

Editor: Henny van Dijk

[www.uthro.org](http://www.uthro.org)

June, 2024

## The June Event ...

## It's June—Hurricane Season



### June 20—Historic Harbor Tour & Dolphin Watch

See Galveston Harbor up close aboard Seagull II on the Historic Harbor Tour and Dolphin Watch, Galveston Historic Seaport's 50-foot twin-engine motor vessel. Fast, stable and sheltered, she was built specifically for harbor sight-seeing excursions and education and is a perfect platform for waterborne experiential learning. The boat is U.S. Coast Guard certified and her operators are fully licensed and knowledgeable about the history and lore of her home waters. Seagull II offers soft drinks and bottled water for sale and has a comfortable main deck, sheltered from sun and rain. An open upper deck affords a full panorama of water and sky.



When I took the tour several years ago we encountered several dolphins swimming along so keep your cameras ready for a chance sighting of those graceful animals. For those of you who need a walker or rolator better not take this tour because it is impossible to board the vessel. This is a pre paid trip and payment should be sent to Margaret Zambrano via Zelle, [zambrano1123@gmail.com](mailto:zambrano1123@gmail.com), or a check by June 14th.

**The fee is \$15.**

The Harris County bus will leave OCB at 10AM and drops you off at the pier for the one-hour tour, after which we will have lunch at the Shark Shack. We will arrive back at OCB about 4:00 PM



Text or call Janice Thomas by June 14 to say "I'm going" by phone or email - 832-515-0280 or [flyte99@yahoo.com](mailto:flyte99@yahoo.com)



The 2024 hurricane season runs from June through November, and it is important to be prepared for when storms develop. Having emergency plans in place is critical to ensuring personal safety during severe weather.

**Know your evacuation zone.** Learn your evacuation zone to determine whether you will need to evacuate when a hurricane threatens. Don't travel hundreds of miles — only go far enough to avoid hurricane hazards such as flooding and tornadoes. Know your evacuation route but plan an alternate route and a place to stay. Visit Harris County's emergency preparedness website [ReadyHarris.org](http://ReadyHarris.org), and find the [Hurricane Evacuation ZIP Zone Map](#) to find your zone and routes by ZIP code.

**Have a disaster supply kit.** Gather needed supplies for seven to 10 days. Don't forget your specific needs like medications, powered devices, and pet supplies, and keep cash on hand.

**Make a family emergency communication plan.** When inclement weather strikes, there is no guarantee all family members will be home or nearby. Think about where your family will meet and how you will keep in touch. It's important to accommodate medical or other special needs, including durable medical equipment, oxygen, a wheelchair, a service animal, or medication refills. For more information on disaster preparedness for people with disabilities, visit the [Independent Living Research Utilization website](#).

**Preparing at home:** Banking and credit card networks may be inoperable after a disaster. Keep cash on hand. Copies of insurance policies — home, auto, and health — should be placed in a watertight bag. These documents should travel with you in the event you evacuate. Leave another copy at home in a zip-top bag in your freezer. It is also a great idea to take pictures or video of your house inside and out for insurance use after the storm.

Keep a car charger and rechargeable battery power banks on hand for cell phones and other electronic devices. For additional information on preparedness at home, visit [The American Red Cross: How to Prepare for Emergencies](#).

### *In this Issue*

Page 1 June Event; hurricane season is here  
 Page 2 A personal odyssey; short notices  
 Page 3 UTHRO travels to Italy—a look back  
 Page 4 ...and now for something completely different

## A Personal Odyssey...

I hope you will allow me to look back on our 41 year love-affair with our home on Goodrum Rd. It was love at first sight when we walked in the model home enamored with the high cathedral ceilings, skylights and the solid brick wall with the fireplace. However our first reality check with homeownership came on Christmas Day just 25 days after taking possession of our home—the severe winter of 1983 which froze several pipes in the attic and realizing that Houston doesn't do deep freezes well. Luckily Yoka had the name of the plumbing contractor who came out immediately, repaired 2 busted pipes and our Christmas dinner went on as planned. And because this was done before many plumbing companies discovered the idea of hiking prices the total bill was \$85.00—No kidding! We celebrated many important events in our lives like the "silver anniversary" in 1987, 2 HS graduations from Spring Branch High, Stef & Monique graduating from UH and the forever in our memory burned arrival of Scooter in 1990 who spend 18 years of his life being a great companion. We also reached our Golden Anniversary and Diamant one in that home so leaving that place was not an easy decision, but during the past 2 years in which we handed control of tasks we had done ourselves for many years, we discovered that we needed help with cleaning the house or taking care of the yard especially after 2 major freezes which decimated the bushes and plants.

