

Water People
By Sue Mayfield Geiger



Photo by Yoann Boyer

When I was five or six, I remember being at an amusement park and seeing a Ferris wheel that reached the sky, flying silver planes that twirled, colorful carrousel horses gliding round and round; I was enthralled. When asked by my parents what I wanted to ride first, there was no doubt in my mind: I headed straight for the boats. Why? Because they were in a pool of water. And although they did nothing but trail each other in a circle, I wanted desperately to ride the boats. And I did. Then and every time after that. I would take the steering wheel and pretend to navigate the yacht on the body of water that was barely a foot deep, but in my mind, it was the ocean.

I have known all my life that I am a water person. Most of us are products of our own environment, so growing up on the Texas Gulf Coast was a given for me. But water people come in all shapes and sizes and are attracted to all forms of water and water-related entities: rivers, streams, ponds, harbors, creeks, wetlands, lagoons – even man-made dams.

What is about water that attracts us? Why are we drawn to water in the first place? According to Dr. Masaru Emoto, a creative and visionary Japanese researcher, water reacts very much how we react. It is a very malleable substance. Dr. Emoto tells us that from its arrival on earth to the vast areas it traverses before emptying into the sea, water holds all the knowledge and experience it has acquired. As phenomenal as it may seem, water carries its whole history, just as we carry ours.

So, if we are attracted to water, can water be attracted to us? In his two most popular books, *The Message from Water* and *The Secret Life of Water*, Dr. Emoto provides factual evidence that human vibrational energy, thoughts, words, ideas, and music, affect the molecular structure of water, the very same water that comprises over 70 percent of a mature human body and covers the same amount of our planet. Water is the very source of all life on our planet, and the quality and integrity are vitally important to all forms of life. Therefore, the quality of our life is directly connected to the quality of our water.

Using high-speed photography, Dr. Emoto found that crystals formed in frozen water reveal changes when specific, concentrated thoughts are directed toward it. Water from clear springs and water exposed to loving words shows brilliant, complex, and colorful snowflake patterns, while polluted water and water exposed to negative thoughts forms incomplete, asymmetrical patterns with dull colors. Sound too far-fetched? Think about how you feel when you are around certain types of water.

Sugary sand, emerald seas and cobalt skies will no doubt make your soul sing. Standing beside a muddy ditch may not. However, depending on your emotional state, you may very well play a part in how water reacts to you. During my younger years, I spent numerous weekends and summers water skiing on Taylor Lake and Inks Lake, both vastly different bodies of water. Taylor Lake (murky with its black, gooey mud bottom) and Inks Lake near Austin (crystal clear with oodles of tickling seaweed) were nothing alike. Yet my connection with those two bodies of water was the same. They represented fun, freedom and boys! I have no doubt that both these bodies of water would have produced beautiful snowflake patterns with that high-speed camera.

However, playing on the water and living on the water are two different things. Real water people will tell you that coastal living isn't for everyone. They are there because they know the pro and cons. Often, those

who have not done their homework, move to the water and find that the mildew, high winds, bugs, soil erosion, house maintenance and hurricane season are just too much for them to handle. Yet the purists are hard-headed and seldom ever leave. They weather the storms and hope for the best. They take their chances because nothing can compare to that brilliant orange sunrise or muted yellow sunset streaked with blue and pink. More importantly, they just like to sit and gaze at...well, the water.

Waterfront property attracts a large following. Talk to any real estate person and they will tell you that waterfront property is always desirable and never loses its value. It is one of the few forms of real estate that continues to escalate even during the worst of times. According to Clifford Johnson of Karen Derr Realtors, "People were attracted to the Texas coast long before the turn of the century. The influx of immigrants; plus, beach hotels and boardwalks were always popular vacation destinations. In 1910 there was a big excursion of people from North Texas to the Galveston area who were seeking warmer weather and coastal communities. Today's investors are particularly interested in waterfront property because they realize the value and scarcity. There are a lot more people who want to live on the water than there is waterfront property available. Also, there is less canal dredging, and has even been temporarily banned in some areas."

Johnson goes on to say that baby boomers all over the nation are now retiring; many of them to coastal regions. "The Texas Gulf Coast is one of the hottest spots around because it is half the price of East coast property," he says. "It is even going for less than coastal property in Louisiana," he adds. Although we live in one of the worst hurricane-prone areas of the U.S., Johnson says that most coastal buyers are not that concerned due to the fact that we have so much advance notice of impending storms. Plus, water people have a motto: Just Rebuild.

With fewer and fewer insurance companies insuring waterfront homes, has Johnson seen a decline in sales? "No," he says, "because those who really want to live on the water think the higher premiums are worth it."

It is obvious that water people are risk takers. But all that aside, water people prefer to focus on the positive perks of their chosen lifestyle. Take coastal Texas: Flocks of pelicans diving for fish, seagulls following after the pelicans, enormous white cumulus clouds, salt spray, sail boats, yachts, bait stands, fishing tackle shacks, shrimp and oyster boats, restaurants and small cafes offering piled-high platters of fried seafood with homemade tartar sauce and cold fresh-brewed iced tea. Some readers will recall the old drawbridge (now long gone) that connected Kemah and Seabrook; San Leon's still-standing weekend cabins with exposed tar paper and pier and beam foundations sunk deep in the ground, thrown together by lost generations of families; Galveston's Crystal Beach and LaPorte's Sylvan Beach.

The Guadalupe River, Lake Travis, Lake LBJ, and all the other numerous bodies of water that are a part of Texas offer waterside living that is perhaps more scenic with hilly terrain and less inclement weather. The stars at night may be big and bright deep in the heart of Texas, but they shine even brighter deep in the soul of coastal Texas.

My own waterfront bungalow was built in 1941 but has been spruced up with yellow Hardiplank and green trim; even sports a new roof. We built a fence out of washed-up pier boards, planted a few tropical plants, took in three stray cats, grew tomatoes out back (away from the strong bay winds) and have made interior improvements as time and money have allowed. Our yard slopes down to the bulkhead out onto our vast acreage (Galveston Bay). The view of the water keeps me sane; the ambiance of my surroundings is magical; my life is slow here with a comfortable calm and natural high.

Like all water people, I am happiest near the water. It gives me that peaceful, easy feeling that some people try so hard to obtain. It just comes natural here. Most water people will tell you that. Just like the Eagles say in their song, *Peaceful, Easy Feeling*. That peaceful, easy feeling may be from "already standing on the ground" – but only as long as there's water nearby.