

This Month:

National Kite Month
Ducks VS Goose
Bikers For Christ
Volunteerism, UWSTX
Tales of The Castaways
Observations, Ben Dover
Pharmaceuticals in Mexico
Springtime at Santa Ana NWR

The Valley Spotlight

**FREE
TAKE ME HOME**

April 2017

The Little Paper You'll Want To Keep & Share

Vol. 3 No. 11



April is National Kite Month

The exact date and origin of the kite is not known but it is believed that they were flown in China more than two thousand years ago. One legend suggests that when a Chinese farmer tied a string to his hat to keep it from blowing away in a strong wind, the first kite was born.

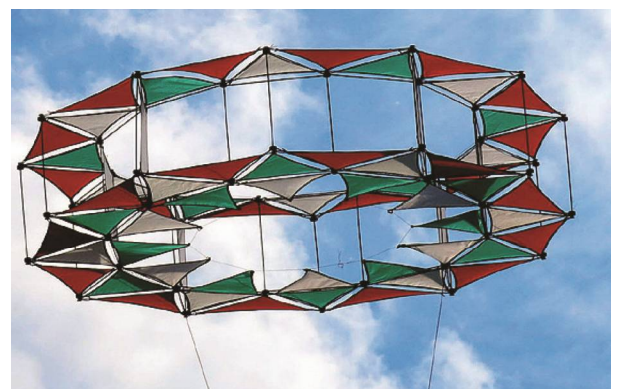
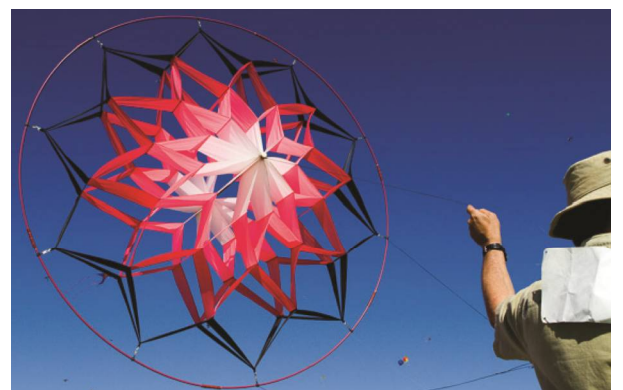
The earliest written account of kite flying was about 200 B.C. when the Chinese General Han Hsin of the Han Dynasty flew a kite over the walls of a city he was attacking to measure how far his army would have to tunnel to reach past the defenses. Knowing this distance his troops reached the inside of the city, surprised their enemy, and were victorious.

Kite flying was eventually spread by traders from China to Korea, and across Asia to India. Each area developed a distinctive style of kite and cultural purpose for flying them.

During the Silla Dynasty of Korea around the year 600, General Gim Yu-sin was ordered to subdue a revolt. However, his troops refused to fight. They had seen a large shooting star fall from the sky and believed it to be a bad omen. To regain control, the General used a large kite to carry a fire ball into the sky. The soldiers, seeing the star return to heaven, rallied and defeated the rebels.

Kite flying became very popular in Japan during the Edo period. For the first time Japanese people below the samurai class were allowed to fly kites. The Edo (now Tokyo) government tried unsuccessfully to discourage this pastime as "too many people became unmindful of their work."

According to one story, about 300 years ago a thief was said to use a large kite to carry himself to the top of Nagoya Castle in order to steal a golden statue from the roof. All he was able to remove were a few small pieces. Later he was captured and punished severely when he bragged of his exploits. (continued on page 5)



Observations On Life by Ben Dover

As I Arise

When I look around my world in the morning, what do I see? Normally I am seated half laying down in my tilt back chair, and eyes about one half open. I then look at each thing appearing in the sphere of my world that becomes visible to my wondering eyes. I have not yet lit the light in the room, so everything is somewhat in a rather dense fog. In reality, it is my brain that is still in a fog, rather dense, and therefore it is not completely the fault of room lighting. I must mentally access all of my body parts, one by one, and assure myself that all of them are in place and will obey my mental commands. After all, those parts are eighty seven years old, and can't be expected to be waiting for an order to move, especially in a prescribed direction. There is no real nor justified reason to distrust any of those parts, nor their movements simply because I am not yet fully awake. Historically, however, I have become vividly aware that age will frequently present its frailties and indicate an unwillingness to cooperate fully, unless commands are definite and adamant.

Now that I have cleared my conscience and have admitted to the frailties that have imposed themselves on this old and somewhat dilapidated and degrading concoction of physio-skeletal inclusions, titled a human body, I can get to the meat of this ultra-valued, and



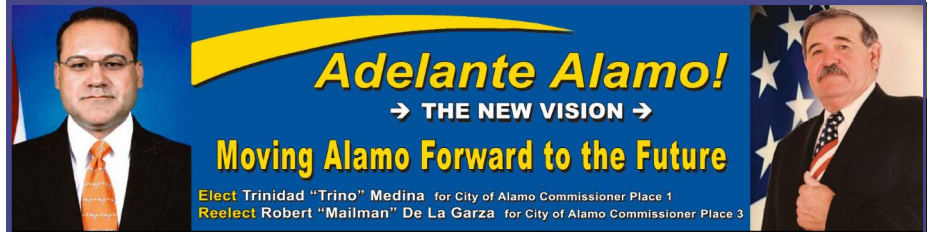
highly sophisticated article.

In reality, I don't have much of great importance to relate, but now the I have your attention, I might ask,

What are you planning to do today? Have you ever read a column of this kind in which someone is genuinely interested in provoking an interest in what you might do? Well, I am that type of person. I like to apply an attempt to create a desire to think. I have spent a lifetime of either deciding how to do a thing or maybe alter an existing item or situation in which alteration might appear as positive.

Even in the musical field, there is still room for the creation of acceptable smoothness and the demonstrating of real talent. Screaming wildly into a microphone doesn't really do it for me. I remember some of those things from those greats of old who gave us peace and a degree of solace during world war two. It seemed, Gold stars were appearing much more frequently, but we seemed to sing. At that time we could still understand the words along with the melodies.

Have a nice day..



The Importance of Service before Self

As a lifelong resident of Alamo, I've witnessed first-hand the benefits of community service. Quite often, community service is overlooked as a contributing factor to a thriving and vibrant town. While the brunt of the responsibility for community development may seem to fall on city leaders, citizens are also in the position to do their part. In my role as your city commissioner, I urge you to join a service organization.

