

**This Month:**  
 Plaza of Liberty  
 Helping Refugees  
 German Birders  
 VITA Positive Results  
 LECA  
 Weslaco BGC  
 TSA Celebrates 85 Years  
 PSJA Teacher Appreciation  
 Alamo Plans for Winter Texans

IN PRINT, ON-LINE & ON FACEBOOK

# The Valley Spotlight

**FREE  
 TAKE ME HOME**

May 2016

*The Little Paper You'll Want To Keep & Share*

Vol. 2 No. 12

## Patriotism is Alive and Well in the Rio Grande Valley

by Rod Graham

On Patriots' Day, April 18, 2016, the Veterans War Memorial of Texas in McAllen dedicated six new walls of history and a statue of George Washington in the Plaza of Liberty. These newest additions compliment the statue of Patrick Henry and three walls of history previously erected in the plaza.



Veterans War Memorial of Texas Plaza of Liberty 29th St. & Galveston Ave., McAllen, TX

Veterans War Memorial of Texas was awarded a grant by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in the amount of \$10,000 on April 23, 2015 covering the cost of three walls of history. Texas Daughters of the American Revolution (TXDAR) contributed another \$65,000 to erect an additional three walls of history and a statue of George Washington.

Col. Frank Plummer, Pres. Veterans Memorial Foundation of Texas, commented, "The DAR goals to preserve history, promote patriotism and education has been truly achieved in the Plaza of Liberty with these walls of history. They reflect the spirit, sacrifice and courage of the American people in defending the hard earned gift of freedom so cherished by the American people."

As I witnessed this dedication ceremony I was reminded of the sacrifices made by the PATRIOTS who first fought for the freedom of the United States of America and then established a government of rule "by the people and for the people" which we have all come to take for granted in our daily lives. One simply has to watch a few minutes of world news to understand that we are truly fortunate to have the freedoms which we enjoy.

It was refreshing to see a large number of young people joining the celebration. Students from local schools were present and even participated. McAuliffe Elementary School was represented in the ceremony by brothers Thomas and Jacob Patino, the McAuliffe Elementary Starletts and the

McAuliffe Elementary Cheerleaders. There was also in attendance a group of students from Agape Christian School.

Seeing these young students take an interest in the principals upon which our country was founded gives me a positive outlook on the future leadership of our local communities, state and national government.

As always, when I visit the Veterans War Memorial of Texas, I was in awe of the magnitude of this project begun in 1988 by Veterans War Memorial Foundation of Texas and the city of McAllen, TX.

To have such an impressive outdoor library of history here in the Rio Grande Valley is not only unique but truly a treasure to be enjoyed by local residents and visitors for many generations to come.



Attending members of Texas Daughters of the American Revolution - TXDAR has contributed a total of \$145,000 to Veterans War Memorial of TX

**★ U.S. FOUNDING FATHERS ★**

THE FOUNDRING FATHERS OF THE UNITED STATES WERE MEN WHO THOUGHT, WRIT, NEGOTIATED, DEBATED, PROTESTED, SIGNED, AND SIGNED AGAIN THE DOCUMENTS THAT WOULD BECOME THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AND THE U.S. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. THESE MEN WERE: GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732-1799), BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790), JOHN ADAMS (1735-1826), THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826), JAMES MADISON (1751-1836), ALEXANDER HAMILTON (1755 OR 1757-1804), JOHN FIFTH (1753-1836).

**★ WORLD WAR I 1914 - 1918 ★**

BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR I  
 CHOOSING SIDES  
 CONSEQUENCES OF WWI  
 ALIGNMENT OF WAR POWERS  
 FIGHTING STARTS

**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
 WAR BEGINS  
 COMMITTEE OF FIVE  
 IMPORTANCE OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
 DEDICATION

**★ WORLD WAR I, 1915 - 1916 ★**

WAR YEARS 1915-1916  
 THE AIR WAR 1914-1918  
 OCEAN WAR 1914-1918  
 SEAWAR 1914-1918  
 WAR SPREADS OUT - YEAR 1915  
 WESTERN AND EASTERN FRONTS  
 U.S. MOVES TOWARD WAR

**★ U.S. CONSTITUTION ★**

IN THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES  
 IN THE BEGINNING  
 CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION  
 U.S. CONSTITUTION  
 AMENDMENTS  
 BILL OF RIGHTS  
 WAR YEAR 1917  
 WAR ENDS 11 NOV. 1918  
 WAR YEAR 1918  
 WORLD WAR I (1914) CASUALTY ESTIMATES  
 WAR ENDS



Walls of History and statue of George Washington by Douglas Clark



## Catholic Charities Of the Rio Grande Valley

by Alma Seong

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, in McAllen, Texas is the home of the Humanitarian Respite Center managed by Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley (CCRGV).

Respite is defined as “a short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant”.

The Humanitarian Respite Center at Sacred Heart provides a place to rest, a warm meal, a shower, clean clothing, medicine and other supplies for thousands of refugees. Facing extreme hardships in their countries of origin, these refugees have made a difficult journey to arrive here in the Rio Grande Valley.

According to [www.immigrationpolicy.org](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org), when Central Americans were asked why they left their home, 59 percent of boys and 61 percent of girls list crime, gang threats, or violence as a reason for their emigration. Whereas males most feared assault or death for not joining gangs or interacting with corrupt government officials, females most feared rape or disappearance at the hands of the same groups.



These fears give them reason to face the unknown dangers of making the long journey to find a better life for themselves in the United States. If they are successful in crossing the Southern Mexico border, they now face over an 800 mile trip to the US border aboard El tren de la muerte (“The Death Train”) also known as La Bestia (“The Beast”) and El tren de los desconocidos (“The train of the unknowns”). The ominous names given to this railway system through Mexico



indicate the many dangers faced by the refugees who ride atop these freight trains. These dangers include death and injury from accidentally falling from the top of the speeding train onto the tracks below as well as physical assault and robbery by gangs along the routes. Refugees who do make it across the US border into the RGV region come tired, hungry and destitute. After being processed and released by Customs and Border Protection, families and individuals come to the respite center for assistance. It is a place to give them their dignity and to rest a while before they head off to meet a relative somewhere in the US to await trial.

