

HOME SWEET HOME

Habitat makes family's dream of owning a home come true

By **MAIKE van WIJK**
The Baytown Sun

For the Coon family, Saturday will mark the rewards of a year of hard labor.

The family will showcase its home at 35 Graham Street, which was built through Habitat for Humanity, from 1 to 3 p.m., prior to moving in to the home.

William, Sharon, William Jr. and Joey Coon spent a year helping to build the house and will sign the papers of ownership Tuesday.

"I think this is the best thing that can ever happen to anyone. A lot of people want homes and can't afford it," William Coon said.

The family was approved by

How you can help

Habitat for Humanity is looking for volunteers to assist with construction projects and also handle office work. The organization doesn't have an office, but needs someone to do bookkeeping and keep track of mortgages.

For more information about these opportunities, call Habitat for Humanity at 427-0866.



Photo by Carrie Pryor-Newman

Joey and Sharon Coon look on as William Jr. and Sr. check the mailbox of their new home at 35 Graham Street. The house was built by Habitat for Humanity and will be showcased from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday.

Habitat for Humanity, an organization that helps build homes for low-income families. The Coons were on the waiting list for a home for two years.

"Adrian Bernard told me about it. I filled out an application thinking I wasn't going to get approved, but I did," said Coon.

In order to qualify for a house from Habitat for Humanity, the family has to have a source of income that will be sufficient to pay the no-interest loan, said Richard Bunce, president of the board of directors.

Habitat for Humanity provides no-interest loans which require families to pay a down payment of one percent, instead of the mainstream five

to 15 percent, he said. The family also has to put in 300 to 500 hours of sweat equity.

"This is the fourth house I worked on," Coon said. It is the eighth house Habitat for Humanity has completed in Baytown.

Construction on the Coon house began in December 1995. The house has a full bathroom, three bedrooms with a half-bath in the master bedroom, a kitchen and a living room.

"Sometimes the hard part came around the holidays. It slacked up and we couldn't get anyone to work," Coon said. "But it didn't stop me and Sharon from working."

Coon said building his house was more enjoyable than the others he worked on.

"It was something I always looked forward to," he said. "I can say, I helped build this house. It helps me to appreciate it more."

Bunce said Coon's comments are the reason behind the sweat equity hours.

"It gives the family a sense of ownership of the house. They take pride in it," Bunce said. "They also understand a little bit of the construction of it."

William will turn 46 today and he sees the house as a birthday gift.

"I've never owned a house before," he said. "It's a once in a lifetime deal to have something like this. Even after I get in this home I plan on helping Habitat."

Sunday, July 14, 1996

Government leaders slated to attend house-raising

By **MAIKE van WIJK**
The Baytown Sun

A handful of local, state and national leaders will be on hand Sunday to witness the construction of a new house by local Habitat of Humanity members.

The new house, which will be built in the 2500 block of Broad Street, at the corner of Harlem Road in McNair, is considered a symbol of cooperation between local, state and federal agencies.

The house will be constructed by Habitat for Humanity, which will raise \$41,200 to pay for the expenses of building the home.

The land was donated to Habitat for Humanity by the Harris County Commissioners Court in June.

The court also pledged to finance any of the funds Habitat for Humanity may not be able to raise.

National Association of Counties (NACo) President-elect Michael Hightower and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Commissioner Nicholas P. Retsinas, as well as Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, are scheduled to appear at a ceremony Sunday from 10 a.m. to noon.

After a brief introduction to the program, these officials will "grab some nails and hammers, they'll put on some hard hats and then they'll sweat for two hours," said Shawn Bullard, spokesman for NACo.

The organizations involved, including NACo, FHA, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, are members of the National Partners in Homeownership, a public-private partnership committed to creating more than 8 million new home owners by the year 2000, Bullard said.

"This is going to be an ongoing process," he said "It is part of the County's commitment in helping

Baytown council OKs architectural contract for wetlands center

By MAIKE van WIJK
The Baytown Sun

The Baytown City Council Monday evening approved a \$31,600 contract for architectural and engineering services with a local firm for the Goose Creek Wetlands Education and Recreation Center.

The contract authorizes Randall-Porterfield Architects to develop plans for the proposed Goose Creek Wetlands and Recreation Center, which will be located at 1724 Market St., in a building that once housed a bowling alley.

The estimated cost of renovations and construction of the center is approximately \$400,000, for which the city has received a grant of \$350,000 from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The total project cost will be \$700,000. Plans are scheduled to be completed by mid-February, with bids expected in March.