Then during a visit from our son in April to experience the Total Eclipse, he asked me "what is your plan...?" and I had no idea what he was talking about.. He explained that obviously our health was deteriorating and if we would like to make sure we would be able to move to a independent senior living community we might have to face very long waiting lists—time to get planning!

I made a list of 6 communities, found their strengths and weaknesses, made appointments and found out that one was way out of our resources, three didn't really want us because they were catering to the "active 55+" crowd and if we wanted to stay in our neighborhood, after all we had lived ever since arriving in Houston in either Spring Branch or West Branch, just N. and S. of Clay Rd. we looked at Brookdale Memorial City. We visited that place and we knew almost instinctively that we had arrived at our new destination. They are taking care of a number of things we before had to pay for—electricity, water, food and ... we would stay in our familiar surroundings, keep our PCP and dentist as well as other contacts.

Recognizing as Bette Davis once said that "Old age ain't no place for sissies..." was the first step in doing our homework and find the next residence for the two of us and after two weeks in our new environment I believe we made the right decision and found a new home.

And just as in 1983 we experienced a major upheaval—the power outage of 2024 when we had to live for the better part of 4 days without electricity and with flashlights and sandwiches. However the management improvised beautifully over the weekend by bringing out butane bottles and BBQ grills for hamburgers on Saturday and hot tamales on Sunday. It certainly gave us confidence that we did find a place we could continue to live, grow and spend the latter part of our lives being taking care off. So for those of our UTHRO friends who knew our address as 10306 Goodrum Rd, it is from this day forward 11900 Barryknoll Ln. #2111, Houston, TX, 77024. Looking forward to stay in touch. And don't be strangers.

Henny & Yoka van Dijk

## Some Short Announcements ...

For those of us who experienced it

**It's official: Houston just experienced a *derecho*.**

What is that, and have we ever experienced one before?

The National Weather Service has concluded that Thursday's severe storms in Houston constituted a *derecho*.

Meteorologists have debated the definition of one for years. And we still don't have a concrete, universally accepted definition. However, progress was made after a 2011 storm that hit the Southeast and a 2012 *derecho* that ravaged the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest.

Ultimately, NOAA/NWS defines a *derecho* as a continuous or intermittent path of wind damage from a squall line of thunderstorms, bow echo, or quasi-linear convective system (QLCS) that extends at least 400 miles and is at least 60 miles wide. In other words: It's a swath of wind damage from mostly non-tornadic thunderstorms that extends for 400+ miles and is at least 60 miles wide.

What sets a *derecho* apart is the wind damage. It's not normal. It's not a couple trees on power lines. It's a lot of wind damage over a long path or.. tornado-like wind damage not caused by a tornado.

### A Heads-Up for the Retiree Benefits Meeting

For retirees it would be July 12, 2024 – at OCB 1851 Crosspoint Ave Rio Grande room from 10am to 12pm.



**ENGLAND & SCOTLAND**

**After the Roaring Success of Italy, Book Your Seats for England & Scotland**

**April 24 – May 5, 2025**

UTHRO Travels is off on another adventure! Join us in discovering the countries of England and Scotland.

I am very pleased to offer you, your family, and friends the opportunity to travel with the UTHRO Travel group for the Best of England & Scotland tour!

Barbara Kelly

### UTHRO OFFICERS 2024

**President** Barbara Kelly

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**Treasurer** Margaret Zambrano

**Newsletter Editor** Henny van Dijk

**Web Administrators** Pat Grealy & Glenn Schreyer



## UTHRO Traveled Italy in 2024... A Look Back !

Barbara Kelly tour organizer and generally a great supporter of UTHRO's efforts to encourage traveling abroad send me her impressions of the most recent adventure—Italy. Her report was unfortunately too long for the newsletter but you can read the full report on our website. Here are the highlights:



### Springtime in Italy is gorgeous!

Our adventure began in Venice with a water taxi from the airport to the front door of our hotel. The first of many water taxis. We

spent the afternoon exploring the streets and many canals of Venice, boated to the Isle of Murano and were treated to master class in glass making and glass blowing. We took a guided walking tour of the Piazza San Marco (St. Mark's Square), the golden Byzantine Basilica di San Marco, the lavish Doge's Palace, and the famous Bridge of Sighs.