Here is one account recalled by Nallely Sepulveda, Assistant at Catholic Charities of the RGV’s Humanitarian Respite Center.

“A few months ago a Central American family was at the center. A relative had promised them bus tickets to head north to their final destination. For some reason the tickets were not available so the family ended up spending three nights at the center. During this time I got to know them. They explained to me that they had owned and operated a successful restaurant in their country. But, local “maras”, gangs, noticed their success and began harassing them for large amounts of money. Failure to make these extortion payments then resulted in death threats.

The demands made by the “maras” were so extreme that this family was forced to close their restaurant and flee to the US in hope of finding a sanctuary.

Eventually the family was able to obtain the means to continue their journey north.

If you would like to make a difference in the lives of refugees, please send us a check payable to Catholic Charities of the RGV.

700 N Virgen de San Juan

San Juan, TX 78589.

THANK YOU!



Families being assisted by a respite center volunteer

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## Energy Efficient Windows

Last year I replaced all the windows in my house with those expensive double-pane energy efficient kind, and today, I got a call from the contractor who installed them. He was complaining that the work had been completed a whole year ago and I still hadn’t paid for them.

Hellloooo ...? Just because I’m blonde doesn’t mean that I am automatically stupid.

So, I told him just what his fast talking sales guy had told me last year, that **in ONE YEAR these windows would pay for themselves!**

Helllooooo? It’s been a year!

There was only silence at the other end of the line, so I finally just hung up. He never called back.

I bet he felt like an idiot.

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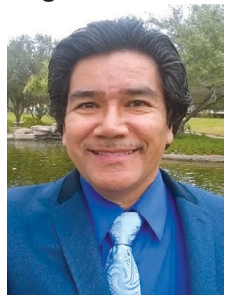
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May 2016 issue Vol. 2 No. 12

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# True Tales of a Valley Birder

by Keith Hackland (alamoinn@aol.com) photo credit: Keith Hackland

## Germans Bird South Texas More

(continued from April 2016 issue)

After a great start to the tour, birding very full days, we were up early next morning, following back roads from Refugio to Rockport, stopping at wetlands to see Mottled Duck, Black-necked Stilt and Teal. We stopped on a busy road where the group wandered along peering through binoculars and scopes, bird watching. Unfortunately I had to watch the cars skim by and my heart was in my mouth as I motioned to traffic to slow down, but to our German birders there were no cars, only birds.



We stopped again at short grass land with mirrors of water lying here and there. A lone bird had everyone's attention. Its legs were yellow, slim build, speckled light brown body, large eye with white eyebrow, short yellow bill with black tip. It was an Upland Sandpiper. A great find. They move through on migration, often seen solitary, and are a bird one stumbles across rather than expects to see.

Observing the feeding of a mixed flock of waders, Long-billed Dowitcher, Terns, and Greater Yellow-legs reminded everyone that lunch time was approaching. At about 12:30 we pulled in to a Subway because we were short of time and thought it would be a quick stop. We had to meet a birding boat scheduled to depart at 1:30 ten miles away. Well no one in our group was familiar with what to do or say or how to select options at a Subway. There were way too many choices, and only one server, who had to do a lot of explaining without the benefit of being able to speak German. We concluded that Subway was a bad idea for the future, and with much patience, managed to have everyone served. Then we drove on to Fulton Harbor. We made a stop en route to admire several Common Loon, a winter visitor that conjures up memories of their melancholy call on quiet lakes in Wisconsin and Canada. The Loon's image is used on the one dollar coin in Canada, commonly referred to as a loonie.

The Skimmer, our ride for the afternoon, is a boat designed to be stable for watching birds on the ocean near the shore, and to travel at a good speed between birding hot spots. Its home port is Fulton Harbor, where it hides amongst dozens of shrimp boats.



The trip, while a little rough on the swells, was most enjoyable. Our number one target, Whooping Crane, was greatly admired and photographed by all. There are some 300 Whooping Cranes now in the wild that winter in Texas at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, a big improvement from the 14 birds remaining in the 1940s. Back from the boat trip about 4:30 pm, we took a quick drive north to a bridge and stream. This is the line where the last Boat-tailed Grackles can be seen, before they all become Great-tailed Grackles in the remainder of South Texas and into the Rio Grande Valley.

We managed to find a few Great-tailed, before retracing our steps and driving through Port Aransas to the Port Arthur ferry. With no waiting, it was a quick ferry ride into Port Aransas. We stopped at our hotel to check in, then made a quick birding stop at the water processing plant, before enjoying supper at Trout Station. My favorite item on their menu is Seafood Jambalaya. It is a dish to write home and tell the folks about . . . it is that good.

Great views of Tricolored Heron, Green-winged Teal, Black-crowned Night-heron, Double-crested Cormorant, White Ibis, Common Yellow-throat (a warbler), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (a woodpecker), and a dozen more birds made for an exciting morning, as we worked our way South on Mustang Island, finally stopping at a What-a-burger for lunch. This was another novelty for our guests, who were amazed and amused at the way Americans eat.

Another two stops, Blucher Park and Hazel Bazemore County Park in Corpus Christi yielded new birds, with a stop at a pond in Riviera, and finally at the Sarita Rest Stop, where we admired Brewer's Blackbirds and Green Jays, as they ate our peanuts. Night fall brought us to Alamo Inn B&B, with a Tex-Mex supper and Mexican beer at El Dorado Restaurant. We had finally made it to the Valley.

The next week our friend Michael Marsden guided our German guests throughout the Valley, to the Island and a great boat ride with Scarlett Colley to see Mangrove Warblers, Brownsville, Boca Chica, and all the other great hot spots.

At the end of the week I received an early morning call that Michael had to take a well deserved day off due to illness, and it was my time again, going on one of my favorite outings to Brushline Road. It is a sandy route north of Alamo through dry land farms to La Sal del Rey, a good road from which to view pot hole lakes supporting water fowl, fields where White-tailed Hawks fly and sometimes Wild Turkeys strut, and the ubiquitous brushline. While we saw a lot of birds, we missed the Wild Turkey. Birders always say it is not birding if all one's target birds are found, and it is always good to leave something to return to see.

