

The Burton Bulletin

May 2026



**The Burton Bulletin is a monthly publication
For the Burton Texas area.**

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**Don't forget Memorial Day
May 25, 2026**

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***TRY THAT IN A SMALL TOWN – A Series
Highlighting Burton Blessings
What’s Great About Our Town: The Seasons Come
and Go; Locals Don’t Complain
By Ned Ross, contributing writer***

We get a lot of out-of-town visitors in our tiny town, and I enjoy talking with them about where they are from and why they are in Burton. While visiting with a woman from the West Coast last month, she pointed out how unpleasant the Texas climate can be. She had been here during the dead of summer, and she was not happy with heat.

I couldn’t resist the opportunity to share a little Texas reality. I pointed out to her that the founding fathers and mothers of this state endured a lot to remain here. Try surviving here without electricity, heating and cooling, refrigeration for food, lighting at night, and no medical help. Folks in West Texas say “everything bites back here,” referring to reptiles and plants of all kinds. A short walk across that arid region validates that statement. The farmers and ranchers in Texas, I elaborated, could not avoid the wild swings in temperatures and precipitation. Tradesmen of all types deal with it daily – even boiling attics when AC goes out and scalding rooftops. I told her that these are tough people, folks who are up for a challenge and work through it. She said that we had grit, and I said that’s exactly right. And that grit is what you see in media as the image of Texas – resilient people who endure and who pride themselves on being tough. Then I closed with those who cannot stand it, leave. I think she got it.

While the freezing temperatures rolled through our town in January, local ranchers told me their cattle were delivering calves, a natural response to the stress of the weather. So not only do our food-raisers deal with the weather, but they also are working in the worst of it, often in the middle of the night. Enjoy that burger and glass of milk!

Despite it all, complaining about the weather is never in season in Burton. Heat is inevitable, the discomfort is universal, and complaining just makes it worse. If you move to a city where folks spend maybe 5 minutes in the shade of a roof to fill their gas tanks, you would think they were about to melt when the groaning starts. To be fair, it must be hard on makeup... People can float in their suburban swimming pools while sipping on iced drinks and whine about the heat. But not in Burton. Heck, we even have a Yankee or two in town from WAY up north, and they deal with it just fine. All are welcome here because all of us at some point in our lineage came from somewhere else. Only those with grit stay.

What a blessing it is to endure the heat, the high winds, the freezing rain, the deluges and droughts. We are all better for it, and those who are unwilling to endure it are not willing to call Texas home as we do. This is no land for weaklings, to paraphrase a movie title. I’ve already “relocated” 3 copperheads this spring, and I haven’t yet been down in the pasture to look for more.

Perhaps the collective friendliness of Texans is a subconscious acknowledgment of dealing with some common hardships to be able to surround ourselves with the kindest people on the planet. The Bible Belt certainly has a bit to do with it, but I also think it is a mutual respect for having grit.

Take a vacation to the playground called California. Inhale some cool air in Colorado or British Columbia. Take in the rich history of Boston or the shopping in NYC. All of those places offer beauty and fun, but they aren’t the Lone Star State. Genuine Texans will always find their way back. And that’s what makes Burton great.

Walter the Debonair Donkey



Walter lives right inside Burton and is a favorite of families that surround him. He is a quadruped extraordinaire, regal, charming, handsome, and stylish. His “wait-staff,” Lauren and Ned, are at his, and two other donkeys, beck and call. Join me each month as we introduce Walter to a growing group of admirers in Burton.

Stay Tuned!
by Lynda Zajicek

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City of Burton Regular Meeting

A regular meeting was held on April 14th at Burton City Hall in a standing room only.

Tiffany Eckhardt addressed city council by stating that there is no official records being kept in the minutes of concerned citizen’s comments and presentations.

Lynda Zajicek addressed the city council that according to a report from Texas A&M that BNB’s in Burton is having a negative effect on the city. She stated that BNB’s bring visitors to Burton and during their stay, they frequent businesses which aid in contributing toward the tax base of our city.

Dale Sxhwartz, a former city council member, was appointed temporary secretary until the city is able to hire a permanent one. He will receive no pay for this temporary tenure.

Carol Jackso, Washington County Election Administrator, did a presentation of the voting machine to be used for the city council election.

The city council approved a bid from American Fence Company to replace a gate at the sewer plant for the cost of \$425.