In other business, councilmembers approved a lease agreement with Citizens Bank that will place an automatic teller machine near the entrance of the Baytown Municipal Court and the Police Department on North Main Street.

Citizens Bank would bear the cost of approximately \$70,000 to construct the machine, which would provide a convenient location for citizens to withdraw cash to pay for citations and bonds.

The council approved the contract with the



Rountree

bank and authorized City Manager Bobby Rountree to designate a place approximately 100 feet south of the fire department sign for a sign Citizens Bank requested.

The city manager reported that Fire and Rescue's damaged Ladder 1 truck is scheduled to be inspected soon.

The truck got stuck in a pothole during a Nov. 19 fire at an apartment complex on Garth Road.

The owner of Woodcreek Village apartments has been ordered to repair the holes in his parking lot by Thursday and will be cited each day afterward if he does not comply.

A water supply contract between the Baytown Area Water Authority and the city of Baytown, which expires Dec. 31, was approved. The contract had one change in its penalty clause.

The new clause requires the city to pay a penalty if the contract quantity of 10.71 million gallons per day is exceeded by 10 percent, but the penalty will only be paid for the excess water and no longer for the entire amount of water supplied by the city of Houston. The contract will expire in 2020.

A final payment to Kinsel Industries Inc. of \$119,317.60 was authorized to complete the payment of the Central District Diversion Project. The \$2.4 million project, which had a 2.8 percent underrun of \$68,515.42, diverted sewage flow from San Jacinto Mall to the West District Plant.

The sewage originally flowed through Baytown to the central plant, causing heavy strain on those routes.

The council meeting concluded with members wishing each other and the citizens of Baytown a happy Thanksgiving.

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The Baytown Sun

, No. 134

Telephone Number: 422-8302

Thursday, April 4, 1996

Baytown, Texas 77520

STANDING TALL

STANDING TALL

Art helps Sandra Clark overcome dyslexia's obstacles

By **MAIKE van WIJK**
The Baytown Sun

Growing up in Baytown, Sandra Clark never knew what big things — really big things — were in store in her future.

The young woman who would one day help Texas sculptor David Adickes erect the 67-foot tall statue of General Sam Houston outside of Huntsville hadn't yet discovered art.

In fact, Clark, who didn't discover she was dyslexic until she got to college, had a tough time dealing with school.

But with determination — and a lot of support from family and friends — Clark graduated with top grades from Sam Houston State University in 1994.

Since then, she's become a kindergarten teacher in Clear Lake — and she's left her own Baytown imprint on one of Texas' most impressive new landmarks: The gigantic statue of Houston just outside the city limits of Huntsville.

Clark was selected as an assistant to artist Adickes in 1993.

For about two days per week, Clark sculpted, painted, did concrete construction and helped with repair work after erection of the statue.

"It was a blast," she said. "I loved it because when it was on the ground it was in eight pieces. It was only the last three months that it was taken to the site.

"It was like putting together a jigsaw puzzle with pieces that are independent from each other. You just pray that it'll fit."

Every piece did fit, except for the chestline and one entire shoulder that had to be broken off and repaired.

"After it was erected, it blew me away. It was like I saw it for the first time."

The statue was unveiled Octo-



Courtesy photo

Sandra Clark works on the 67-foot tall Sam Houston statue on the outskirts of Huntsville. The former Baytown resident served as an assistant on the project, which gained national attention.

ber 22, 1994, and has since proven to be quite an attraction for Huntsville.

Clark teaches kindergarteners at Clear Creek Children's Institute.

"There's nothing like going home and planning art and making models for the children.

She said that no matter how

many years she teaches, she wants to give a child as much reinforcement as she received from her mentors.

"I want to be there for someone else because people were there for me," Clark said.

"When you tell a child 'I know you can do it' you've given them a will to do it."

The Write Stuff

Native Baytonian Gene Cartwright's new book scores big

By MAIKE van WUJK
The Baytown Sun

Native Baytonian Gene Cartwright can't live without writing — and it looks like that passion is paying off.

His book, "I Never Played Catch With My Father," is his first published, and even before its entrance to the mainstream market, Hollywood is negotiating for film rights.

"I write not only out of pleasure, but I have to," Cartwright said. "It's like eating, sleeping and breathing. Even in the classroom (in junior high) I would steal away and write."