Making our way back to Houston we found a Barred Owl in the park in Refugio, and by the end of their tour our group had 264 bird species, a really excellent count, reflecting the advanced skills of the German birders and the great guiding of Michael Marsden.

*We hope to see many more German birding tours visiting South Texas during the coming years.*

### A Wise Man Once Said:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, for they are sticking to their diets.

Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.



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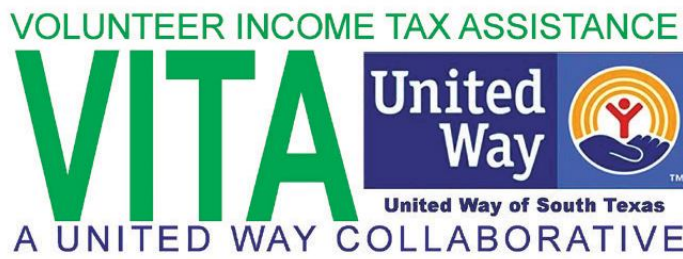


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## Celebrating Positive Results



### THE TAX SEASON FOR THE VITA PROGRAM WAS THE BIGGEST EVER!

We want to thank all of our friends and volunteers, from businesses (Wells Fargo, Affordable Homes, UTRGV, STC, City of RGC, Roma, PSJA, La Joya, and McAllen, Independent School Districts, Lonestar National Bank, BBVA, Goodwill Industries, Security Service Federal Credit Union) school districts and municipalities, who have impacted 3000 families by completing tax returns at no cost. The amount of money returned to these families in our two county area, Starr and Hidalgo, totaled, \$6,074,000.00.

We talked to families about basic budgeting, opening savings accounts and suggested they think about setting goals on what the family needs most over the next couple of years. The majority of our clients have realistic goals for utilizing their tax returns. Taking care of bills (especially medical) and buying books for a college student are commonly listed as priorities. The United Way of South Texas has spearheaded this program for 5 years and has experienced growth every year. We will continue to raise awareness as we prepare for the 2016 tax season which will open in January 2017.

Think about the economic impact this program brings to our 2-county area. To get involved, please call 956-686-6331, or go to ...

[www.volunteersotx.org](http://www.volunteersotx.org). Impact families, impact our local economy!

We at High Octane Cuts have a sense of pride when it comes to making our community look good and feel confident after they come for a visit to our shop. However, that isn't enough for us at High Octane Cuts. We feel like we can do better to help out the community besides making them look good. That is why we are hosting

### *The High Octane Cuts and HTXV 2nd Annual Car Show*

to benefit the RGV Down Syndrome Association. We are trying to bring awareness to the RGV about Down Syndrome and bring something awesome to the Valley. All proceeds from this car show will go to help bring advocacy, education, and assistance to families with Down Syndrome.

*This is just one event though.*

*We will be back to help other causes with other events.*

If you would like to help out please do. We are accepting donations and have a Go Fund Me account as well. Thank you RGV for everything and we'll see you at the show.

For sponsorship info or to register, contact Luis Ramirez,  
Event Coordinator: [punker1110@yahoo.com](mailto:punker1110@yahoo.com) .. 956-793-3423

[placement of this ad was made possible through the generosity of Trino Medina]

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we want her around us.

To kiss away our wounds we run to her.

And for a warm hug and love we look for her.

She is the focal point of our lives, the greatest human  
being in the world or should we say divinity on earth.

On the special occasion of Mother's Day  
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To All of the Mothers in the Rio Grande Valley,

***HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!***



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## Spotlight on the RGV Sector US Border Patrol

by Rod Graham from an interview with Marlene A. Castro, Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Public Affairs Office, Rio Grande Valley Sector

As one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the United States, the US Border Patrol's mission is to detect and prevent illegal aliens, terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States, and prevent illegal trafficking of people and contraband.

We all see US Border Patrol (USBP) vehicles on the roadways of the Valley and we see news stories and press releases regarding current activities in which USBP is involved.

What we do not see, or hear much about, is the vast network of support staff working out of the public eye without which the efficiency of USBP's efforts would be greatly diminished. In USBP jargon, this is referred to as "Mission Support".

One mission support group which plays a key roll in the effectiveness and safety of the USBP field agents is LECA, Law Enforcement Communication Assistant.

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week Border Patrol Agents (BPA) are in the field patrolling and following up on leads provided by a variety of sources. These sources include agent observations, reports from local citizens as well as electronic detections coming from remote surveillance technology including ground sensors and remote video surveillance.



LECA operators stay in constant contact with field agents providing vital information needed to perform their duties efficiently and safely.

Here in the Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Sector there are two LECA offices monitoring these reports 24/7 and providing agents in the field the information required to safely respond to the situation at hand.

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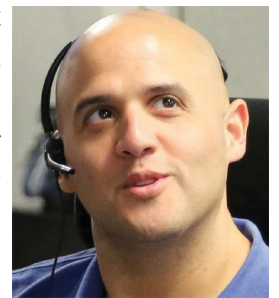


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With state of the art computer technology, LECA is able to detect suspicious activity, dispatch BP agents to monitor this activity and provide the responding agent with detailed reports of possible dangers presented by a specific suspect.

RGV Sector LECA Operator Aaron Palomo told me, "I feel we here in LECA make a difference out there in the field ... it is our responsibility to make sure that all of our agents get home safely to their families."



Do I enjoy what I do?  
Yes, and I take pride in what I do."

## Unappreciated

by Pastor Rodney J. Sawyer

"Unappreciated" was the debut album of a soul girl group called Cherish. One of the lines in the chorus of the song "Unappreciated" says, "And lately I've been feeling, feeling unappreciated." Although the song has to do with a boy and girl relationship, we all understand being unappreciated at times in our lives. Caring and appreciating people is becoming a lost art.

The People's Covenant Church is making a small effort to show appreciation to the teachers at PSJA Elvis J Ballew High School, one of nine high schools in the Pharr/San Juan/Alamo district.

PSJA Elvis J Ballew High School just happens to be down the street from our church facility on Standard Ave.