My community service began many years ago with my involvement in youth sports. Throughout the years I've made it a goal to volunteer my time with various organizations. Currently, I am involved with the Alamo Lions Club. Since its inception in 2015, the Alamo Lions Club has initiated service projects such as the Christmas Toy Drives, cemetery clean-ups, provided school supplies to children in need and awarded scholarships to deserving students.

The hustle and bustle of our daily lives can make volunteering appear like a daunting task. When it seems like there just aren't enough hours in a day for ourselves and our families, it may seem nearly impossible to carve out time for someone else. However, community service isn't solely about the hours logged but about the impact it can have on someone, on a family, on a city. Involvement with service projects can provide a sense of pride and allows you to become invested in your community. New friendships are often a result of gathering with a group and seeing the project at hand come to fruition. Satisfaction may be gained from simply spending the afternoon tutoring a child or teaching someone how to ride a bike.

The impact volunteerism has on a community can have positive long-lasting effects and will surely strengthen bonds within it. We must remember that every person matters and everyone can make a difference.

Robert De La Garza

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Squirrel Problem

The Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrels. After much prayer and consideration, they determined the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist Church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and, unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim ... so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.



The Episcopal Church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist Church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water slide.

But the Catholic Church came up with a very creative strategy. They baptized all the squirrels and consecrated them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish Synagogue, but it's rumored that they took one squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel on their property since !!!

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The Valley Spotlight

is published by Created Images and More
11924 E 83 Business
La Feria, Texas 78559
www.RGVaff.com

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April 2017 issue Vol. 3 No. 11

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True Tales of a Valley Birder

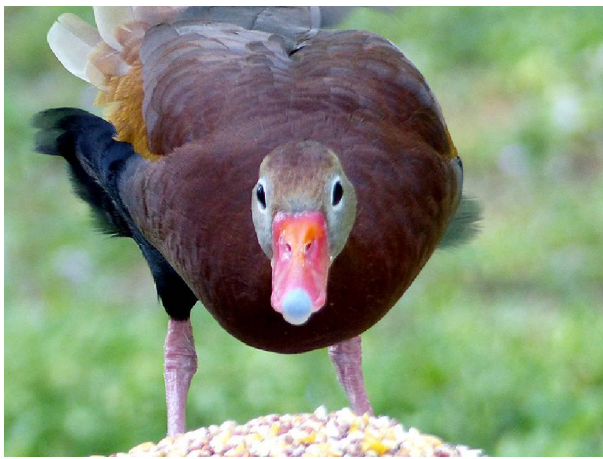
by Keith Hackland (alamoinn@aol.com)

Wild Ducks and Tame Goose Compete in Our Yard

Everyone who feeds birds has great stories. The best stories are about incidents that occur when one least expects it, like this morning . . .

I was going about the yard routine with our chickens, goose, and vegetable garden on a warm spring morning, when I felt as if I was being watched, causing me to look up. There, about ten yards from me was a pair of Black-bellied Whistling-ducks. I walked closer to about five yards, and they held their position. These great lookers have coral bills and legs, black bellies, rufous red all over, and big eyes. They are ducks, but they behave like geese. We see them in the daytime, but they also forage at night, often flying miles to flooded fields and shallow ponds. During the night time we often hear them whistle as they fly overhead, invisible against the dark sky, and my wife Audrey says "I hear Whistling-ducks." She says this because my hearing is poor and she wants me to enjoy them as she does.

These two ducks in our yard stared at me, like my cat Gordon Gray stares at me when he wants something, but does not know the right word for it.



I continued with my chores, watering the garden, pretending not to notice them. The ducks were patient with this dumb human (me), and after glancing at each other they figured out a new way to communicate with me. I had a good idea what they probably wanted, but thought it would be interesting to watch them longer. One duck jumped up on the empty bird feed table where we pile cracked corn and sorghum for the doves, black birds and sparrows. The duck scanned the empty table, then looked directly at me, and repeated the process several times. The words were crystal clear,

"Hey, where is the duck food, we 're starving. Please refill the table."

"Okay," I said, I get it. Returning with a pitcher full of feed the two ducks watched from a distance. I filled the table with feed, and retired to the house to pick up my camera. When I returned outside here were the ducks both on the table. While one kept watch, the other fed on the grain. Then they switched off so the guard could eat. As they felt more comfortable, both ate together. After taking some good photos I resumed watering the garden.

Black-bellied Whistling-ducks, as most Valley residents know, invade suburbia in spring and summer, seeking holes in mature Valley Ash trees where several females share a nest. They all lay eggs and take turns incubating them. As the young hatch in successive waves every few days, the females in turn take off with a group of newly hatched ducklings. Their cute babies are yellow, camouflaged with blue-black stripes and purple bills.

Having eaten their fill, the two yard ducks dropped back to the ground and sauntered over to the goose water tub, waiting as it filled for the chance to take a drink. About this time I glimpsed a good sized bird fly in and sit on the peak of the goose pen, where the goose waited patiently for release. I looked up and saw that it was a Sharp-shinned Hawk. These fast hawks prey, like Cooper's Hawk, on birds and to them a bird feeder is a bird buffet for their next meal. As I looked up, it caught sight of me, and flew off again, headed for the next yard bird feeder.

The ducks walked over to the water tub and looked inside. It was not yet full enough for them, so their retired a couple of yards.

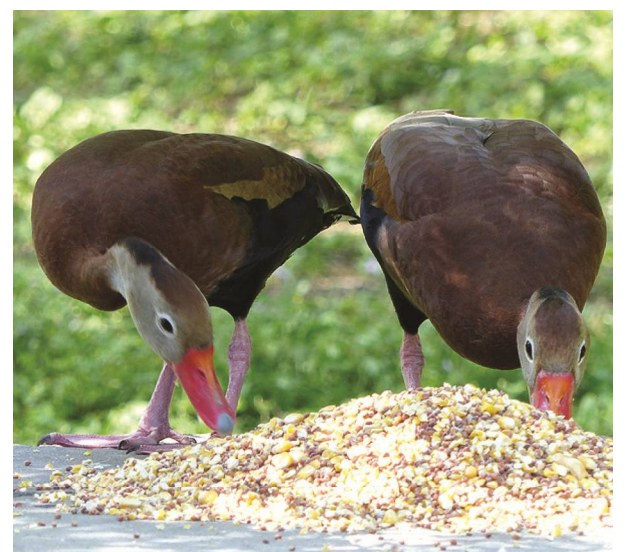
It was time to release the goose. He is a Chinese Goose, pure white with yellow bill and yellow legs, and he towers over all ducks. He ran out to his water tub, honking and flapping his wings. This was too much for the ducks and they took off, leaving the water tub to Guardian, the goose. Guardian watches our yard to earn his keep. He was hand raised by the children of a Donna pet shop owner, when we purchased him 12 or 13 years ago, so he loves being petted and carried, but that does not make him properly tame or calm.