Early Morning on Day 3 we were off to Bologna, one of the most beautiful and best-preserved historic districts in Europe with towers from the Middle Ages. We enjoyed a guided walking tour through the old university city and were delighted with a typical lunch of Tagliatelle Al Ragu and then continued our journey to Florence or Firenze.

It is one my favorite cities and we spent 2 ½ days exploring it all!. The next day we began with a walking tour through the Piazza Della Signoria, the magnificent Duomo and Ponte Vecchio (the old bridge) lined with craft shops. The tour continued to The Accademia Gallery world-famous for Michelangelo's statue of David. Twelve of us booked, a guided tour of the Uffizi Museum. Truly a bucket list item for me.

Day 5 found us in Pisa for a tour of The Leaning Tower and the Duomo Square with its four masterpieces of medieval architecture – the bell tower, the cathedral, the baptistry and the cemetery.

Day 6 we were on our way to Rome. On our way we visited Civita di Bagnoregio, an ancient Etruscan city perched on a steep crumbling rock formation. The city is isolated from surrounding cities and can only be reached by an upward climb over a long bridge connecting it with Bagnoregio. About half of the brave souls in our group made the climb and reported that it was magnificent. We reached Rome in late afternoon exhausted and enjoyed an early dinner and then to bed. Early the next morning several of us walked to the Trevi Fountain and the Spanish Steps. Of course we got lost on the way back, but enjoyed strolling the streets of Rome and the fragrance of the Orange Blossoms on the Orange Tree lined streets. Then the group was off to The Vatican for a guided tour of the Vatican Museum, the Sistine Chapel, and St. Peter's Basilica. I only have one word – magnificent!

The next day was spent touring Imperial Rome. We began at the Colosseum, walked under the Arch of Constantine, and marveled at the ruins of the Roman Forum.

Day 9 found us on our tour bus headed further south toward the Amalfi Coast. Along the way we stopped in Pompeii for a tour of the ancient city. As you may recalled Pompeii is the Roman city that in 79 A.D. was buried under thick volcanic ash after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Pompeii is one of the most significant proofs of Roman civilization and provides a look into the art, customs, trades, and everyday life of the Romans. Pompeii was also on my bucket list and I felt privileged to experience this architectural wonder.

We arrived in Sorrento in the late afternoon and our initial introduction to the Amalfi Coast left us awestruck. Little did we know that was just the beginning. Our hotel sat atop a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean. The view was breathtaking. Fourteen of us ventured into town for dinner and happened upon a family-owned Italian restaurant. We meet the mother whose recipes her son, the chef, uses daily, the sister and the brother. They made us feel like we were part of the family. We were even serenaded by an accordion player! What great fun!

The morning bought us on the bus heading down the Amalfi Coast to the city of Amalfi. The nerve rattling ride on the narrow, twisting roads was soon forgotten as we were awed by the view. Not only was the water of the Mediterranean stunning, but the flowers, the hillside villages and the miles and miles of lemon trees were equally magnificent. We spent the day in Amalfi and even visited a family owned and operated Limoncello distillery. Of course, we sampled their wares and brought some home. We then took a ferry ride to Maiori where our bus met us for the return trip to Sorrento.

The next morning took us to the Isle of Capri! The ferry ride over and back was great fun as we saw more of the Amalfi coastline. Our day was spent with a guided tour of the beautiful island with its awe-inspiring views, wonderous gardens and of course abundance of lemon trees. Many of us took a boat excursion around the island to experience the famous grottos of Capri with their iridescent waters.

Too soon it was time to return to Houston. The consensus of the group was that it was the best trip we ever experienced.



Next year's trip to England & Scotland is anticipated to be just as wonderful. I hope you will be joining us.

Barbara Kelly

## **UTHRO**

The University of Texas Houston Retiree Organization  
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Houston, TX 77054

*To update your address or phone number  
please contact us at 713 906 0437*

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### **And Now For Something Completely Different... Ode To The Spell Checker...!**

Eye have a spelling checker, it came with my pea sea  
It plainly marques four my revue miss steaks eye kin knot sea.  
Eye strike a key and type a word and weight 4 it 2 say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write it shows me straight a weigh.  
As soon as a mist ache is maid it nose bee fore two long  
And eye can put the error rite Its rare lea ever wrong  
Eye have run this poem threw it I am sure your pleased to no  
Its letter perfect and the weigh my chequer tolled me sew !

*Www.writerswrite. Podterous.com*