800 S Standard Ave.  
San Juan, TX

On May 10, some of our members will be serving a hot lunch to all the staff at PSJA Elvis J Ballew High School. We also plan to gather their prayer needs to take back to our congregation so we can pray for them. All this is good timing, since National Teacher Day is to be held on May 3rd. The National Education Association describes National Teacher Day as "...a day for honoring teachers and recognizing the lasting contributions they make to our lives".

If there is one thing that our culture falls short of today, it is in the area of showing appreciation to others. Teachers are often high on the unappreciated list of professions. Some of this may be due to the bad publicity that is received through the media in isolated cases. Just like the police as of late, they are stereotyped because of the bad example of a few.

We need to express our appreciation to our hard working and dedicated teachers for several reasons:

- 1) They are role models. Sometimes they are the only positive influence a young person will ever have.
- 2) They are professionals that care. How many of us can remember back to a teacher that truly cared for us in a special way?
- 3) Teachers empower by believing in their student's potential. This can be a life-driving gift to a student when they enter the market place!
- 4) Teachers challenge their students to a higher standard. Many students take the challenge and excel beyond their dreams.
- 5) Finally, teachers are inspirational. Many teachers are teachers, because of their teachers!

Serving a meal and praying for the teachers just down the street seems like such a small jester for our church, but we believe that God can take even the smallest act of kindness to touch a person in a big way. As the Apostle Paul stated, "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all that we ask or imagine..."



# Spotlight on the Boys and Girls Club of Weslaco

by Mary Gallardo Lopez



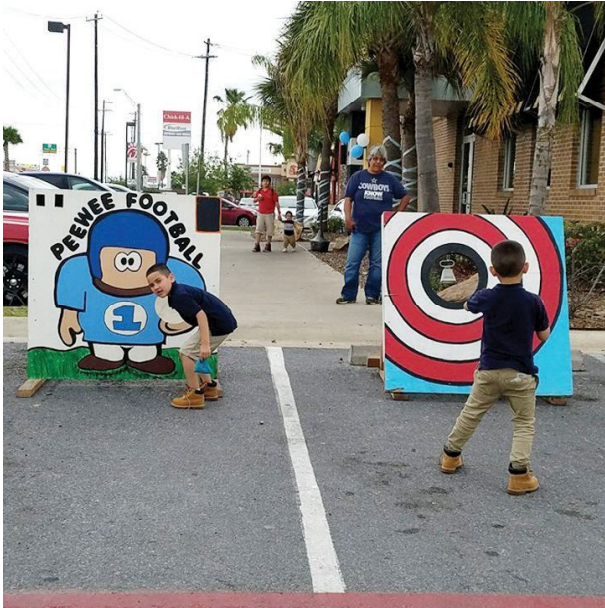
On Wednesday, April 13th we participated in a benefit event with Buffalo Wild Wings in Weslaco for Team Up for Kids Community Day. Together we raised money for our clubs, where 10% of all sales went to BGCA. There were appearances by none other than the best of our community ...

*The Weslaco Police Department.*

Children enjoyed the many activities we had planned for family fun outside the venue, while indoors there were contests for great prizes, and not to mention the tasty food at discounted prices. This was a fun and successful event, a big thank you to all who helped and contributed, but most of all to those who made the donations possible!

We've had a solid season so far for our basketball league at BGCW. This will be our last season spent outside of our own facility and we intend to make the best memories to end it on a good note. Thank you to the district for allowing us to use their facilities for the past years and to all the parents and coaches for making it a memorable year. We can't wait to have our own court to share with our BGC kids for upcoming leagues.

We'd like to congratulate Jacynda Rico, The Boys and Girls Clubs of Weslaco's Junior Youth of the Year. She is pictured here receiving her award and recognition in San Antonio surrounded by others just like her from all over Texas. We are so very proud of her and wish her the best of luck in her future.



Help The Valley Spotlight continue to provide community awareness about Non-Profit Organizations like Boys and Girls Clubs

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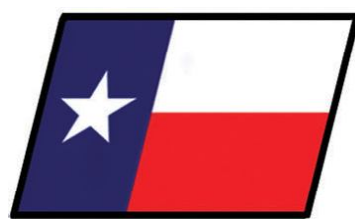
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# Jeepers Just Hanging Out With Jeepers

by Alyssa Cavazos



It was a full house at Sofie's 'SS' Saloon this month. The lot was jam packed with Jeeps, most proudly displaying their corresponding Jeep clubs. Present at this month's Jeep Night were the Texas Jeep Crawlers, Texas Off-Road Republic,

Jeep Night for the month of April was solely for Jeepers to meet up and have a leisure evening. Jeepers hanging out with Jeepers doing what Jeepers do best.

This month we took a break from the competitions and themed Jeep Nights. The only thing on everyone's mind was to enjoy the evening and each other's company. Sofie's 'SS' Saloon was the spot for the monthly meeting. Burns Motors' David Nuñez delivered once again and grilled up some barbecue for Jeep Night, which was sponsored by Burns Motors. The hours flew by as guests enjoyed good food, great music, and awesome company.

With the pressures of competition and awards absent, Jeepers were able to hang loose and intermingle.

South Texas Rebels, and the South Texas Jeeps. We were happy to have everyone in attendance because more is always merrier. If you are interested in joining in on the fun and experiencing what we Jeepers do best, join us



at Jeep Night, held every second Thursday of each month.

To keep updated on all Jeep Night information and events please like our official Facebook page "Jeep Night powered by Burns Motors".



**For additional information or questions Big Lew can be contacted at 956-984-4454 or by email at [biglew@burnsmotors.com](mailto:biglew@burnsmotors.com)**



# Hummingbirds

By Christine Donald, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Santa Ana NWR

Spring is in the air with all of its glorious renewal. Wildflowers are sprouting, butterflies are fluttering, birds are singing and green grass is growing, signaling for many that it is once again time for mowing and weed-eating.

For me, it means that it is time for hummingbirds to make their appearance. I look forward to their arrival and enjoy watching them. They are true marvels in the bird world.

Hummingbirds are New World birds that constitute the family Trochilidae including over 300 species. Among the smallest of birds, most species measure in the 7.5-13 cm range.

The smallest hummingbird, the bee hummingbird, shown here at its approximate actual size, weighs less than a penny.



Have you ever wondered where their name comes from? Their name comes from the humming sound created when they flap their wings 80 times per second.

