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In 24 hours, the island, the islanders and perhaps even the sailors anchored off the harbor forgot the weather front that roared and ripped in from the north on our second day in Port Aransas.

The silence revived the story a cowboy named Slim Robert once told of why he quit a good job in the Panhandle. Slim said, "No one at breakfast in the boarding house where the boss lodged his shipping crew mentioned the roofing tin out front wrapped around tree trunks from a tornado the night before. So I decided to leave before winds hit strong enough to change the subject from 'Please pass the molasses.'" "

I expected beach walkers to notice the gentle zephyrs fluttering gull feathers lying on the sands, versus the day before, when the toughest old birds sought refuge on the bay side of the island to keep from losing their feathers. A guy from Fort Worth was the first contact. He agreed that yesterday blew in a mite too breezy to take his walk. He originated from a town in Oklahoma not far from the Kansas line, where tracking tornados can be a full-time summer job. No wonder the 55 mile an hour winds failed to feel strong to him. (I am tacking on five to 10 miles to the gusts for drama.)

The gentleman revealed two traits without going further. One, he had time to listen to my stories. And two, he hadn't lived in Fort Worth long enough to know the stories on "Sea Wolf" Daggett, the wildest man in Fort Worth history. He made me yearn to retell of the fall when "Sea Wolf" tried to add 26 taxicabs loaded with 26 call girls to President Truman's motorcade down the main part of Fort Worth. But I am going to resist repeating and repainting those old plonkers more than twice a year, counting print and voice, even if it means taking the Boy Scout's oath for real this time.

The next prospect wades off in the water's edge in rubber boots to gather shells before they shatter. She uses a plastic pipe two feet long to dislodge or catch the shells. So much time in the surf makes her quicker than a blue heron at stabbing a mussel shell.

She said, "I stayed indoors yesterday to rest for the big accumulation the high tides deposited." The bulging sack tied to her side proved she knew her business – a good guess is she might be in business, if you catch what I mean.

Further up the beach, a chap passed, spellbound by his metal detector. He swept the sands oblivious to human traffic. His interest was directed on what humans lose at

the beach. He showed no patience with idlers looking for a story on reaction to weather fronts.

Be so smart to meet people who own metal detectors, especially in hard times like the last eight decades in the ranch business. (Needs to be a new phrase coined to connect to "ranch." "Hobby" rates first choice). Be much more profitable than tending hollow horns or woolies. Metal detectors don't have to be pastured or fed. One will fit in a small space in your closet. And I prefer them to any other kind of detectors, especially lie detectors. I despise the thought of those meddling violators of free voice and free press.

When I was in Provincetown, Massachusetts last summer, an hombre advertised on the hotel's bulletin board that he helped find lost items with his metal detector, like I suppose the beach guy I watched in Port A. His ad read: "Lose something? Call Jerry. With the help of my Classic IDX metal detector, I can help." Underneath, some dame free-rode in an offshoot for missing persons: "In search of a baby sitter? - See Francis at 534 Commercial Street."

Odds hit high that this Jerry guy realized summer folks in Provincetown lodged in big homes had shiny trinkets slip off their fingers or fall from their beach bags worth hunting with his Classic IDX. First thing came

to my mind was lost pickup keys. But people who hire chauffeurs to drive limousines depend on voice commands to lock the ignition. Too, in case the drivers fail to respond to voice commands from the back seat or lose the keys, those fancy car jockeys will find themselves driving a laundry buggy down a hotel hallway instead of flaunting it around beaches in snappy caps.

By the time the walk ended, I was so intrigued by the foresighted guy with the metal detector in Port A., he became confused with old Jerry back in Provincetown renting his magic wand. But doesn't that nervy Francis character horning in to search for lost baby sitters recast the profile of big copycats found at Provincetown, or Pensacola, or for that matter, Podunk for an all-time chiseler? Would have been just like that free rider to claim baby sitters can be found by crystal balls.