He is known to bite, leaving black and blue bruises on our legs. So it is easy to understand why the ducks gave him a wide berth.



Later in the day I noticed a duck sitting on our roof, checking out if it was safe from the goose for ducks to drop into the yard to fill up on corn and water.



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**Bikers For Christ
Doing The Most Good**

On March 8, 2017, The Salvation Army of McAllen/Hidalgo County received a donation of seven adult bikes from the Bikers for Christ. The bikes donated will be used by The Salvation Army Emergency Shelter guests who need transportation. The Bikers for Christ is a motorcycle ministry chapter that primarily outreaches to Motorcycle Clubs.

According to the motorcycle ministry each chapter is required to be active in their own church, however their support extends to Outcry in the Barrio and visits to the homeless. "We are often in bars and motorcycle rallies," says Robert Toney, Elder of BFC McAllen. "The Salvation Army follows our own calling to the poor, the down-trodden and the outcast. Some wish to live within the sound of chapel bells, but we want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell," adds Robert.

Social Services Director, Angela Belton says "We are thankful for the generous donations of bicycles



for our shelter guests.

Thank you, Bikers for Christ, for "Doing the Most Good."

The Salvation Army of McAllen/Hidalgo County works with men, women, children and families experiencing homelessness. It is the only Emergency Shelter program in Hidalgo County that can house a complete family. Their objective is to move these individuals and families from crisis to stability through emergency shelter.

Love of Christ ELCA Lutheran Church

**Worship Service
11:00 AM**

**Lenten
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The Salvation Army is committed to "Doing the Most Good" supported by donors and partners who share a desire to help our neighbors in need.

When hard times hit, The Army is there to help meet basic needs, whether it's a box of groceries, a

hot meal or assistance paying rent. Providing care and aid to those living on the fringes of society is the heart of The Salvation Army's mission.

For more information on their programs and services call 956-682-1468.

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"It is not what I like, it is what "Sully" the border collie likes. He gets the best of care ..."
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Inner Peace

- IF you can start the day without caffeine.
- IF you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains.
- IF you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles.
- IF you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it.

- IF you can understand when your loved ones don't give you any time.
- IF you can take criticism and blame without resentment.
- IF you can conquer tension without medical help.
- IF you can relax without alcohol.
- IF you can sleep without the aid of drugs.
- THEN you are probably ... The Family Dog!

Kites (continued from page 1)

The earliest evidence of Indian kite flying comes from miniature paintings from the Mogul Period around 1500. A favorite theme was of a young man skillfully using his kite to drop messages to a lover who was being held in strict seclusion from him and the rest of the world.

There are many stories about how the people of Micronesia used leaf kites to carry bait far out over the water where the gar-fish fed. The Polynesians have myths about two brother gods introducing kites to man when they had a kite duel. The winning brother flew his kite the highest. There are still contests in the islands where the highest flying kite is dedicated to the gods.

Marco Polo carried stories of kites to Europe around the end of the 13th century. Illustrations of the period show non-flying dragon kites on military banners.

Sailors also brought kites back from Japan and Malaysia in the 16th and 17th centuries. Kites were regarded as curiosities at first and had little impact on European culture.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, kites were used as vehicles and tools for scientific research.

Men like Benjamin Franklin and Alexander

Wilson used their knowledge of kite flying to learn more about the wind and weather.

Sir George Caley, Samuel Langley, Lawrence Hargrave, Alexander Graham Bell, and the Wright Brothers all experimented with kites and contributed to development of the airplane.

The US Weather service flew kites designed by William Eddy and Lawrence Hargraves to raise meteorological instruments and cameras.

One of the strangest uses of kite power was developed by schoolmaster George Pocock. In 1822, he used a pair of kites to pull a carriage at speeds of up to 20 miles per hour. Some of his kite trips were recorded at over 100 miles. And because road taxes at the time were based on the number of horses a carriage used, he was exempted from any tolls!

During World War I, the British, French, Italian, and Russian armies all used kites for enemy observation and signaling. The introduction of airplanes quickly made these units obsolete. The German Navy continued to use man-lifting box kites to increase the viewing range of surface-cruising submarines.

In World War II, the US Navy found several uses for kites. Harry Saul's Barrage Kite prevented airplanes from flying too low over targets. Pilots lost at sea raised the Gibson-Girl Box kite so they could be found. And Paul

Garber's Target Kite, a large steerable Diamond was used for target practice and aircraft recognition at sea.

As the airplane became firmly established the kite was used less for military purposes or scientific research and more for recreational flying. The last 50 years has seen renewed interest in kiting. New materials like ripstop nylon, fiberglass, and carbon graphite have made kites stronger, lighter, more colorful, and more durable. Important inventions like Francis Rogallo's flexi-wing and Domina Jalbert's parafoil kites helped develop modern hang-gliders and sport parachutes.

In 1972 Peter Powell introduced a toy dual line stunter and the public began to fly kites not only for fun, but also for sport. Enthusiasts experimented with new designs that could fly precise maneuvers, go faster, or perform intricate tricks. Competition where fliers competed to music became popular.

Larger and more powerful kites were designed and in the 1980's, Peter Lynn of New Zealand introduced a stainless steel kite powered buggy.

In the 1990's, kite traction on wheels, over water, and on ice have become increasingly popular. In 1999, a team used kite power to pull sleds to the North Pole.

The Pharmacy Corner

Trino Medina, RPh

Doctors Renaissance Hospital Clinical Pharmacist, CVS Clinical Pharmacist

Many of us have decided that Mexico is not a safe place to go visit but thousands of people are still going across the border to get their life saving medications. Why the risk and is it worth the trouble? Ever since I can remember, I have seen Americans go south of the border to eat, drink and buy medications. Many of these people are on set incomes and welcome the cheaper prices of everything.