"I Never Played Catch with My Father" is the story of a son who finds that after accumulating wealth and success, he still lacks the full satisfaction that can only come from memories he never had, memories relating to his relationship with his father.

Cartwright was born and raised in Baytown

among four sisters and three brothers.

"I came from a very religious family," he said, which is reflected in the book. "If I could pick my parents, I would select the same."

He met his future wife, Theresa Sheffield, in first grade at Carver Elementary School. After graduating from Carver High School in 1964, he studied engineering at Prairie View A&M University. Cartwright moved to California in 1979. Three years ago, he began writing full-time.

Much of the book is autobiographical.

"My father was not a sports-minded person. He was so committed to his role in his church and seeing to it that we had a roof and had clothing for eight kids. I think he later regretted that he never came to watch me play," Cartwright said.

Some store names and character names are from Baytown, as well as childhood scenes.

"The scene of going to the store for the first time is real," he said.

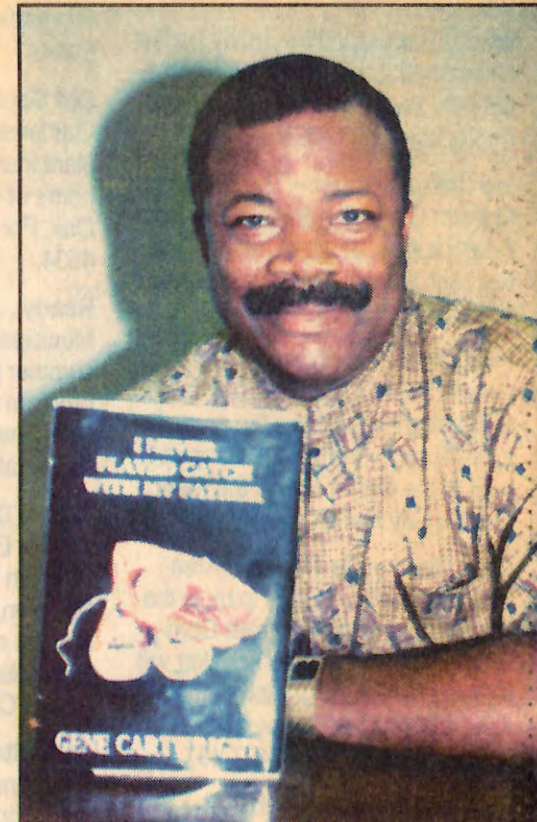
So is Cartwright's passion for baseball. "Baseball is what kept me alive when I was a kid," Cartwright said.

Cartwright's message — that parents play with their children — is delivered on the last page of the book. "Play is serious business with kids. When you play with kids, you identify with them," he said. "You can't wait until they're teen-agers."

The father of sons Gene, 28, and Patrick, 11, and daughter Eugenia, 26, Cartwright has had his share of learning experiences. "My first two kids came along when I was still learning," he said. "My (youngest) son benefits from that."

As a rule of thumb, Cartwright offers the following advice: "Try to create the childhood you wish you had for your children."

Cartwright will be signing books at Sterling



Gene Cartwright, Baytown native, novelist
Municipal Library Tuesday at 7 p.m. Books may not be available in stores yet, but people can buy them at the library Tuesday.

LAUGHING IT UP

Sterling grad earns ticket to success by starting comedy magazine

By **MAIKE van WIJK**
The Baytown Sun

Regina St. Romain thought her life was mapped out when she entered court reporting school in Houston.

However, her life changed when she helped a woman set up a newspaper in the Houston area two years ago, which sparked the idea to start up a comedy magazine.

"She gave me a lot of ideas," said St. Romain, a 1986 Sterling High School graduate. "The paper didn't work out and I thought, 'Well, I can do that myself.'"

On April 18, 1994, the first issue of UBTRiPPiN' magazine was printed and distributed. The magazine is the only comedy entertainment magazine in the United States, and is supported by comedians nationwide, St. Romain said.

St. Romain decided to target comedy because she always enjoyed it.

"When I was growing up I wasn't a class clown, but I would entertain my classmates and family," she said.



St. Romain also enjoyed watching comedy shows like "The Fresh Prince of Bellaire."

"I thought, 'That should be something on paper,'" she said. "With comedy there is so much to laugh about."

The name of the magazine was inspired by two popular songs

by Michael Jackson and Babyface.

"Everyone was using the word 'trippin' and I wanted to use something people would recognize. Then I didn't want them to forget the name."

