



UNDERSTANDING WATER QUALITY

FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Submitted by David Renniger

Question: What is the most common pollutant in the urban waterways of Harris County, Texas? (Answer below)

WATERSHEDS AND WATER QUALITY

Water quality describes physical and chemical parameters of surface water that impact both human and ecological health within a given watershed. A watershed is a geographic area where flowing water (and everything we put in it) drains into a larger common body of water. It can be the gutter system around your house that flows to the storm sewer, or an entire river basin that collects runoff from surrounding towns, roadways, and green spaces. Everyone lives in watershed. In Texas alone, there are 23 major river basin watersheds, each ultimately flowing into the Gulf of Mexico.

Understanding the relationship between water quality and human activity is the cornerstone of my own transformative experience in becoming NatureSmart. You see, I spent the majority of my career liberally applying pesticides and chemical control products to keep my demanding landscape clients happy and their gardens as green and pest-free as possible. Little did I know that most of these chemicals would eventually find their way into watersheds where they negatively affect everything from contact recreation and fishing areas, stream ecology, human health, and the safety of our drinking water.

IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

Water quality is determined by comparing levels of pollutants like sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and man-made chemicals against baseline levels in a watershed. While this monitoring activity is performed by regulatory agencies and trained experts, here are four areas where you can make a significant contribution to improving water quality in your watershed:

1. Landscapes

- Choose sustainable landscape practices
- Minimize exposed soil with vegetative cover
- Plant vegetative barriers to filter runoff and trap sediments
- Mulch lawn clippings
- Stop using pesticides and chemical fertilizers

2. Car Care

- Regularly check for fluid leaks
- Recycle used motor oil
- Wash vehicles at the car wash and not in the driveway

3. Paved Surfaces

- Sweep/blow driveways, sidewalks and roads
- Don't sweep/blow debris into storm drains
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces

4. Home Care

- Never pour anything down storm drains
- Carefully store and dispose of cleaners, chemicals, and oil
- Pick up pet waste
- Pump and inspect septic systems regularly

Unfortunately, most major streams in Harris County, Texas are listed on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's 303(d) list, which identifies impaired waters with higher than acceptable values for pollutants. The good news is that implementing the recommendations in these four areas of focus can make a difference and cost nothing more than a simple change in behavior.

The answer to our question: E.coli bacteria from fecal contamination is the number one cause of impaired waterways in Harris County, Texas. The bacteria is carried by stormwater runoff that flows into our creeks and streams. You can make an immediate impact by cleaning up pet waste and not allowing them to defecate near stormwater drainage areas.

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Northwest Harris County Aggie Moms to Award Scholarships

Please join us for the Northwest Harris County Aggie Mom's Club monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2015, beginning with refreshments and social time at 6:30 followed by meeting at 7:15 p.m. The meeting is held at the Houston Distributing Company, 7100 High Life Drive, conveniently located near Willowbrook Mall at the intersection of High Life Drive and Cutten Road. You will want to find out which deserving students will be awarded the 2015 scholarship awards and learn how these scholarships impact the Aggie experience. NWHC Aggie Moms Club members will also vote on which Texas A&M student organizations they would like the club to support. All meetings are open to the public and prospective students; current students and Aggie families are always welcome!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Parents Weekend- April 17-18th-Parents' Weekend is a cherished Aggie tradition honoring Aggie moms and dads since 1919. Among the many weekend activities is the popular Aggie Moms' Boutique, a gift and craft fair held on April 17 and 18 in the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M. Check out our booth! We will be selling our Tradition beads! For more information on the scheduled parents weekend events go to <http://parentsweekend.tamu.edu/node/38>.

Aggie Muster-April 21st- Aggies around the world will join together for Muster, held at Reed Arena beginning at 7PM to honor Aggies who are no longer among us. Muster is a day celebrating the camaraderie and the friendships, the triumphs and the defeats, the legacies and the impact that Texas A&M University has made, and continues to make, in all of our lives.

The Northwest Harris County Aggie Mom's Club meets August thru May on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:15 pm at 7100 High Life Drive. For more information on monthly speakers or upcoming events visit our website at www.nwhcaggie moms.org or contact Connie Pritchard, Club President at pritchardg@sbcglobal.net



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Houston Family Arts Center Asks Audiences, 'What's Wrong With This Picture?' In 2015-2016

HFAC ANNOUNCES 10TH SEASON

"What's wrong with this picture?" is the playful theme and question attached to each show in Houston Family Arts Center's (HFAC) 2015-2016 season. Entering its 10th mainstage season, HFAC orchestrated a line-up of all-encompassing shows that highlight the theatre's award-winning musical expertise, all while enveloping theatre experiences full of odd, zany, mystical and dramatic turmoil audiences love.