Mexico has been a country in turmoil, plagued with corruption and drug cartels. So why are so many of us still heading over there? Until recently, my family had not been to Mexico for over 5 years. I was afraid of the violence and kidnapping that was widespread in our neighboring country. So why are many Americans going to Mexico for meds?

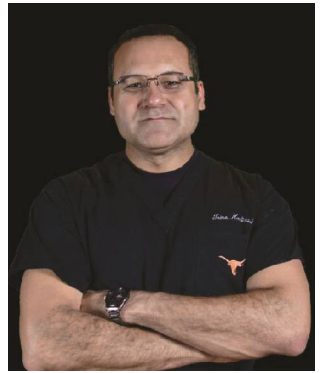
Many people go to Mexico to buy their medications because they are much cheaper. I went across into Progreso, Mexico to see what people were talking about. I saw prices that were much lower. Mexico did not get affected by the increase in drug prices like the US did. I asked some of the local Mexican pharmacies about this disparity. Many of them were oblivious of the problem Americans were having. Customers from the North had been going to Mexico non-stop so they never saw a slowing down but rather saw an increase in customers.

They did complain of the violence in Mexico, but claimed that there was no violence in their border town so business was booming. I could not find a single medication that was more expensive than in the United States, from antibiotics to blood pressure medications to cholesterol medications. I understood why so many people were going to Mexico to get their medications. So is there any problem with this?

The only problem I saw was that Mexico does not have a Federal Drug Administration like the United States. This is an organization that reviews all medication applications including drug trials on animals and humans. They review not only the effectiveness of every drug but also the possible side effects of the drugs. Ultimately, they are the major party that decides if a drug can be sold to the public or not. There are many drugs that are sold in other countries even in the United Kingdom that are not sold in the United States because the FDA deems them not safe by their standards.

It would be easier for me to recommend the cheaper Mexican drugs, but as a registered pharmacist I prefer to recommend trying to get medications in the United States. People should not risk their lives getting heart, cancer or diabetes medications in Mexico. We cannot monitor them and we cannot guarantee their

effectiveness or their safety. I recommend people check with their insurance about drug coverage and work with their doctors and pharmacists to find alternatives to drugs that are not covered. For those people not having insurance, I recommend asking about insurance for drug coverage only for a cheaper premium. People can also ask about discounts at many pharmacies. It is easy for me to make my recommendations, but ultimately I don't think people will stop going to Mexico to get their life saving medications. Ultimately, the best thing would be for the United States to lower their drug prices. This would be the ideal goal. Since I don't see this happening any time soon, try to visit the same Mexican pharmacies so you can have consistency, try to stay close to the United States borders and try to ask a lot of questions from the Mexican pharmacist or clerks. Make sure you take the American name of the drug you are on so you can make sure you are getting the right medication. Finally, just take your Mexican drugs to your doctor or your local American pharmacist to at least identify the product.



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 Numbers cannot repeat down a column | Numbers cannot repeat across a row

Volunteerism at Its Best

by Eloise Montemayor
Community Relations/Public Sector Associate
United Way of South Texas

With the help of outstanding volunteers and supporters, United Way of South Texas impacts approximately 286,000 residents in Hidalgo and Starr counties every year. We admire the work ethic and passion of our volunteers who collectively contribute hundreds of hours towards United Way programs like Back-to-School “In Style” Shopping Spree, Day of Caring, and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program.

The VITA program alone exemplifies what hard work and commitment from volunteers has done for our community. United Way’s VITA program has grown to offer free income tax preparation services, for households earning less than \$54,000, at 16 sites today compared to eight sites in 2011. By the end of the 2015-2016 tax season, VITA volunteers helped 3,102 households receive a total refund of \$6.1 million. This year (2016-2017 tax season), VITA volunteers have already helped 3,190 residents receive a total refund of \$7.2 million.

The VITA program is just one example of how important volunteers are to the success of our programs. However, there are various other ways volunteers can get involved with United Way and with other agencies and entities that serve our community. This month we invite individuals and families to put their heart into their community by giving of their time and talents. In fact, we hope that hundreds of volunteers will participate in National Volunteer Week, which is April 23-29.

More than 100 agencies have posted their needs online through Volunteer South Texas (volunteersotx.org), a free user-friendly online portal.



First-time client Jose Russa sought free income tax preparation services for the first time this year. He was thrilled to find out from VITA volunteers Guadalupe Torres and Bruce Ramirez that he would be receiving a refund when he had expected to pay back.



Some of the agencies have even posted specific projects just for volunteers wishing to help during National Volunteer Week (NVW).

Last year, 275 volunteers contributed 864 hours of their time during NVW. We hope that more volunteers will be willing to participate this year.

To find out more about Volunteer South Texas and the needs of our local non profits, visit volunteersotx.org or call United Way at 956-686-6331.

If you would like to support our programs with a monetary donation, you may mail a check to United Way of South Texas at P.O. Box 187 McAllen, TX 78505-0187

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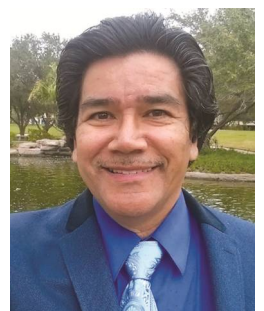
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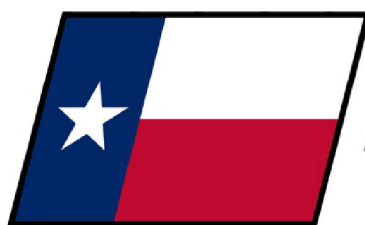
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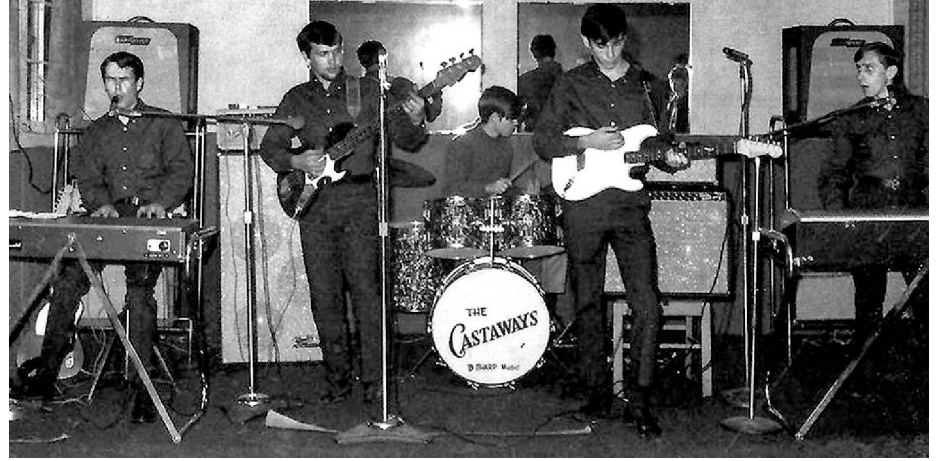


