomers Group</i>	Katherine Brown Jill Smith
<i>Parliamentarian</i>	Richard Champagne
<i>Plant Raffle</i>	Johnny and Donna Williams
<i>Refreshments</i>	Pam Vinson
<i>Silent Auction</i>	John Jamerlan, Debbie Peterson and Eddie Mitchell
<i>2007 Spring Show</i>	John Stubbings and Laurie Skov
<i>HOS Web</i>	Calvin Starr
<i>2007 Workshop Chair</i>	Ted Baenziger and John Stubbings

Directors

<i>Two-Year Term</i>	<i>One-Year Term</i>
Joe Fields	Dolores Fields
Fr. Ted Baenziger	Marvin Gerber
Greg Scott	Jim Butler
Calvin Starr	Jerry Stephens
John Jamerlan	Julius Klehm
Phillip Free	Doug George
Richard Lund	Laurie Skov
	John Stubbings

Representatives

AOS Representative	Melba and Jim Butler
IPA Representative	John Stubbings
ODC Representative	Joe Fields
SWROGA Representative	Julius Klehm and Terry Palmer

Houston Orchid Society *December 2007 Meeting*

Program: December Program
Plant Auction, Holiday Party

Date: December 6, 2007

Time: 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Place: Houston Garden Center

Monthly Speakers

December: Houston Judging Center Auction and
Annual Holiday Party

January: Dottie Woodson, Prevention and treatment of
pests and diseases

HOS Website

www.houstonorchidsociety.org

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The Houston Happenings
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