

## Ahoy, Matey! The Lone Star Pirate Festival Sets Sail Again

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Whether the recent TikTok craze stirred your interest in sea shanties or you've been blowin' th' man down since you were a wee buccaneer, you'll find riches galore in the rich tradition of seafaring music at the [Lone Star Pirate Festival](#). The Jolly Roger sails over Warehouse Live Saturday, July 24, and the second installment of the event, which celebrates the pirate life, is expected to draw crowds from throughout the Gulf Coast region.



Zach Penland, the festival's producer, said this part of Texas has a healthy pirate community, thanks to gatherings like Texas Renaissance Festival and Sherwood Forest Faire, and because of Galveston's association with swashbucklers like Jean Lafitte, "one of the most famous pirates of all time," Penland noted. He said Florida, the east coast near Georgia and the Carolinas, and California all boast sturdy pirate communities.

"Most of our community is centered around I guess what you would consider the Ren Fest crowd, the Texas Renaissance Festival crowd. Most of us know each other in some way, shape or form, everybody spends a lot of time out there every year. There's a large community in Galveston. Really, from Galveston all the way to Austin," he explained. "Every community in different areas is a little different but ours, we just want to have fun. We don't take ourselves seriously, we just want to go and have a good time - we just happen to dress like pirates when we do it."

That's right, the day's events encourage attendees to dress in pirate attire for the full experience. No worries, you won't wind up in Davy Jones' locker if you don't. Penland said the crowd will likely be a 50/50 split of decked out buckos and everyday landlubbers. And, association with the pirate community isn't required to attend, either. The event is open to anyone 18 or older who dares to walk the plank into a deep ocean of pirate passion. As with most things, music will stoke the magic.

"We're really excited. We've got an absolutely killer lineup," Penland said. "I'll start close to home. We have Blaggards, who are Houston area locals and favorites. Their particular genre of stout Irish rock really is something for everybody, that influence from Johnny Cash and Elvis,

Thin Lizzy and The Pogues. It's a little bit of everything for everyone, to a much faster tempo, and it's exciting."

It may also be a first chance to hear live songs from BLAGMATIC, the band's new album, which is available now for download via the [group's website](#). They've been touring the Midwest this week so "Blag-hards" are expected Saturday to offer their favorite band a hero's welcome.

"[Bilge Pumps](#) are in the Dallas area and they've performed down in Houston, at the Renaissance Festival here, they've performed at festivals across most of the south through the years and at Dickens on the Strand every year. They're also popular around the Railean Rum Distillery in San Leon. They are just fun. They take classic sea shanties and add whatever personal twist they in their minds hear in it," Penland explained.

"I one time described them as living Muppets," he added. "It is kind of like watching Muppets Treasure Island, but with real people. They're silly and they're goofy and they're over the top but they're great musicians and they're good storytellers."

"He's made a career out of touring the country, going from one renaissance festival or pirate festival to the next, and has been one of the most creative individuals I've ever met," Penland said of [The Minstrel Rav'n](#). "He can turn a phrase into a song in moments, he's just quick on his feet with it. He's famous for walking around and singing to people as he's moving through a crowd, with a guitar or a lute or a mandolin, but this past year he has put together an electric show and has a completely new style coming out for most of us to hear for the first time at the Lone Star Pirate Festival, along with an album."

"The last band we have performing that day is [O'Craven](#). They are some hard rockers from northern California who have never performed in Texas before but have been dying to get down here and looking for any outlet to do it. We managed to provide that for them. I cannot wait to meet these guys in person, they are going to be so much fun," Penland promised. "They've taken the spirit of piracy, the independence and the freedom, and turned it into rock and roll. They're gonna, I think, blow people away."

If that wasn't enough, the day will feature appearances by burlesque beauties Tifa Tittlywinks, Nikki Knockout, Emma D'Lemma and The Abby Cadabra. There'll be food trucks on site, grog to be drunk and vendors on hand displaying a booty of pirate-themed merchandise.



"Warehouse Live, you know, is divided into two separate rooms. There's the Studio room, which is a smaller venue, and the Ballroom. The Ballroom is going to be all of the live performances throughout the day but the entire vendor room is going to be filled with artisans who have made art or jewelry or leatherwork or mugs, all of the essentials of what it is to be a pirate," Penland said. "We're gonna have tons of that throughout the day, everyone's going to have new and unique things, the shopping this year is going to be fantastic because we have new vendors coming in and the beloved old guard who's coming back."

The festival debuted in 2019 and Penland said it drew about 450 attendees. Plans for 2020 were halted by the scourge of COVID-19 so he's hoping the enthusiasm built in 2019 will have long

sea legs and carry over into bigger crowds this year. That's important too because the festival also serves as a fundraiser for veterans.

"The benefit aspect of it is for the [PTSD Foundation Camp Hope](#). I've always been a big advocate for trying to do as much for veterans as possible. Having the Lone Star Pirate Festival finally gave me an outlet to do that," Penland said. "We donate the proceeds from all of our t-shirt sales to Camp Hope following the festival. They're a donation-based organization whose sole focus is dealing with the unseen wounds that our veterans have from their time in the service. It's just a very small sacrifice for those who've sacrificed so much for us."

Penland said doors will open at 2:30 p.m. and live music starts an hour later. He hopes fans will help grow the pirate music genre locally and agreed that songs sung by scallywags on the open seas years ago might have been an early form of punk rock.

"I think in the modern era most people have grown up with the Disney pirate and the ideas behind stories like Treasure Island, about freedom and the history of pirates being what it was, pushing back against people who sought to rule them and they wanted to live their lives their own way. I think all of that has a part to play in the ideology of how somebody gets interested in it.



"In my mind, it is rebellion, it is a bit of that, you know? But without having to be destructive. We're still a civilized society," Penland said with a chuckle. "We just throw on funny hats during the weekend and have a good time with some drinks."

Warehouse Live, 813 St. Emanuel, hosts the Lone Star Pirate Festival 2021 Saturday, July 24. The event begins at 2:30 p.m. and is open to the public, ages 18 and up. \$40-\$85.