After two years of success, St. Romain is pleased with the results. The magazine is printed bi-monthly and the 10,000 issues are distributed to select comedy clubs, bookstores and newsstands nation-

"With comedy, there is so much to laugh about."

— Regina St. Romain,
Publisher of UBTrippin
magazine

wide.

The positive response allowed her to make the magazine her full-time job.

"Sometimes I work part-time to keep up with my skills and keep up with what's going on in this world," she said. "It's really fun doing that magazine."

But St. Romain is still amazed at the path her life has taken. "I never planned to do a magazine," she said. "I thought I would be a secretary or a court reporter all my life."

KEEPING KIDS ON THE GO

By **MAIKE van WIJK**
The Baytown Sun

It doesn't take a trip to Disneyworld to make a child happy. As long as the activities are fun and provide fun times with loved ones, anywhere can be an outing, even the park 15 minutes from home.

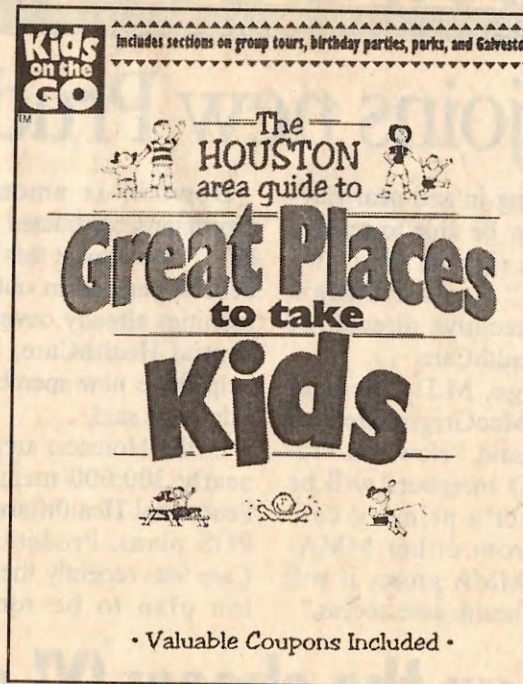
That's what Linda Coe and Diane McNulty found out when they decided to explore Houston and the surrounding areas. The partners are the authors and researchers of "Kids on the Go: The Houston Area Guide to Great Places to Take Kids."

The book provides tips and ideas for parents, relatives, teachers and baby-sitters about places to take children ages preschool to 13.

"Linda saw a Kids on the Go Book in Charleston, S. C., and thought for sure there was a book like that for Houston. But we couldn't find anything," said McNulty.

The partners took it upon themselves to create a book for Houston activities for children, which was published in the summer of 1995. "I take my kids to places all the time," said Coe. "I thought, why not write it myself, I'm doing it anyway."

For one year, McNulty and Coe took their children to Houston area attractions to test



them out and provide tips for others on what to bring, what to expect, and how to get there.

The book has sections for birthday parties, day trips to Galveston, cultural outings and mini adventures.

Each attraction includes a description of activities and facilities, operating hours, cost, phone number and location, as well as

personal comments, like bringing sun screen and insect repellent, and the accessibility of strollers.

"We're trying to provide enough information for moms and dads and grandparents so they will know what they're looking for," said McNulty.

"It is also good for people who are coming in town who have children. Or for people who don't have children and need some ideas for visitors."

McNulty said that time was a big factor in selecting the geographical area. "We wanted places where people could get there in a reasonable amount of time. Galveston is the farthest we went," said McNulty.

They have been taking notes for additions to the bi-annual update of the book, which will be released in Fall 1997.

The women are especially expanding the book's radius to the Baytown and Lake Jackson areas. However, until the summer, the first edition is still a good buy.

"Nothing in the book is outdated," said McNulty. "Everything we mentioned is still open, which I think says a lot about the places."

The book is self-published, but can be found at area bookstores, as well as The Baytown Sun offices, 1301 Memorial Drive. The price is approximately \$16.

Baytown woman writes weight loss book

By **MAIKE van WIJK**

The Baytown Sun

For some women, losing weight after pregnancy can be a difficult task — but Baytown's Lauren Grand is hoping to make the battle against the bulge a little bit easier.

Grand found there weren't many programs available to help new mothers lose weight, which sparked an idea to write a book. "Getting it Back: Recovering the figure post-partum" will be published in December.

"I put all my knowledge together and began to pursue (writing a book) and it got publi-

cized," Grand said. Grand's book,

Grand, a 1984 Lee High School graduate, has been in 11 radio interviews and is also becoming a figure on television, having publicized her book on several shows.

