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Frankly Speaking –

Taste Buds

by Frank Jordan

As I drank the scalding coffee I felt the numbness cover my tongue and my taste seemed to disappear. What happened? After some thought, I realized my taste buds were literally burned by the extremely hot liquid.

But what are taste buds? Research revealed humans have about 10,000 taste buds that decline to about 5,000 as we age. Taste buds range from 30 to 60

microns, or slightly more than 1/1,000 inch in diameter. Attached to each taste bud are even smaller microscopic hairs called microvilli.

These taste buds are located around papillae on the upper surface of the tongue, the soft palate, upper esophagus and epiglottis. Okay, I didn't know what the epiglottis is either, but I looked it up and discovered it's a flap made of elastic cartilage tissue attached to the entrance of the larynx or your voice box. What this interprets to is that the taste buds are not just on your tongue, but also on the roof of your mouth and in the back of your throat.

On a simpler note, the taste buds are the receptors for taste; including salty, sour, bitter, sweet and umami. Wait a minute – What the heck is “umami?” “Umami,” meaning savory, officially became the fifth taste in 1985 and represents the taste found in meat, cheese and soy sauce that creates a coating sensation over your tongue. The next time you enjoy your steak eating out, tell the chef it was truly “umami” and watch his or her expression.

Let's get something else clear. Different areas of the tongue do not have different tastes assigned to them because all tastes are detected by all areas of the tongue. The process is taste receptor cells, or taste buds, come in contact with food particles dissolved in saliva. The taste buds then send that information to the gustatory, or taste, area of the brain via some of the cranial nerves. Geeze, this taste bud thing is a lot more complicated than I originally thought!

About 25 percent of folks are “super-tasters” with more than 1,000 taste buds per square centimeter, while another 25 percent are “non-tasters” with only about 40 per square centimeter. As a life-long sufferer of allergies, I learned at a young age and was confirmed by an allergist that those with severe allergies taste primarily by

“feel” with damaged taste buds, rather than the taste forms of salty, sour, bitter, sweet and umami. Folks with allergies love the cold such as ice cream and Jello, but almost unanimously detest foods that taste “slick” like boiled okra and Brussel sprouts.

Now you know how you taste things, but to add to the confusion, about 75 percent of what you think is your taste actually comes from your sense of smell! Did you know babies are born with taste buds on the insides of their cheeks and have more than adults?

What about other animals? Cats cannot detect sweetness, the suction cups on octopus' tentacles are

covered in taste buds and a butterfly's taste buds are located on their feet and tongue. Enough.

All of this inquiry began because I drank some coffee that was too hot for the thousandth time and cremated some taste buds. But what can I do? You don't put Vaseline or a Band-Aid on your tongue! Answer? You can drink some cold water to cool your mouth, but you'll have to wait about two weeks for the replacement of those damaged taste buds.

Frankly speaking, a nap is in order now that in good taste we've titillated your curiosity while having nipped this knowledge lack in and about the bud!

Fundraisers at Chambers County Museum

WALLISVILLE - The Chambers County Museum at Wallisville, filled with the rich history and artifacts of bygone days, is dedicated to being a “Keeper of the Past” for Chambers and surrounding counties. We are dependent upon you for charitable donations to accomplish this worthy endeavor. This year we are hosting Heritage Day 2025, our primary fundraising event, on Saturday, October 25. We are currently looking for sponsors to partner with us to make Heritage Day as successful as it was last year.

This year's celebration focuses on the Chambers County seafood industry. We will honor the legacy of the Hisler Seafood Company and Jeri's Oyster Company. We are excited to present our

seafood industry display to you.

We have several opportunities available to partner with us – financial sponsorships, donate live or silent auction items, prize drawing tickets and fish fry dinners. If you fancy yourself a good gumbo cook, come compete in our gumbo cookoff.

As always we look forward to making this a success together.

Our historical celebration will be held at the museum in Wallisville, 20136 Interstate 10, Wallisville, Texas 77597.

Donations to the Wallisville Heritage Park Foundation, Inc., a Section 501(c)(3) organization, are tax deductible.

Marie Hughes
Museum Director
409-389-2252

Dayton Rotarians hear about human trafficking, domestic violence

DAYTON - The Rotary Club of Dayton held its weekly luncheon Thurs., August 28, at the Dayton Community Center, where members and guests heard a sobering presentation on the dangers of human trafficking and domestic violence. The featured speaker, Brad Payton, emphasized the urgent need for awareness and vigilance to protect families and children from these crimes in Liberty County and across Texas.