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We Were Zombies!

by Rod Graham as told by Dennis Craswell

Duane Eddy and the Rebels' .. "Rebel Rouser", Link Wray and his Ray Men's .. "Rumble", The Ventures' .. "Walk Don't Run" and Surf Music, pioneered by Dick Dale, was the style of instrumental Rock and Roll that was popular when we first formed The Castaways in the early 1960s. Then came Beatlemania and the British Invasion. Radio station DJ's stopped playing songs unless they included vocals.



We knew that we had to keep up with this evolution in order to follow our dreams of becoming a famous Rock and Roll band. There was only one problem, we had no microphone.

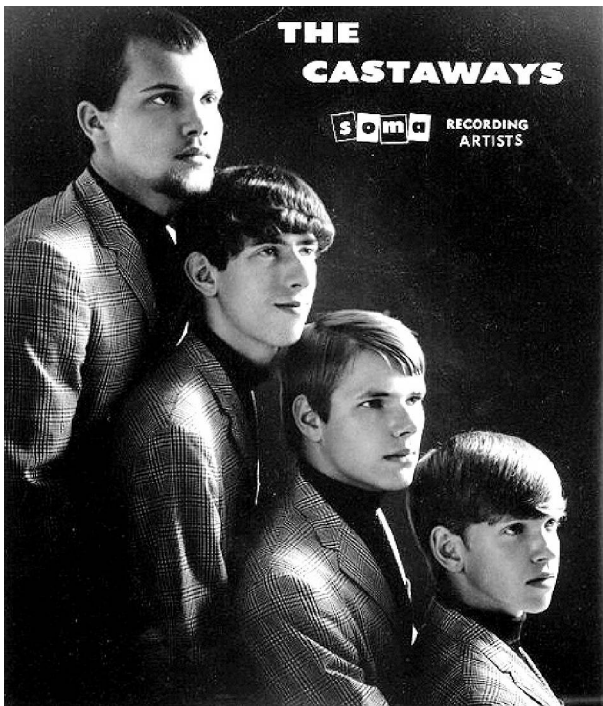
Our guitarist, Dick Roby, said he thought there was a guy over on Oliver Street that had one. We all headed over to Roy Hensley's house to see if we could borrow his Shure 55 mic. Roy informed us that indeed he did have a microphone. He went on to explain that he was the only one who was allowed to use it. Thus enters singer, guitar player Roy Hensley as the newest Castaway.

After the success of our song, *Liar Liar*, in 1965 we began getting offers to open for bands of larger stature. One such gig was as the opening act for The Zombies who had recorded hits such as, *She's Not There*, *Tell Her No* and *Time Of The Season*.



The Zombies, British Rock Band in the 1960s

We were excited to play this gig. We had been covering *She's Not There*, and we had gotten pretty good at it. So when the time came, we took the stage and played our hit, *Liar Liar*, and a full set of cover songs. As we came to the end of our allotted time I noticed a very panicky looking promoter at the side curtain giving us the "rolling" sign with his hands telling us to keep on playing.



Well he's the boss, so we kept on playing. Every time we would finish a song we could hear him whimpering loudly, "keep it going, keep it going."

We played several more songs and now he's yelling, "DON'T STOP, DON'T STOP, KEEP ON PLAYING!" So we kept on playing. Finally we decided enough was enough and said, "Thank You and Good night."

We left the stage and found the promoter having a mental and physical meltdown. The crowd was stomping on the wooden floors and chanting "We want the Zombies, we want the Zombies." The only problem was that The Zombies had not shown up! The white faced, panic stricken promoter looked at us and shrieked, "You guys gotta be The Zombies! You have to go back out there and BE THE ZOMBIES! If you don't, this crowd will riot and tear the place apart."

Now I won't say what town this was, but if you remember a couple of gangs called The Greasers and The Baldies, you will understand that we knew that he was right! We had to do some quick thinking. Sure we knew The Zombies hits and were confident we could play them perfectly, but my God, this crowd had just seen us on stage for over an hour. How could we possibly pull off this farcical charade?

First, a costume change. Bob put on his furry vest, some John Lennon welding glasses and a fedora hat. The rest of us followed suit scrounging up whatever we could muster; jackets, vests, sunglasses, ascots etc.

We switched instruments where possible, arranged ourselves in different positions and we took the stage as The Zombies.

Note to the editor:

I have been wanting to tell the stories of The Castaways for a long time. By helping me do so, you are making a lifetime dream come true.

I believe that I speak for many of the entertainers who come to the Valley in the winter when I say, "Thank you for all that you do to help us. Your time, efforts and resources are greatly appreciated! In our line of work honesty and generosity are in short supply and Rod, you my friend are a breath of fresh air.

Denny Craswell

In the most convincing English accent I have ever heard anyone mimic, Bob said, "Thank you very much" and we started right into *She's Not There*. The crowd was a screaming throng and we really thought "Hey, we're going to pull this off!"

We played every Zombies' song we knew and then covered other groups like The Beau Brummels, Herman's Hermits, The Dave Clark Five and even some Rolling Stones. The crowd was going wild. I thought to myself, "my god, WE ARE The Zombies, The Zombies basking in all their glory".

Then came a reality check. Out of the corner of my eye I saw this guy creeping closer and closer to the front of the stage. I noticed he was holding an album cover which he would look at, then look up at us on stage.

I began to get really nervous as he would point to the album cover and then point to each one of us on stage. Each time he did this he would shake his head no. I knew we had been busted. We were going to die, or at the very least we would be tarred and feathered.