"It is another way of reaching out and doing something for the community," Grand said. "It is not just a book but it is a program."

Grand will be teaching a fitness class at the San Jacinto Mall in May to be certified.

"My three principles are nutrition, aerobics and weight training," Grand said. "Health and

Fitness is such a big thing. I want to target this (book) to postpartum women."

Knowing the pitfalls of trying to lose weight, she advises women not to cut down on calories.

Grand recommends participating in some form of aerobic activity three times per week for 20 to 30 minutes. Grand also recommends weight training because, "Aerobics only raises your metabolism for two to three hours."

Canine-friendly Texas offers many places for you and your pooch

From staff reports

Ever been on a guilt-trip after you came home from a beautiful day on the road and looked into your dog's eyes? Eileen Barish has the solution for you.

The author of various state directories has added another one to her list. "Doin' Texas with Your Pooch" provides suggestions for traveling in Texas without leaving Fido home alone or in a kennel.

The book lists hotels and motels where pets are welcome, and provides tips on how to pack and travel with your dog.

Not only does the book provide hints on where to go, but also how to prevent potential hazards, like aggression prevention. The book also includes pet care tips, as well as guidelines for owners.

The 600-plus page book proves that Texas is a very pet-friendly place, including the Baytown and Houston areas.

It makes the perfect gift for your dog-lover friends and family, or your own dog.

"Doin' Texas with Your Pooch" is available at The Baytown Sun, 1301 Memorial Drive during regular business hours.

Call 422-8302 to reserve your copy. Fido will definitely appreciate it.

Here's some tidbits for the book:

WHAT TO DO

Impress your dog with thousands of hikes, parks, lakes, forests and other dog-friendly



Author Eileen Barish with her canine pals Max and Rosie.

recreation.

- Consider a canoeing adventure with your pooch through the Big Thicket waterways on an unforgettable Timber Ridge Tour (page 104).

- Take your bow-wow to a powwow at the Alabama Coushatta Indian Reservation (page 317).

- Give your hound something to howl about with a free concert at the Miller Outdoor Theater (page 277).

- Sniff out prehistoric tracks with Dino at Dinosaur Valley State Park (page 240).

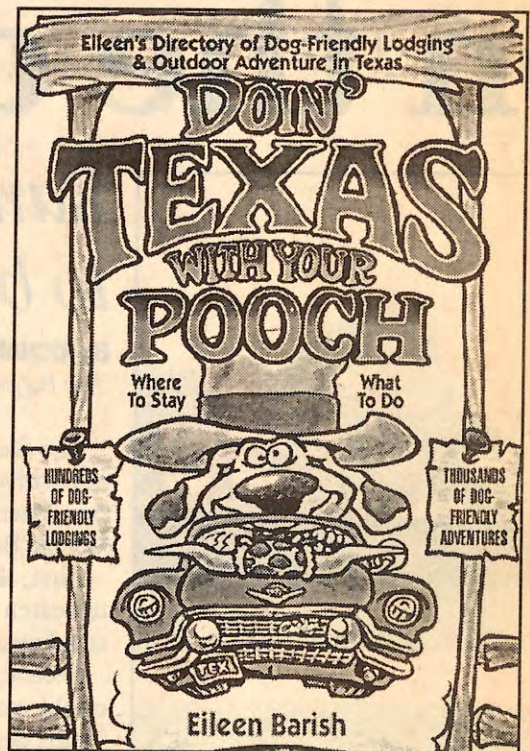
- Set your woofers' tail in motion with a trip to Fort Worth's Water Garden (page 226).

- Beachcomb with the wet wagger along 80 miles of Padre Island National Seashore (page 155).

- Explore hundreds of miles of hiking trails with your hiking hound in more than 100 state parks (see Index).

HOW TO DO IT

Check out the extensive training section for some handy travel-



ing tips.

- How To Pack For Your Pooch (page 483).

- Traveling By Plane (page 495).

- Travel Training (page 473).

Old dogs can learn new tricks.

- Crate Training Is Great Training (page 479).

- 10 Ways To Prevent Aggression (page 481).

- Training Do's And Don'ts (page 478).

Make a night of it with the pooch.

- Lodging Guidelines (page 24).

- Canine Camper (page 546).

Enhance your travel knowledge.

- 100 Ways To Be A Better Hiker (page 520).

- 37 Ways To Have A Better Vacation (page 498).