The HFAC 2015-2016 season opens in hysterical chaos with Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me a Tenor* followed by Stephen Sondheim's musical mixture of fairy tale treasures in *Into the Woods*. HFAC brings the classics to the holiday season with *It's a Wonderful Life*, then starts the new year in the 1950s with *Forever Plaid*. Soon after, and just in time for spring, a six-foot-tall invisible rabbit named Harvey will have audiences hopping, while the comedy *Damn Yankees* will bring out the inner baseball fan in us all. An incredible story of tragedy, deceit and the life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart starts the summer season with Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*. An audience favorite, *Footloose*, then closes the season with a classic tale of rock 'n' roll and teenage rebellion.

"Theatre teaches us a lot about human motivation," said Lisa Garza, Artistic Director for Houston Family Arts Center. "This season, we want to look at how one responds to unusual situations. Do you panic? Initiate evasive action? Or dig down deep and find the part of yourself that is willing to overcome obstacles at any cost?"

HOUSTON FAMILY ARTS CENTER'S 2015-2016 MAINSTAGE SEASON

Lend Me a Tenor, Sept. 4 - 27

Set in the 1930s, hysterical chaos on a truly operatic level ensues when a world-famous tenor presumably goes missing on the biggest night in the Cleveland Grand Opera's history. What follows is a series of slapstick fun sure to leave any audience teary-eyed with laughter. HFAC's rendition of Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me a Tenor* runs Sept. 4 - Sept. 27.

Into the Woods, Oct. 16 - Nov. 8

The fairy tale classics of *Cinderella*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Rapunzel* and *Little Red Riding Hood* are weaved into an original, charming, musical tale of a couple's journey to break a wicked witch's curse. Will the baker and his wife be able to break the witch's spell? Bring the entire family and find out during the enchanted tale of *Into the Woods*, Oct. 16 - Nov. 8.

It's a Wonderful Life, Nov. 27 - Dec. 20

George Bailey spends his life giving up big dreams on behalf of his community. Overwhelmed by family obligations, George uncovers an opportunity to save his town but a mistake finds himself in a disparaging situation. Through his family and

community's prayers, George's guardian angel, Clarence, who hasn't earned his wings, takes George on a journey to discover his "wonderful life." Discover if Clarence earns his wings when this treasured, heart-warming holiday classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*, is brought to life on HFAC's Garza Mainstage from Nov. 27 - Dec. 20.

Forever Plaid, Jan. 29 - Feb. 21

On their way to see the Beatles' American debut on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, a quartet of high school friends' musical dreams begin and quickly end after a car crash involving a busload of Catholic schoolgirls. HFAC audiences will watch in musical amusement, Jan. 29 - Feb. 21, when "The Plaids" return from the afterlife for one final concert in *Forever Plaid*.

Harvey, March 11 - April 3

What do you get when you mix a polite and friendly man with a strange, six-foot-tall, invisible rabbit named Harvey? A sister who wants to commit her brother, but gets committed herself, and a town comically turned upside down on the search for a mild-mannered hero and his invisible friend. Harvey hops onto HFAC's Garza Mainstage just in time to celebrate Easter, March 11 - April 3.

Damn Yankees, April 22 - May 15

Aging baseball fan Joe Boyd makes a deal with the devil and gets transformed into a handsome, star baseball player who helps his favorite team, the Washington Senators, beat the Yankees in the World Series. Along his journey to make his beloved Senators world champions, Joe must resist all temptations, including the beautiful Lola. Will Lola get, what Lola wants? Will the Senators win the pennant? *Damn Yankees* "swings" onto HFAC's Garza Mainstage April 22 - May 15.

Amadeus, June 3 - June 26

Envy, scandal, comedy and murder are all intertwined in composer Antonio Salieri's quest to meet and ultimately destroy the brilliantly talented Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. During a chance encounter, Salieri discovers Mozart's personality doesn't match the extraordinary grace of his compositions. Upset that God gifted an ill-behaved man with such talent, Salieri makes it his mission to befriend and masquerade as Mozart's ally, all while attempting to destroy Mozart's reputation through a variety of sinister acts. HFAC's rendition of the Tony award-winning *Amadeus* runs June 30 - June 26 on HFAC's Garza Mainstage.