Sure enough, in a quiet moment between songs, this guy shouts as loud as possible, "YOUR NOT THE ZOMBIES!"

You could hear a pin drop in the deafening silence that followed. Then, once again in that inimitable British accent, Bob said something like "Of course we are you silly bloke" then we played *She's Not There* again as the closing song and left the stage.

We should have played "*They're Not Here!*"

We did not stick around to see what would happen next. We "got outta Dodge" fast and alive. Once again, we should have been shot!



I have never lost my love of performing for live audiences.

In the warm months of the year you can find me around Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

During the Winter I perform in Winter Texan Resorts here in the Rio Grande Valley.

I perform as The Castaway, Music With That Island Groove.

You can find my schedule at www.the-castaway.com and also at www.WinterTexanInfo.com

I hope to see you around, Denny Craswell

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

The sun is finally hanging around enough to enjoy.

Ample rainfall has encouraged the growth of springtime flowers. It is April. A month which is full of holiday tradition.

Beginning with **April Fool's Day** and ending with **National Honesty Day**. The latter having been established by M. Hirsh Goldberg, former press secretary to a governor of Maryland. Goldberg felt that the month of April, which begins with a big day of lying (April Fools Day), should end on a higher moral note.

Most notable of all April holidays of course, **Easter**, this year on April 5th, celebrates Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead, and is Christianity's most important holiday. I can remember as a young boy getting up before the sun came up on Easter morning and going to church for a sunrise service. Afterwards we would feast on pancakes, bacon and eggs. Then we would head home and my brothers and I would search the house for the hidden baskets full of candy left by *The Easter Bunny*. Even though my father was a Southern Baptist preacher, the two Easter traditions seemed to find their way together in our home.

On April 20th we celebrate **Patriots' Day**. First proclaimed in Massachusetts in 1894 by Gov. Frederic T. Greenhalge. This is a civic holiday commemorating the anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the first battles of the American Revolutionary War on April 19, 1775.

Although this day is mostly celebrated in New England states, many people across the US observe this day as a day of remembering the brave patriots who fought for our freedom from English rule. This ragged band of farmers and shopkeepers were our first military heroes and are well deserving of the honors we bestow upon them by recognizing their efforts.

Volunteer Recognition Day is also celebrated on April 20. This is a day to honor all volunteers who are working on behalf of others without being motivated by financial or material gain. Be sure to take the time on Volunteer Recognition Day to thank volunteers you know about for their selflessness, and get involved yourself in a volunteer activity or donate to a volunteer group.

It Happened in April

American Independence

On April 18, 1775 Paul Revere and William Dawes rode out of Boston about 10 p.m. to warn patriots at Lexington and Concord of the approaching British. At dawn the next day in Massachusetts, about 70 armed militiamen stood face to face on Lexington Green with a British advance guard unit. An unordered 'shot heard around the world' began the American Revolution. A volley of British rifle fire was followed by a charge with bayonets leaving eight Americans dead and ten wounded. In 1983 the American Revolution ended with the signing of The Treaty of Paris. Six years later on April 30, 1789 George Washington became the first U.S. President as he was administered the oath of office on the balcony of Federal Hall at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets in New York City.

Early Postal Service

In the American West, the Pony Express service began as the first rider departed St. Joseph, Missouri on April 3, 1860. The famed Pony Express riders each rode from 75 to 100 miles before handing their letters off to the next rider. A total of 190 way stations were located about 15 miles apart.

The service lasted less than two years, ending upon the completion of the overland telegraph.

North vs. South

The American Civil War began on April 12, 1861 as Confederate troops under the command of General Pierre Beauregard opened fire at 4:30 a.m. on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. After over 500,000 American deaths, the Civil War effectively ended on April 9, 1865 as General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant in the village of Appomattox Court House. Just six days later on April 14, 1865 President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded at Ford's Theater in Washington. He died the following morning at 7:22 a.m.

Civil Rights

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was shot and killed by a sniper on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. King is best remembered for his *I Have a Dream* speech delivered at the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington. Just one week later on April 11, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The law prohibited discrimination in housing, protected civil rights workers and expanded the rights of Native Americans.



Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work Day falls on April 23rd this year. Originally established in 1993 by the Ms. Foundation for Women. The intention was to give girls additional direct attention and an insight into work world opportunities available to them. Its popularity quickly sparked interest by the boys, who soon felt left out and were required to go to school for the day, while the girls "got the day off". As a result, the day has turned into "Take Your Son or Daughter to Work Day" in many areas. While this takes away from the original intent to give more attention to adolescent girls, it has become a valuable and popular career day opportunity for girls and boys alike.

On April 27th we honor one of baseball's greatest players ever, Babe Ruth. On April 27, 1947, Babe Ruth attended Yankee Stadium for **Babe Ruth Day**. It was to be the second last time he was at the stadium. In 1946, Babe Ruth was diagnosed with Throat Cancer. Back then, there was not as much treatment as there is today. On this day in 1947, "The Bambino" returned to "The House that Ruth Built" to be honored and true baseball fans across the US continue this tradition to this day.

The Space Race

Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space on April 12, 1961. He traveled aboard the Soviet spacecraft Vostok I to an altitude of 187 miles (301 kilometers) above the earth and completed a single orbit in a flight lasting 108 minutes. The spectacular Russian success intensified the already ongoing Space Race between the Russians and Americans. Twenty-three days later, Alan Shepard became the first American in space. This was followed in 1962 by President Kennedy's open call to land an American on the moon before the decade's end.

Apollo 13 was launched from Cape Kennedy at 2:13 p.m. on April 11, 1970. Fifty-six hours into the flight an oxygen tank exploded in the service module. Astronaut John L. Swigert saw a warning light that accompanied the bang and said, "Houston, we have a problem here." Swigert, James A. Lovell and Fred W. Haise then transferred into the lunar module, using it as a "lifeboat" and began a perilous return trip to Earth, splashing down safely on April 17th.

