

BOB BOWMAN'S EAST TEXAS

With death of Bishop, East Texas lost 'aggressive historian'

The first time I met Eliza Bishop of Crockett was in 1966 when I accepted a job as the East Texas bureau chief for the Houston Chronicle.

Eliza was a local correspondent for the Chronicle and we enjoyed a long-time friendship.

When she passed away in December, East Texas lost one of the most competent and aggressive historians. Her enthusiasm for history rubbed off on me, and she encouraged me to write books about East Texas.

For years, she was the face of historical research in Houston County and was tireless in her efforts to document the area's deep roots.

"All of Houston County is saddened by the death of Miss Eliza Bishop," said Houston County Judge Lonnie Hunt.

"We lost a true Texas treasure. In the past 89 years no other person has done more than Eliza Bishop to preserve and promote the history of her native Houston County."

Of the 261 official Texas historical markers inside the county, Hunt said Bishop was responsible for most. She also authored several books, including "The History of Houston County, Texas."

Some of the first early Texas settlers came to Houston County and settled around present day Augusta in 1821.

Shirley Cutler, of Augusta, who has worked and researched to get historical markers for the Augusta Cemetery and the Augusta

Union Church, worked closely with Bishop over the years to document the community's early history.

"She was a real valuable source of information," Cutler said of Bishop. "She did more for the historical part of the county than anybody; she just lived history."

"She was proud of her county and she wanted the people to uphold its history," Cutler said.

Along with her work on the county's historical commission, Bishop also worked for the Houston

Post; served as president of the Texas Press Women and was the organizing president and charter member of the David Crockett Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

She also served as a news commentator for a time at Palestine's KNET radio station.

"Hers was a life devoted to others," Hunt noted. "Through her many contributions and accomplishments, she herself became a great historical figure in her own time."

But Eliza shunned recognition for herself.

When Doris and I started a "Best of East Texas" award for the East Texas Historical Association, Eliza was one of the early recipients.

But she declined to attend the ceremony in Nacogdoches, and sent a friend to accept the award for her.

Her excuse was that she was busy working on the inscription for a new historical marker for Houston County.

That was just like Eliza.

SPOTLIGHT

Gottesman: Take time to relax, enjoy self

Aahhhh, relaxation! It may seem like a guilty pleasure in our world of overloaded schedules and rapid change, but we all need to relax a little.

Relaxation is a natural, necessary quality of healthy living. It's a counter-balance to the stress we feel in everyday life no matter how well we plan or how good we are.

Our bodies know innately how to relax, but our minds often tell us to save relaxation for a time when we're not so busy.

There's a certain logic to this way of thinking, but in the long run, it benefits us about as much as an in-drawn breath without an "exhale."

We take in and take on more than we can handle until our shoulders ache with tension, or our thoughts run on at the end of the day when we expect to relax into sleep.

In my years as a massage therapist, I've come to view relaxation as the primary purpose of my work, and the starting point for all benefits a client may re-

ceive from a massage.

Sometimes it's a gentle touch that prompts relaxation; at other times, it's a deep-tissue workout.

But the common element to all effective massage is the sense of well-being that comes from even a brief interruption to habitual tension, pain or stress.

In a peaceful environment, as responsive hands confirm and relieve a body's discomfort, it's easy — or at least easier — to float into physical relief and allow thoughts to fade away.

This is relaxation, reminding us how right it is to be at home in our own skin, returning body and mind to harmony as senses and thought are caught up in the awareness of comfort, or peace.

When our focus is drawn even momentarily to serenity, away from worry a pain or what we need to do after we finish what we're doing now, we take a quick mini-vacation from stress.

We come back to the same day and the same circumstances, but we're a bit lighter in body and clearer

in thought than when we left. We may also feel a bit more hopeful, more in touch with our natural abilities for coping, more aware of possibility and solution. Relaxation is refreshing.

Sometimes, a client will tell me, "I'm trying to relax" or "I don't know how to relax," but relaxation is not an act of will.

It's more like a willingness to be free of the tension gripping mind and muscle. Simply recalling a time of feeling at home, or being in our element can draw us into relaxation.

Yoga, swimming, playing the piano, rocking a baby, crafting pottery, riding a horse are just a few examples of ways to become immersed in the moment and re-acquainted with the part of ourselves which is inherently at ease and capable.

There are as many ways to slip into relaxation as there are people in this world, but only one requirement: reserve some time!

By setting aside a few minutes once or twice a week we are agreeing to allow ourselves to relax, and

opening the door to discovering how.

In the beginning, this can seem like an empty exercise as thoughts crowd in or the body fidgets, wanting to knock an entry or two off the to-do list.

But with practice we become attuned to what encourages relaxation in us, and we fall into it more and more readily until we have rediscovered the comfort so natural to us as children.

Choose a quiet place. Leave goals at the door. Notice the rhythm of your breath or your pulse.

Unreliant on personal planning, do something you love, something that comes naturally, like tending a garden, or casting a line into the water or do nothing, and sink into stillness.

Recall a time when you were caught up in love or beauty. Let what is good fill your vision and warm your heart.

Judy Gottesman has been a licensed massage therapist in Texas since 1994. She owns and operates Essential Massage in Edom.

H1N1

Health boss: It's not too late to get vaccinated

People have been asking me if it's too late to get the H1N1 flu vaccine to do any good.

As a doctor, a father and the commissioner of health, this question concerns me.

The answer is no, that it is absolutely not too late to get vaccinated.

H1N1 is still killing people. It is still hospitalizing people. The virus is still circulating. We have a powerful tool in our arsenal against it — a vaccine that is safe, effective and now plentiful.

People who have not been vaccinated should do so now.

We are concerned about what might be around the corner, especially if people lose interest in being vaccinated and another wave of illness hits us harder, faster and stronger because we became complacent.

We have weathered two major waves of the illness so far, one last spring and

one last Fall. We have a window of opportunity before a possible third wave. Now is the perfect time to get vaccinated.

We certainly don't know what to expect from H1N1 flu. It is unpredictable. It might come back with a vengeance tomorrow. It might disappear in the Spring.

From past pandemics, we know that a resurgence of H1N1 early this year is possible. We need to stay ahead of it. It's easier and smarter to prevent an illness than to combat it once it has already taken hold.

Predicting the severity and occurrence levels of any flu is fairly impossible.

Traditional flu season is from October through mid-May. The highest levels of seasonal flu in Texas usually occur in January and February — but not always.

See VACCINATED • 7

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