Mayor Buck said that the ribbon cutting for Well #5 has been rescheduled for July, mostly because we cannot drink from it yet and don’t have clearance for it yet. Also, it was reported that Well Water #4 was not installed properly but the city has been granted an exception for it. The city also received an exception for the sanitary easement for Water Well #5 since the landowner has not signed off yet.

The city council went into executive session to discuss the hiring of AOKA for an engineering review of the construction plans for Burton ISD and to discuss the possible hiring of a candidate for city secretary.

After 90 minutes the council reconvened into regular session. They approved the hiring of AOKA for a one-time review of construction plan for the school. Mayor Buck and Superintendent Curry will meet to discuss the plans.

The council plans to meet in a special called meeting on April 28th to introduce the candidate for city secretary and to finalize the amended general and utility funds budgets.

City of Burton Special Meeting

A special meeting was held on April 28th at the Burton City Hall. The first item on the agenda was the approval of the amended fiscal year 2025-2026 general and utility funds budgets, reflecting actual income and expenses for the 4th quarter.

The second item was to nominate and hire Amanda Klehm for the position of City Secretary. The council went into executive session and shortly thereafter reconvened back into the special meeting. The council unanimously approved hiring her. She was sworn in by Acting Secretary, Dale Schwartz

Amanda has served at deputy city secretary for Brenham and is co-owner of Sew Stitches Boutique located at 1403 S Day Street in Brenham. She and her husband reside in Chappell Hill.

Amanda Klehm



Photo by Tiffany Eckhardt

Blood Drive

The Latium-Wesley-Greenvine Volunteer Fire Department invites you to participate in their Spring Blood Drive on May 9th, 10:00am to 2:30pm at Brandt Hall in the fire department.

To sign up, go to www.commitforlife.org
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Life & Times of Pete Horn

After years of working in Russia, it took some time to regroup. During that period, I did some diesel generator work, but nothing major. Then, the founders of a company named Gemma called to ask me to manage a 44 MW plant to be built in Brazil, in a city on the Amazon River. The design engineering was scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro. For about three years, I lived and worked in Brazil, and the world felt different in every way. I always considered Brazil a blessing and a reward after Russia. The cultures and societies were polar opposites. Once again, thank you, Lord. For the first six months, I commuted from an apartment on the beach at Leblon, Rio de Janeiro, where the engineering and design work was done, to the building site on the Amazon River in Manaus, Amazonas. The culture was addictive, the people open and engaging, and the environment—with timeless architecture and lush greenery everywhere—both Rio and Manaus were wonderful.

Several members of the Brazilian National Football (soccer in the US) team and their families lived in the LeBlon apartment building, where I stayed. One day, as I was heading to the lobby, a woman overheard me talking on the phone. She was the wife of one of the players, a British national, and asked if I minded speaking English, then offered to tell me about all the great places to visit in Rio. It was a fantastic offer. I attended many practice sessions (1996-98) and had the chance to see some of the finest world-class athletes play, as well as meet their families. These football players were in incredible condition, and witnessing all this up close was unmatched. The design work went smoothly, my Brazilian Portuguese improved, and just as I was settling in, I moved to Manaus full-time. The one cultural aspect I will always miss from Rio is the tradition of individuals putting out a small table and two chairs on the sidewalk in front of their homes every Friday. The idea was that passersby could sit, chat for a while, and enjoy some finger food. Once I understood what it was about, I took great pleasure in visiting with those folks after work as I walked to the park to catch a ride to LeBlon.

Full-time work on the power plant consumed all my time and energy, but it was impossible not to see and appreciate the fact that I was living in the Amazon. No matter how many photos I could publish here, they couldn't capture what it was like to live in the Amazon. The plant site was on the north shore of the Amazon River; it was the first IPP (Independent Power Project) in Brazil, and I was the Construction Manager. The plant was set up as a 44 MWe simple cycle with two combustion turbines and one generator. The plant provides power to Manaus, but the first place we ran a direct line to was a children's hospital. While the big economics were providing the city and the port of Manaus with power, getting power to the hospital was personal. The team we had was excellent, a few hundred brasileiros, six engineering/technologists from Houston, and me. Later, I assisted GE with an 180MW plant and arranged support for two other power projects.



As you can see, Manaus is 1200 miles up river from the Atlantic and receives direct shipping from the EU.