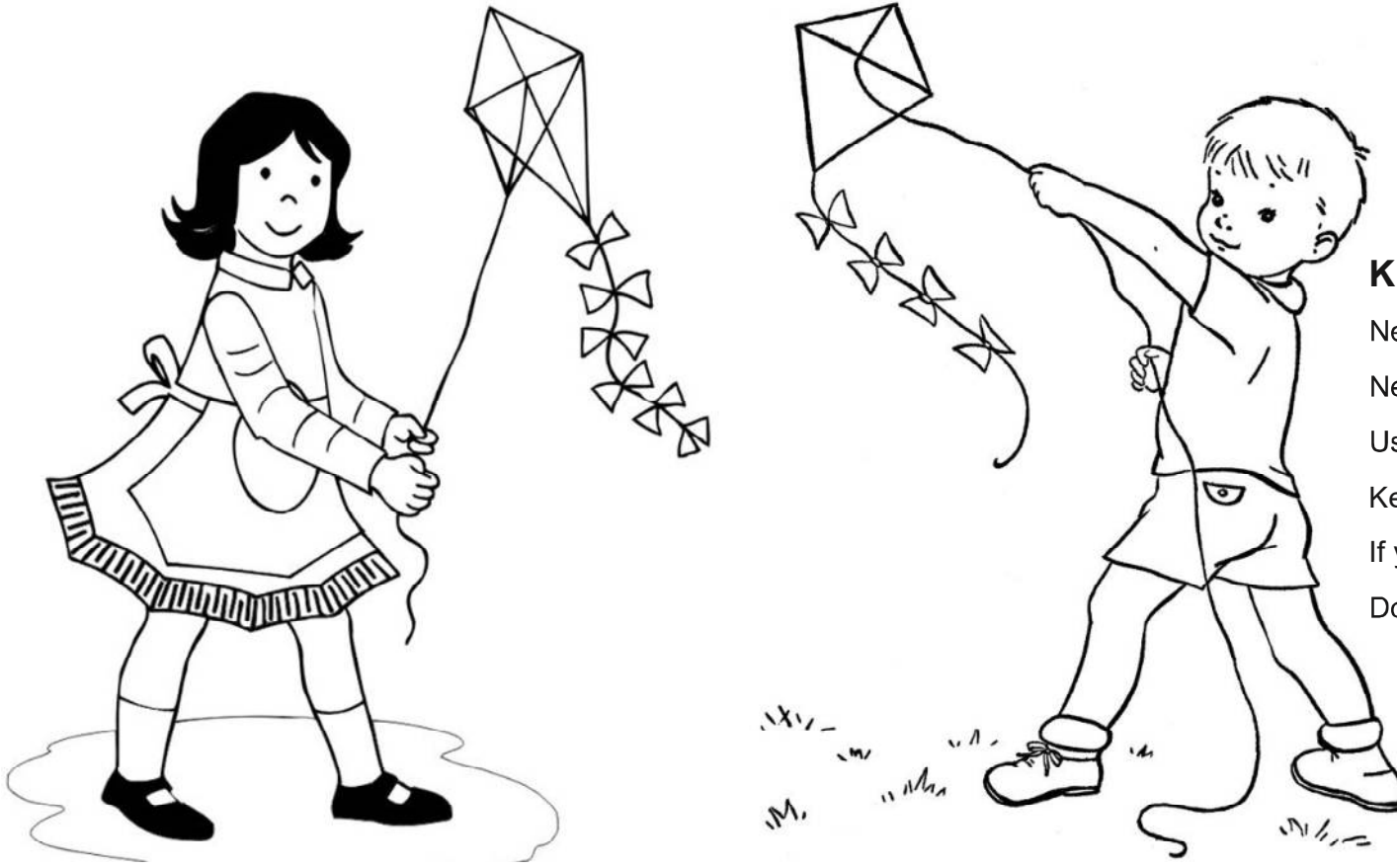
The first space shuttle flight occurred on April 12, 1981 with the launching of Columbia with astronauts John Young and Robert Crippen aboard. Columbia spent 54 hours in space, making 36 orbits, then landed at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

For Kids Only

No matter how old you are!

Have Fun and Learn

while you solve these puzzles and practice your coloring skills



Kite Flying Safety Rules:

- Never fly kites near power lines.
- Never fly kites in stormy weather.
- Use cotton string to fly a kite.
- Keep your kite far from roads.
- If you have a large kite, wear gloves.
- Don't fly your kite above people.

Imagination
is the
highest kite
one can fly.

Lauren Bacall

Kite flying is a great way to spend time together as a family, enjoy the outdoors and get exercise!



Scrabble Day (Always April 13) celebrates the popular board game. People young and old enjoy this game. Scrabble was created in 1938 by Alfred Mosher Butts. It's very easy to celebrate Scrabble Day. Just get out the old board game, dust it off, and play a few rounds with family or friends.

Find these words that are sure to make you a winner at Scrabble

- ASPHYXY
- BEZIQUE
- BLOWZY
- CAZIQUE
- FROWZY
- JEZEBEL
- JUKEBOX
- PACK-WAX
- QUARTZ
- QUEAZY
- QUETZAL
- QUEZALS
- QUICKLY
- SQUEEZE
- SQUIFFY
- WHEEZY
- ZEPHYR
- ZINKIFY
- ZOMBIFY
- ZYMURGY

D	D	Q	U	E	A	Z	Y	N	D	N	F	C	P	D	K	Z
J	D	Z	M	Y	U	F	Y	G	R	U	M	Y	Z	K	M	C
I	U	Q	Q	F	W	R	B	Q	J	Y	J	F	Y	I	A	A
I	E	U	U	I	K	O	D	Y	G	O	F	A	Y	Z	H	Z
M	Q	A	E	K	O	W	X	J	L	S	I	F	I	E	K	B
I	E	R	T	N	C	Z	P	M	E	J	V	Q	I	U	Q	B
H	I	T	Z	I	D	Y	R	Y	B	A	U	B	R	U	H	F
S	M	Z	A	Z	V	K	F	K	E	E	X	G	E	N	Q	Q
I	Q	C	L	J	M	I	U	Y	Z	G	D	P	K	Y	P	S
Y	G	U	V	F	B	D	X	Q	E	J	A	Y	R	X	W	S
W	B	I	E	M	P	O	M	N	J	C	A	L	Q	Y	R	Y
H	M	E	O	E	B	R	M	T	K	A	C	K	U	H	Y	Z
E	H	Z	Z	E	Z	K	A	W	V	Z	Z	C	E	P	H	W
E	J	T	K	I	B	E	A	C	V	Y	C	I	Z	S	P	O
Z	D	U	X	N	Q	X	X	D	N	Q	F	U	A	A	E	L
Y	J	Q	U	R	Y	U	T	W	W	Z	K	Q	L	N	Z	B
F	T	O	D	F	Y	H	E	C	A	I	K	N	S	C	T	D

Spring Is Hinting At Us

by Laura M. de la Garza - Park Ranger

As I walk around the refuge with the scents of Spring tickling my nose, I can see budding leaves emerging and hear birds calling. Spring is always an exciting time for me and my family. My kids especially love to see the differences in the seasons and enjoy the outdoors so much more during this time.