They are true aviators in the sky and can fly right, left, up, down, backwards and even upside down. They are also able to hover by flapping their wings in a figure-8 pattern. They have a specialized long and tapered bill that is used to obtain nectar from the center of long, tubular flowers.



The hummingbird's feet are used for perching only, and not for hopping or walking.

Hummingbirds primarily eat flower nectar, tree sap, insects and pollen. Their metabolism with a high heart rate, fast breathing and body temperature require that they eat frequently. They even eat fast with a tongue that can lick their food 13 times per second.

Part of the fascination with watching hummingbirds is their behavior. They are very territorial and their hilarious antics chasing one another and even larger birds like hawks are fun to watch. I have seen hummingbirds chase one another, being so focused on getting rid of the other bird on their favorite feeder that they

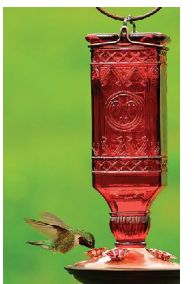


have flown right in a suet cake on a feeder or the screen on my porch and getting their beak stuck. All safely survived and went on to defend their territories fiercely, not the least embarrassed about their mishaps.

Historically hummingbirds were killed for their beautiful feathers; today they face different but equally devastating threats of habitat loss and destruction. Many of the species populations have dropped due to habitat loss. Changing climate and temperatures disrupt their migratory patterns which may cause them to end up outside their normal ranges where they may be unable to find food. Luckily, for the hummingbirds there are lots of folks that put up feeders, like me, because we enjoy watching their antics. Both parties benefit.

The joy of watching them is easy for all. Take some sugar (1 cup per 4 cups water), heat it till the sugar dissolves and put in a feeder.

Hang in a tree or on a hook and enjoy the beauty of hummingbirds.



# The Salvation Army Celebrates 85 Years Of Transforming Lives

With the help of God and the support of the community, we have had the privilege and honor of helping thousands upon thousands of needy people in Hidalgo County throughout the past 85 years. Behind all the numbers are stories of transformation, including that of former shelter client, Casimiro Rodriguez.

Rodriguez was drunk and high the day before his brother kicked him out of the house. His addiction to cocaine and alcohol had led to many family disputes. But this time, the dispute resulted in Rodriguez's homelessness and rude awakening. With nowhere to go during the summer of 1993, Rodriguez looked for a bus in McAllen that would take him far away from the Valley. With his backpack and a suitcase in hand, he got on the first bus he saw, not realizing that it was for local transportation only. But small talk with the bus driver led Rodriguez to an unexpected destination, The Salvation Army (TSA). The bus driver insisted that Rodriguez would get the help he needed at TSA by first checking into the shelter. Knowing that he would not get much farther on that bus and that he indeed needed help, Rodriguez followed the bus driver's advice. He checked into the shelter and met Mr. Willie, the shelter manager at that time. "He showed me he was there for me," Rodriguez said of Mr. Willie. "I'm grateful because I reached out my hand for help and TSA gave it to me."

Rodriguez stayed at the shelter for two months. Then, upon Rodriguez's request for rehabilitation, TSA sent him to a Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center in Tyler, Texas. The four-month program not only transformed Rodriguez, but allowed him to start working again. He stayed in Tyler working as a custodian for TSA for about four years. Within his first year there, he remembers the TSA shelter opening its doors to people who lost their homes to a hurricane that hit nearby Houston. He helped give out meals, blankets and hygiene items. "I humbled myself," Rodriguez said. "I saw a lot of the need and realized life is too precious; you can go like this (snaps his fingers) at any time."

When Rodriguez found out that his father was ill in McAllen, he decided to move back to the Valley. He ended up working for TSA in McAllen as a custodian and then as a donation truck driver for about eight years. In 2008, TSA Divisional Headquarters in Dallas dispatched the McAllen Corps canteen, or mobile feeding unit, to Texas City and Galveston for Hurricane Ike relief. Rodriguez drove the canteen to the area and stayed there for three weeks delivering meals that the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers cooked daily for Hurricane Ike victims.

"While delivering meals over there, I met a wealthy banker with his family, his wife and three kids," Rodriguez recalled. "The lady was crying. They had lost their home and everything in it. But I told her that she didn't lose everything. She had her family right there with her."

Today, Rodriguez enjoys sharing his testimony and words of hope to others. Since his rehabilitation in 1994, he has been sober and drug-free. Rodriguez confesses that it has been difficult for his family to trust him again. But his advice to those who struggle with addictions is that "nothing is impossible with the Lord."

We invite you to join us in celebrating National Salvation Army Week, May 9-14. You may find the complete schedule of activities at [facebook.com/salvarmymcallen](http://facebook.com/salvarmymcallen). We also invite you to help us help others. To give a monetary donation, you may send a check payable to The Salvation Army to the following address: PO Box 4766, McAllen, TX 78502. You may also visit with us in person at 1600 N. 23rd St. McAllen, TX 78501 to discuss with us how you would like to get involved. Thank you for your support!



**DOING THE MOST GOOD™**  
SERVING MCALLEN SINCE 1931

## National Salvation Army Week Monday, May 9th - Saturday May 14th

**Monday, May 9: Lunch from the Canteen**  
Free lunch for the community will be served from our canteen between 12:30-1PM at The Salvation Army parking lot 1600 N. 23rd St. McAllen, TX 78501.

**Tuesday, May 10: Doughnut Day Appreciating First Responders**  
We will be serving emergency first responders around the community with doughnuts between 9-11:30AM as a token of our appreciation.

**Wednesday, May 11: Special Program Character Youth Building Class**  
Our afternoon Character Youth Building class will include a presentation by guest speaker and a tour of the facility, especially for children. Schools and other children will be invited to join.

**Thursday, May 12: Behind the Red Shield and Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon**  
Join us at this free luncheon from 12-1PM at The Salvation Army Banquet Hall 1600 N. 23rd St. McAllen, TX 78501. Learn about The Salvation Army's programs and services, hear a former shelter client share their success story and enjoy a tour of the facility. We will also recognize volunteers for their continued support. Please RSVP with Eloise Montemayor at 956-682-1468 by 5PM on May 10.