Footloose, July 15 - Aug. 7

The rebellious nature of a big-city teenager in competition with a Midwestern town minister wreaks havoc on a quiet southern town that abhors rock music and dancing. When the Chicago-born teen calls for a rock 'n' roll prom and the cultural

(Continued on Page 4)

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revitalization of a repressed town, a fast-paced musical drama ensues. With the famous, memorable songs "Footloose" and "Let's Hear it for the Boy," Footloose dances into our hearts July 15 - Aug. 7.

ABOUT HOUSTON FAMILY ARTS CENTER

Houston Family Arts Center (HFAC), founded in 2005, is a not-for-profit performing arts and educational organization, with a passion for entertaining, enlightening and engaging audiences in Texas. Recent winner in seven categories for the Broadway World Houston Awards, HFAC has also been named Houston's "Best Gem of a Theater" by the Houston Press and "Best Arts and Entertainment" by the "Best of the Northwest" Readers' Choice awards. HFAC is a proud winner of the prestigious national American Association of Community Theatre Twink Lynch Organizational Award. HFAC produces a broad mix of classics, comedies, dramas, musicals and new works. Through its award-winning Actors Academy, HFAC offers acting, singing and dance classes, and performance opportunities for all ages. To purchase tickets, sign up for auditions or classes, or for more information, please visit www.houstonfac.com or call HFAC at 281-587-6100.

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The Cypress Symphony

The Cypress Symphony hosts its 3rd Annual Fundraising Gala and Season Announcement Dinner presented by Clearwater Utilities at 5pm on April 26, 2015 at the Norris Conference Centers at CityCentre. The evening will include revealing all major works for the 2015/2016 season with introductions by season conductor Jerry Hou, returning after his enthralling performance in January.

Richard Dowling will perform an exclusive recital for gala attendees that will elegantly (or subtly) match the theme of the evening "Stardust" with an emphasis on evening jazz. A Texas native, Dowling is known best for his recordings of American Music and has won the hearts and recognition of many for his performances, including the Houston Tuesday Musical Club Competition and a sold out debut at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Dowling was the first soloist to appear with the Cypress Symphony in September 2013 at the inaugural concert.

Founder Caroline Ewan comments that "I am thrilled that the symphony is about to embark on its third season. Our mission to enrich and educate the community has the support it needs to expand not only the size of our orchestra, but also the number of communities that we are reaching. Our third season will be our first entre into these two areas. It is a historic and exciting time at the Cypress Symphony."

The Cypress Symphony, founded by 26-year-old Caroline Ewan, is receiving great support from the northwest Houston community for its energetic performances. The next concert is May 9th at 7PM at the Centrum under the baton of Bohuslav Rattay, Conductor of the El Paso Symphony. Kathy Winkler, violin professor from Rice University, will perform the wonderful "Lark Ascending" by Vaughan-Williams as well as "Appalachian Spring."

During the fundraising gala, there will be a silent auction presenting items from some of Houston's best cultural institutions and local artisans. Ms. Ewan and the administrative team will highlight the current status of the Cypress Symphony and present exciting new developments for the 2015/2016 season.

The gala will be held at Norris Conference Centers at CityCentre at 826 Town & Country Blvd, Suite 210, Houston, Texas 77024. Tickets for the gala can be purchased online at www.CypressSymphony.org or by calling (832) 766-0529. Individual seats for this exclusive event are \$60 with discounts for table purchases or priority seating. Additional tickets and upcoming concert information can be found online at:

www.CypressSymphony.org

The Cypress Symphony is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization and member of the League of American Orchestras.



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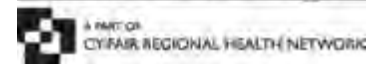
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AHFC office: 713-939-7473