I lived comfortably in Manaus, staying at the Tropical Executive Hotel nestled on Ponta Negra, a picturesque area where the mighty Amazon and Negro Rivers converge. The hotel was luxurious and beautifully appointed, offering a distinct sense of indulgence with its elegant decor and top-tier amenities. The surrounding area was bustling with tourists from around the world, creating a lively atmosphere that included memorable moments such as sharing drinks with the iconic Jimmy Buffett and being (pseudo) referenced in one of his books. Local regional politicians frequently visited with their friends and families, adding to the vibrant and dynamic ambiance of the neighborhood. It was convenient to stay in a compound where all essentials — shops, eateries, and services—were within walking distance. I definitely noticed a few extra pounds from indulging in the rich local cuisine. During my time in Manaus, I also lived in various apartments scattered throughout the city, and for a while, in a shipping container converted into a cozy residence. Nothing went to waste in this resourceful environment; shipping containers were transformed into shops and homes, while crates were carefully disassembled to craft lumber. Old hardhats found new life as chicken nests or were modified for fishing tools. Since I worked every day, I mostly avoided typical tourist activities. Instead, I spent my time with staff, exploring the local scene, visiting small, humble restaurants that resembled simple huts, enjoying fresh fruits sourced directly from the jungle, and discovering hidden local spots known only to residents. The Amazon region is home to over 100 tribes, each with their unique cultures, along with significant communities of Japanese, Korean, and European expatriates, creating an incredible melting pot of diverse cultures and traditions.

To make a long story short, we put the unit online ahead of schedule and met the budget. The “commissioning run” is normally about checking things out, fixing what needs fixing, and turning it over to the permanent operators. Not in Brazil. Remember the Children’s Hospital?

(Continue on page 6)

Continue from page 5- Life & Times of Pete Horm

The director there made some phone calls, and in the middle of wrapping things up, a group of folks came up to the unit en masse. The local bishop came and blessed the unit and my staff. The hospital director took out a megaphone and announced that no children had died since we started producing power. That was it. Tears flowed, and everyone was hugging and kissing. A remarkable place, remarkable people, and culture. I've been involved with many projects, but that moment will stay in my heart forever. Manaus, the capital of Amazonas state, is a vibrant city situated on the banks of the Negra and Solimões rivers. Known for its lush rainforests, rich biodiversity, and the meeting of two major rivers, Manaus is a hub of cultural diversity and economic activity, blending traditional Amazonian customs with modern urban life.

I was blessed to have a great local support staff, and because of this staff, I experienced the Amazon. I worked through the Thanksgiving to New Years' holidays there one year and was taken to a little village north of Manaus on the Rio Negra. The folks in this village had the custom of setting out a board down the main street as a table, hewn from a single tree. The table was roughly 4" thick, about 10' wide, and around 80' long. On the 24th of December, all the locals brought food and drink out to this table and partied from early morning on the 24th until midnight on the 25th. As a guest, I brought (with the help of staff) about 30 pounds of spiced fish from "the city". On the first day, a group of children insisted I join them in the river, which I did. As I was about to get in the water, I thought I was hallucinating... playing with the children was a pink dolphin, then there were more. The "boto" in their culture is a kindred spirit that grows up among the river people, and the children play with them as we would play with a dog. To look a creature so beautiful in the eye, to pet its skin, to listen to it chirp in recognition of words and people, was surreal.

After drying off, it was time to start celebrating. Folks were very tolerant of my poor Portuguese, and I found myself engaged in many conversations. The predominant topic was the "Emerald Sea," as locals call the Amazon Forest, and the foods and customs from where I lived (Maine, at that time). We ate a feast of many types of fish prepared in many ways, along with other meats, including Anaconda, Cayman, and Monkey. The Monkey was a difficult meal to look at; to me it looked like a child... no bueno. The drinks were a wide variety of local fruit juices, local beer, and a bit of homemade wine. Friendship and the welcoming of the local culture were, as always, a pleasure. I turned in early, knowing travel would commence the next morning.

On the afternoon of the 26th, we went upriver several miles and deep into the jungle (the old Land Rovers were TOUGH). When the trail became too rough to drive, we started walking toward the sound of falling water. I really don't have words for the sights, but the dense green thinned out, and in front of us was a waterfall in the middle of lush green. Probably 150 yards wide with a 20' drop. I stood there, awestruck, trying to take it all in... and then I sat there... the sight, the sound, the unique aroma of the Amazon, Orchids, the size of a basketball. I was

in sensory overload. I have stood in magnificent cathedrals in Europe, in the hall of a 1,200-year-old mosque in Tatarstan, and in places of worship throughout the world, but I had never been so overwhelmed in a spiritual way, as I was at that waterfall. The guide sat with me and some staff who had brought me. Despite the three or four languages spoken in reverent whispers, I could feel how special this place was to the locals and intuitively understood. Since that day, I refer to that place as the most spiritual cathedral on earth. We were only there for a few hours, but for me, it was the grander version of how I felt when (in my teens) I stood on the spot at Walden Pond where Thoreau sat and wrote the book. Such moments erase time and bring a depth of feeling for which there are no words.