**Friday, May 13: Family Thrift Store Super Sale Everything in the store will be 50% off.**  
Don't miss out on great deals!  
McAllen Store – 1600 N. 23rd St.  
Weslaco Store – 401 S. Texas Blvd.

**Saturday, May 14: Music Concert**  
The Salvation Army McAllen Corps musicians will join Corpus Christi Corps members for a music concert, which will conclude the week's programs and activities. Details will be announced on our Facebook page.

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Professional Dog Grooming  
at Competitive Prices

1615 N. 11½ St. in McAllen  
(Off Pecan, West of 10th St.)  
956-648-2416 Linda Utberg



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Mon - Fri, 9 am - 6 pm    Sat, 9 pm - 12 Noon ... Sun, 3 pm - 6 pm

[www.pawsandclawsgv.com](http://www.pawsandclawsgv.com)    [pawsandclawsedinburg@gmail.com](mailto:pawsandclawsedinburg@gmail.com)

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

"Our dogs always love staying at Paws and Claws ... we appreciate all you do to make them feel so comfortable!"

## Believe Me, The Duck is Dead

A woman brought a very limp duck into a veterinary surgeon. As she laid her pet on the table, the vet pulled out his stethoscope and listened to the bird's chest.

After a moment or two, the vet shook his head and sadly said, "I'm sorry, your duck, Cuddles, has passed away." The distressed woman wailed, "Are you sure?" "Yes, I am sure. Your duck is dead," replied the vet.

"How can you be so sure?" she protested. "I mean you haven't done any testing on him or anything. He might just be in a coma or something."

The vet rolled his eyes, turned around and left the room. He returned a few minutes later with a black Labrador Retriever. As the duck's owner looked on in amazement, the dog stood on his hind legs, put his front paws on the examination table and sniffed the duck from top to bottom. He then looked up at the vet with sad eyes and shook his head.

The vet patted the dog on the head and took it out of the room. A few minutes later he returned with a cat.

The cat jumped on the table and also delicately sniffed the bird from head to foot. The cat sat back on its haunches, shook its head, meowed softly and strolled

out of the room.

The vet looked at the woman and said, "I'm sorry, but as I said, this is most definitely, 100% certifiably, a dead duck."

The vet turned to his computer terminal, hit a few keys and produced a bill, which he handed to the woman.

The duck's owner, still in shock, took the bill. "\$150!" she cried, "\$150 just to tell me my duck is dead!"

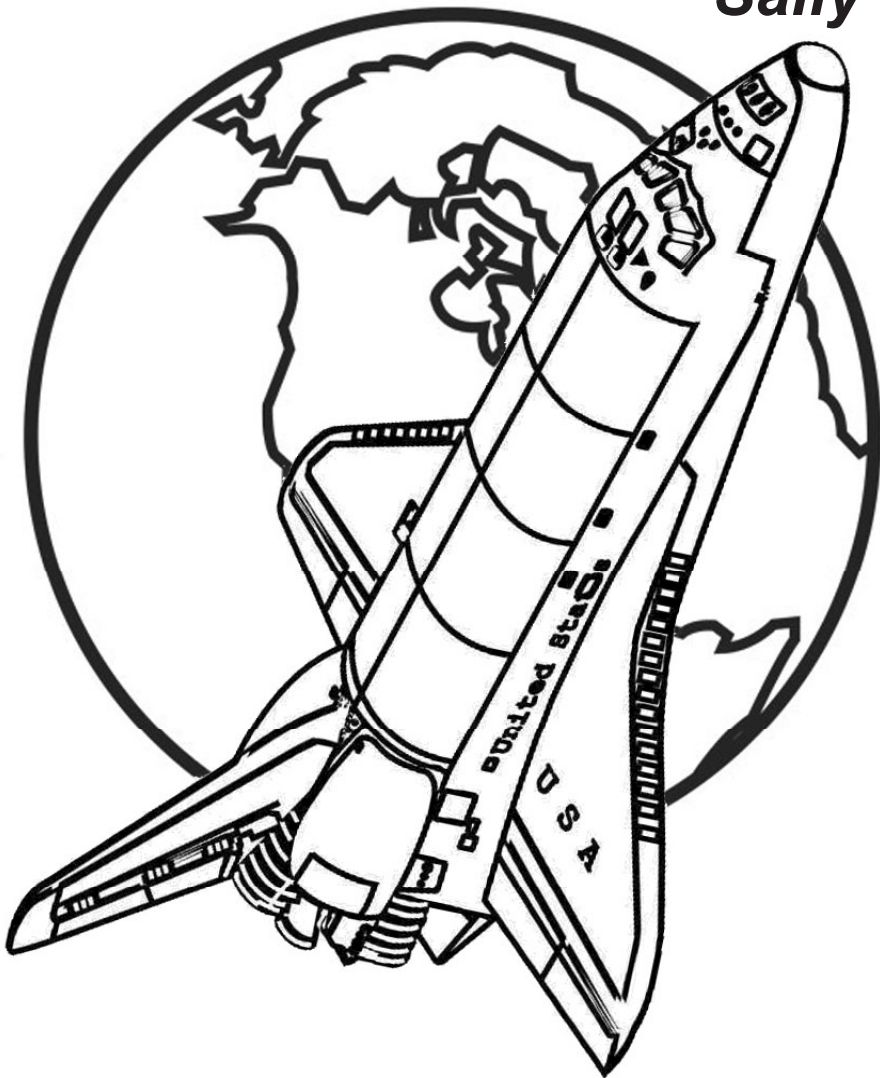
The vet shrugged, "I'm sorry. If you had just taken my word for it, the bill would have been \$20, but ...