Website: www.albionhurricanes.org

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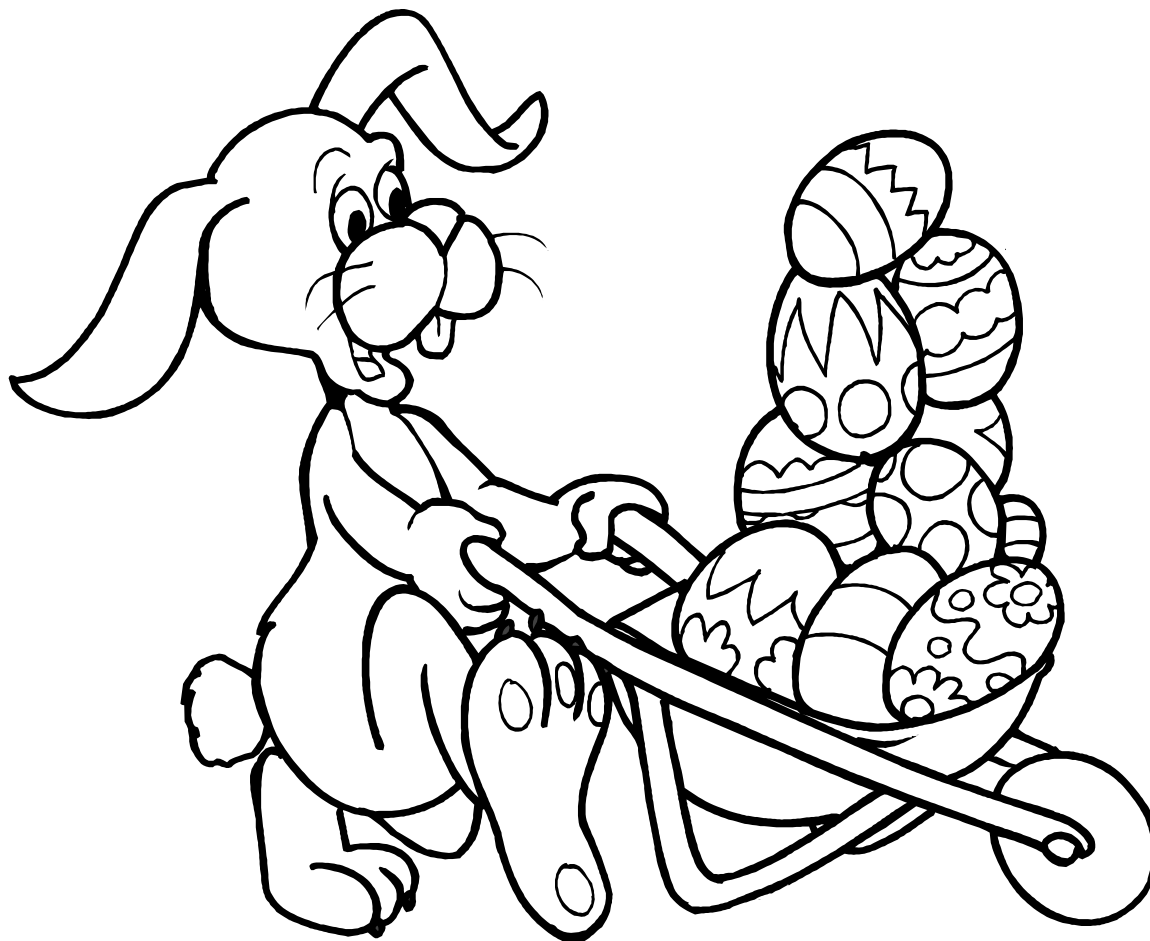
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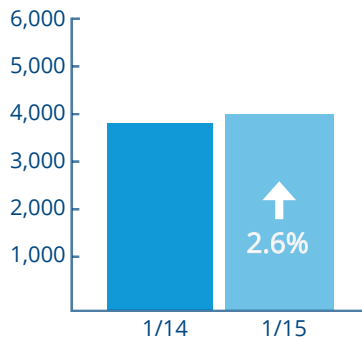
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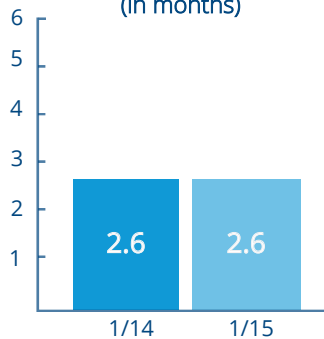
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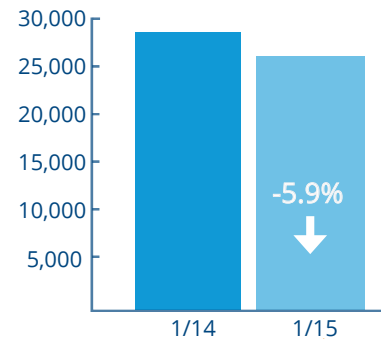
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