We returned to the village, and the next two days we made our way back to Manaus via what I referred to as BYOH (bring your own hammock) riverboats. There are hundreds of these boats, and they travel throughout the Amazonian river system like floating buses. There are other "Tour Boats" for tourists that have cabins, but this open "Hammock Boat" is typical for the locals, with the next step being their personal canoes. The canoes are generally either planks of wood or dugouts, sometimes powered by an adapted engine, an actual outboard motor, or just paddles. Think "family car".



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**BYOH River boat in the flow from the Solimoes River....
Having joined the Rio Negra flowing into the Amazon
River. The rivers don't blend for hundreds of miles.**

The hammocks sway gently with the motion of the open Amazon River boat as the diesel engine hums rhythmically, creating a soothing backdrop for the journey. The sounds of samba and a mixture of languages—spoken by tribespeople and Portuguese speakers—fill the air. Throughout the trip, children wander around selling food, drinks, and gum. Occasionally, I would apologize, saying, "Please forgive my poor ability in Portuguese," and they would respond by speaking a little slower, some even practicing their "TV English" with me. The journey felt surprisingly short and was totally immersive.

(Continue on page 7)

Continue from page 6 – Life & Times of Pete Horn

Everything in Manaus was gearing up for the New Year's celebration. Ponta Negra was hopping every night. The food, the caipirinhas, music, and dancing were everywhere. I spent some time sightseeing, visiting a number of local restaurants to enjoy foods I had never experienced anywhere else in the world. Trucks drove around the city streets with sound systems playing Boi or Samba, with women dancing. Just amazing joy. One moment to share: I was standing, waiting to cross the road near a bus stop in the city. A music truck was heading toward us, and the music wafted up to us faintly, then louder. I'm not sure when it started, but a few folks started moving to the music, then more than a dozen people began moving to the music as well, and by the time the truck went by, folks were in full dance mode. As it continued into the distance, the folks moved with it, and the movements seemed to fade with the sound. Those couple days flew by, and some staff secretly got together to celebrate my 46th birthday in a way I'm not likely to forget. We got into the company van and drove for about an hour. Finally, we stopped on high ground along the Amazon River. I followed them on a winding path down to the river's edge, where there was a raft made of massive rain forest trees that appeared to be 12-14' in diameter and maybe 100' long. The upper surfaces of the trees were flattened, and they planked over them to create a dance floor, band stand, and café on this amazing raft. So, there I celebrated my birthday, and at midnight, what seemed like a thousand little boats, camps, and homes started firing all types of fireworks into the air. The splashes of color reflected vividly off the surface of the river as we danced our way into the new year. I awoke into the new year, having slept in a dugout on the shore of the Amazon River, to the sounds of the jungle waking up around me. The next few days were peaceful and calm, and from then on, I felt at home.

Once the plant was commissioned, I was hired by several local companies to integrate power and thermal systems into the luxury high-rise buildings they were constructing. Everything had to be reliable and invisible to the buyers of these luxury condominiums.

Sharing this causes me to think about the fact that this was 27 years ago. A very different world back then, and I was in a very different part of my life's journey. Incredibly blessed, I am thankful for where this journey has taken me and where I have landed after so many thousands of miles. I hope my reminiscence hasn't bored you. If it has, blame Dave - LOL!

Article by Pete Horn

Some people's noses and feet are built backwards. Their feet smell and their noses run.

Pencils could be made with erasers on both ends, but what would be the point?

Sleeping comes so naturally to me. I could do it with my eyes closed.

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As I get older, I remember all the people I lost along the way. Maybe a career as a tour guide wasn't the right choice.

I went to the doctor with a suspicious-looking mole. He said they all look that way and I should have left him in the garden.

I always take an extra pair of socks when I play golf, just in case I get a hole in one.

Whenever I think of the past, it brings back so many memories.

Everywhere is within walking distance, if you have the time.

My friend told me he installed a skylight in his apartment. The people who lived above him were not happy.

I watched the Indy 500 and I was thinking, if they have left earlier, they wouldn't have to drive so fast.

I like to reminisce with people I don't know.

Do Lipton employees take coffee breaks?

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