*with the Lab Report and the Cat Scan,  
it's now \$150*

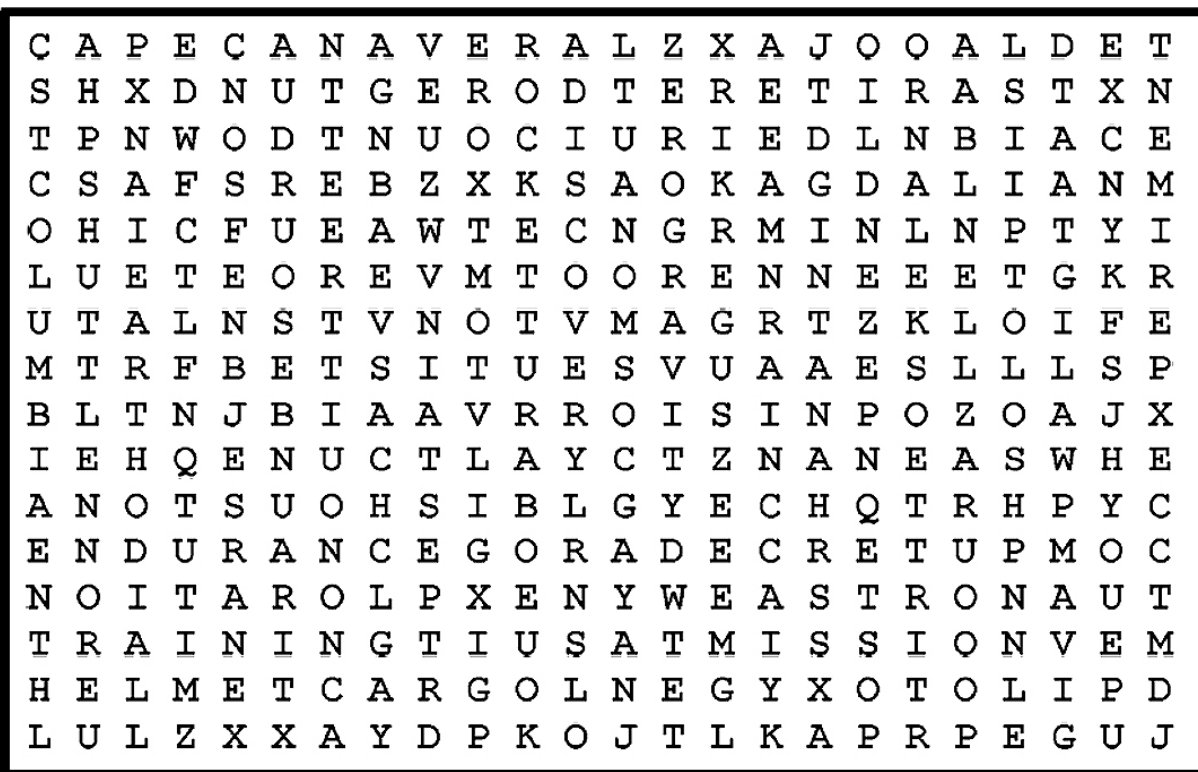
**For Kids Only**  
No matter how old you are!

**Have Fun and Learn**  
while you solve these puzzles and  
practice your coloring skills

**May 26 is  
Sally Ride Day**



On June 18, 1983, Sally Kristen Ride became the first American woman in space as a crew member on space shuttle Challenger. Sally Ride Day was created in honor of her birthday, May 26, 1951.



Can you find these words associated with Space Exploration in the puzzle above?

- |                       |                |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>ASTRONAUT</b>      | <b>FLOAT</b>   | <b>REENTRY</b>       |
| <b>BLASTOFF</b>       | <b>HELMET</b>  | <b>ROCKET</b>        |
| <b>CAPE CANAVERAL</b> | <b>HOUSTON</b> | <b>SATELLITE</b>     |
| <b>CAPE KENNEDY</b>   | <b>HUBBLE</b>  | <b>SCIENTIST</b>     |
| <b>CARGO</b>          | <b>LANDING</b> | <b>SHUTTLE</b>       |
| <b>COMPUTER</b>       | <b>MISSION</b> | <b>SPACE STATION</b> |
| <b>COSMONAUT</b>      | <b>NASA</b>    | <b>SPACEWALK</b>     |
| <b>COUNTDOWN</b>      | <b>ORBIT</b>   | <b>SUIT</b>          |
| <b>EARTH</b>          | <b>OXYGEN</b>  | <b>SURVIVAL</b>      |
| <b>ENDURANCE</b>      | <b>PILOT</b>   | <b>TECHNOLOGY</b>    |
| <b>EXPERIMENT</b>     | <b>PREPARE</b> | <b>TRAINING</b>      |
| <b>EXPLORATION</b>    | <b>RADIO</b>   | <b>ZERO GRAVITY</b>  |

### A Bit Of Humor

While I sat in the reception area of my doctor's office, a woman rolled an elderly man in a wheelchair into the room. As she went to the receptionist's desk, the man sat there, alone and silent.

Just as I was thinking I should make small talk with him, a little boy slipped off his mother's lap and walked over to the wheelchair.

Placing his hand on the man's hand, he said, "I know how you feel. My Mom makes me ride in the stroller too."

A young boy enters a barber shop and the barber whispers to his customer, "This is the dumbest kid in the world. Watch while I prove it to you." The barber puts a dollar bill in one hand and two quarters in the other, then calls the boy over and asks, "Which do you want, son?"

The boy takes the quarters and leaves the dollar. "What did I tell you?" said the barber. "That kid never learns!"

Later, when the customer leaves, he sees the same young boy coming out of the ice cream store and says ; "Hey, son! May I ask you a question? Why did you take the quarters instead of the dollar bill?"

The boy licked his cone and replied, "Because the day I take the dollar, the game's over!"

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mother looked back once while she was driving," he announced enthusiastically, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

# May 25th is National Missing Children Day

## *Safety Tips For Parents To Prevent Missing Children*

### **Teach Your Children:**

- Their full names, addresses and phone numbers.
- How to make a long distance call (both directly to you using the area code and by dialing "O" for the operator).
- Never to go into anyone's home without your permission. Children should know whose homes they are allowed to enter.
- If they become separated from you while shopping not to look for you, but to go to the nearest checkout counter and ask the clerk (1) if he or she works there and (2) for assistance. **Never go to the parking lot!**
- To walk with and play with others. The child is most vulnerable when alone. If your child walks to school, have him/her walk with other children.
- That adults do not usually ask children for directions. If someone should stop in a car asking for directions, the child should not go near the car.
- If someone is following them, they should go to a place where there are other people, to a neighbor's home or into a store. They should ask for help. They should not try to hide behind bushes.
- Never to go near a car with someone in it; never to get into a car without your permission. Warn your children that someone might try to lure them into a car by saying you said to pick them up. Tell them never to obey such instructions.
- That a stranger is someone they and you don't know well.
- Never to tell anyone over the phone that they are home alone.
- Never to answer the door when home alone. Teach your children how to call your community's emergency assistance number. Make sure that they know a neighbor they can call if someone tries to get into the house or if there is an emergency.
- To tell you if any adult asks them to keep a "secret."
- That no one has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable. They have the right to say "no."
- To tell you if someone offers them gifts or money or wants to take their picture.
- To yell "HELP", not just scream.