With such great weather this winter, it has been an amazing time to get out and enjoy the birds and experience countless hours of exploring the outdoors.

Santa Ana is a great place to bring your little ones to explore and learn about the many facets of the flora and fauna of the Rio Grande Valley. As busy as we get with work and our daily chores, we can sometimes forget that life can be enjoyed so much more when we spend time outdoors with Mother Nature.

As Mothers, we want the best for our kids and this is the best time of the year to explore our National Wildlife Refuges. Here at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, our local families can enjoy a wide variety of family friendly spring programs. We will be conducting these programs on Saturdays and on Sundays.

So the next time you and your family find yourselves close to Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge open your mind and get your spring on! You can be sure the kids will be outdoors and engaged.



Side Note:

Laura M. de la Garza is the Park Ranger for Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Alamo, Texas.

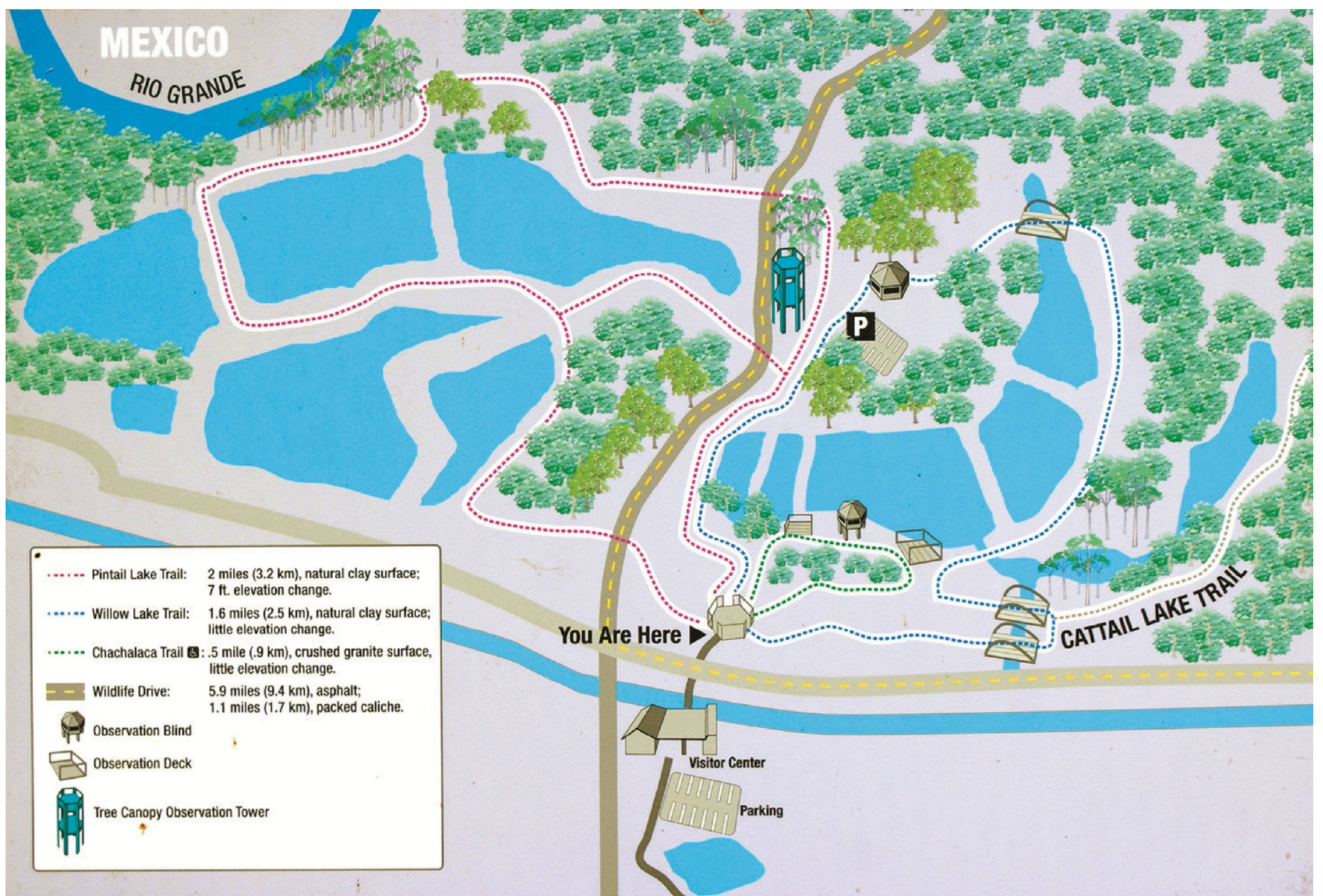
The refuge is located 7 miles south of Alamo on FM 907 about ¼ mile east on Military Hwy.



The refuge is open from sunrise to sunset and the visitor center is open from 8-4 daily. For more information please call 956-784-7500.

www.facebook.com/SantaAnaNWR

**Santa Ana
National Wildlife Refuge**
3325 Green Jay Road
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956-784-7545



The Valley Spotlight says ...
We appreciate our Winter Texan friends!



Thank you for coming,
travel safely and we will see you next Fall!

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Scientists at NASA have developed a gun built specifically to launch dead chickens at the windshields of airliners, military jets and space shuttles, all traveling at maximum velocity. The idea is to simulate the frequent incidents of collisions with airborne fowl to test the strength of the windshields.

British engineers heard about the gun and were eager to test it on the windshields of their new high-speed trains. Arrangements were made to borrow the gun. But when the gun was fired, the engineers stood shocked as the chicken hurtled out of the barrel, crashed into the shatterproof shield, smashed it to smithereens, crashed through the control console, snapped the engineer's backrest in two and embedded itself in the back wall of the cabin.

Horrified, Britons sent NASA the disastrous results of the experiment, along with the designs of the windshield, and asked the U.S. scientists for suggestions.

NASA's response was just one sentence: "Thaw the chicken."

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