Payton opened by defining human trafficking as the exploitation of one person by another through force, fraud, or coercion for labor, services, or sex. Unlike smuggling, which involves moving people

across borders, trafficking is about exploiting them once in place. “This is the exploitation of one human by another human,” Payton said, noting that it affects all ages and can occur in nearly every industry.

Houston, with its sprawling highway system and proximity to international borders, serves as a major hub for traffickers. According to Payton, the Texas Department of Public Safety reported 52 victims rescued in early 2024 from the Huntsville-to-Liberty region alone, excluding Houston, where the numbers “more than triple.” A 2016 University of Texas study estimated 313,000

trafficking cases in Texas, with the majority – about 234,000 cases – linked to labor exploitation in agriculture, construction, hospitality, and related industries.

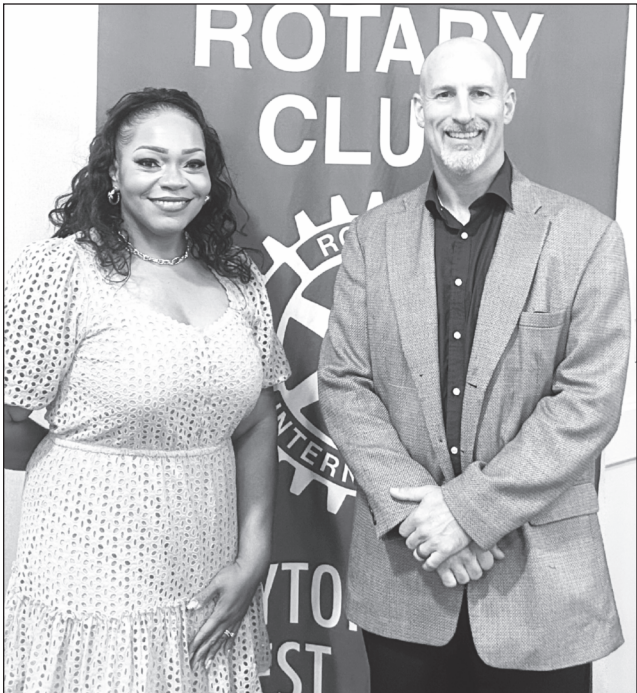
The guest speaker described common scenarios, such as undocumented workers promised legitimate jobs, only to find themselves stripped of identification, coerced into exhausting labor, and saddled with fraudulent debts. Families of victims are often threatened, reinforcing control by traffickers.

He urged attendees to recognize warning signs: overcrowded and unsafe living conditions, excessive employer control, fearful behavior, and financial exploitation. However, he cautioned community members against personal intervention. “Do not interject,” he said firmly. “If you believe something is happening, document it and report it.”

Resources such as the National Human Trafficking Hotline, Texas Trafficking Hotline, and the Blue Lightning Campaign (a DHS initiative) provide avenues for reporting suspicious activity. Payton also distributed wallet-sized cards with checklists and hotline numbers for quick reference.

The presentation struck a chord with Rotary members, highlighting that trafficking is not a distant issue but one that impacts Liberty County and surrounding areas. “There's not an industry you can name that hasn't fallen victim at some point to human trafficking,” Payton said.

The Rotary Club of Dayton continues its tradition of hosting programs that inform and empower community members to act on pressing social issues.



DAYTON ROTARY CLUB
Rotarian Stephanie Montgomery and guest speaker, Brad Payton


Stargaze with an expert Fri., Sept. 19

LIBERTY - The Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center (SHC), invites you to stargaze with an expert Friday evening, Sept. 19, at the Center's Amateur Astronomy Night. Village Creek State Park Interpreter Alex Stamatis will lead visitors on a tour of the night sky from 8:30 p.m. until approximately 10 p.m.

Learn to locate constellations and view some of the season's most fascinating celestial objects using telescopes, binoculars and the naked eye. Not only does the SHC

offer a terrific vantage point from which to view celestial objects away from bright city lights, but the event date should be an ideal time to observe the rings of Saturn. Visitors are encouraged to bring along flashlights, especially red-light flashlights, and join the fun on the Center's grounds at 650 FM 1011 in Liberty.

In the case of inclement weather or poor viewing conditions, the event will be moved to Friday, Sept. 26. For more information, email SamHoustonCenter@tsl.texas.gov.



Liberty

Church of Christ

Join us this Sunday for Bible Classes for all ages at 9 a.m. and stay for Worship at 10 a.m.

•••••

We meet Sunday night at 5 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

•••••

We meet at 3201 North Main Street and have a parking space just for you.

We'd love to see you soon. We've saved you a seat!

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