### **As Parents You Should:**

- Know your children's friends.
- Never leave children unattended; never leave children alone in the car.
- Be involved in your children's activities.
- Listen when your child tells you he or she does not want to be with someone; there may be a reason you should know about.
- Notice when someone shows your child a great deal of attention and find out why.
- Have your child's fingerprints taken; know where to locate dental records.
- Be sensitive to changes in your child's behavior or attitudes. Encourage open communication. Never belittle any fear or concern your child may express to you.

- Take a photograph of your child each year (four times a year for children under age 2).
- Have a set plan with your child outlining what he/she should do if you become separated away from home.
- Do not buy items that have your child's name on them such as hats, jackets and t-shirts.

An abductor could start a friendly conversation with your child after reading the child's name.

- Make a game of reading license plate numbers and remembering their colors.

This will help children recognize the numbers and letters on license plates and their states of origin.

- Be sure your children's day care center or school will not release children to anyone but the children's parents or persons they designate. Instruct the school to call you if your child is absent.



# CYBER TIPLINE

[www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

**1-800-843-5678**

If you think you have seen a missing child, or suspect a child may be sexually exploited, contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. The CyberTipline® receives leads and tips regarding suspected crimes of sexual exploitation committed against children. More than 4.3 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation have been made to the CyberTipline between 1998 and April 2015.

If you have information regarding possible child sexual exploitation,

***Report It To The Cybertipline.***

## Winter Texan Marketing in Alamo, Texas

By Alma Puentes Colleli, Marketing Consultant

It's a bittersweet time of the year in the Rio Grande Valley with the end of the Winter Texan season. In Alamo, we enjoyed an exciting year and made some great memories with our Winter Texans. They will be missed but we look forward to October to welcome them back.

The City of Alamo has made the retention and attraction of Winter Texans a priority. For the first time, the City is actively engaged in a marketing campaign targeted at Winter Texans and has even implemented an Ambassador Program so that Winter Texans can help market Alamo back in their home states. Here's why. For up to six months each year, nearly 20,000 Winter Texans call Alamo home. The City of Alamo recognizes and values not only the economic impact that the Winter Texans provide to local businesses but also the positive impact they have on the community as they volunteer and share their time and talent to improve the quality of life for all residents in the City.

In the fall of 2015, Management staff from the RV parks and resorts and Alamo County Club were concerned that the number of Winter Texans staying in Alamo would decrease. They approached the City leadership about the issue. The Mayor and City Commissioners along with members from the Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce and the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge met with the RV park managers to start brainstorming ideas for marketing. The City leadership took a proactive approach and from that original meeting, a Winter Texan Committee was formed to develop a marketing plan funded by the City in order to promote Alamo, its hotels and RV resorts as a destination of choice for Winter Texans. I came on board in October 2015 as the marketing consultant to develop

the marketing plan with input and ideas from the committee and City leadership.

We realized that local marketing was very important. The first step was to reach and communicate with current Winter Texans not only staying in Alamo but in the Rio Grande Valley region. All management staff from Alamo RV parks, resorts and the Alamo Country Club were invited to join the committee and share information about upcoming events and learn about City events and volunteer opportunities. In order to reach Winter Texans throughout the Rio Grande Valley, we placed both print and online advertising. We exhibited at the Winter Texan Expo to provide an opportunity for our RV parks and resorts to market their properties. As the consultant, I also visited each RV park and resort and attended many Winter Texan activities at each park.

Social media is key as more and more retirees and senior citizens use Facebook, Twitter and the internet to research places to visit and stay for the winter. We actively post items of interest for Winter Texans on the City social media sites and now have an email account for tourism inquiries:

[tourism@alamotexas.org](mailto:tourism@alamotexas.org)

To reach prospective Winter Texans we participated in the Texas Governor's Office Sales and Media Blitz to Ontario, Canada to meet with key tourism industry professionals. This summer, we are going where our target audience is located; the Midwest United States.

We will exhibit at several Family Motor Coach Association and Good Sam Rallies and are advertising in the FMCA Motor Coaching Destinations Guide. Registrants at our booth can enter a grand prize drawing for a 3 day weekend trip to Alamo with airfare and lodging provided.

We realize that testimonials are a very important aspect of marketing and for that reason the Alamo Texas Ambassador Program was developed. Close to fifty Winter Texans were trained in March and armed with a video and marketing materials to take back home with them. They also signed up to work the City's booth at the FMCA and Good Sam Rallies!



Winter Texans attending the Alamo Texas Ambassador Program



Winter Texan Ambassadors Richard Schmidt and Juanita Vess

With our strong marketing campaign I am certain that we will reach prospective Winter Texans and together with our returning Winter Texans we will enjoy another great winter in Alamo this year! I thank the committee, Mayor Diana Martinez and the City Commissioners and Mr. Ozuna the City Manager for their vision and commitment to maintain and grow Alamo as the destination of choice for Winter Texans.

## Celebrating and Honoring Our Military

In the United States, Armed Forces Day is celebrated on the third Saturday in May. It falls near the end of Armed Forces Week, which begins on the second Saturday of May and ends on the third Sunday of May.

First observed on May 20, 1950, the day was created on August 31, 1949, to honor Americans serving in the five U.S. military branches; the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Coast Guard.

Following the consolidation of the military services in the U.S. Department of Defense, it was intended to replace the separate Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Days, but the separate days are still observed, especially within the respective services.



The first Armed Forces Day was celebrated by parades, open houses, receptions and air shows. The United States' longest running city-sponsored Armed Forces Day Parade is held in Bremerton, Washington. This year Bremerton will celebrate the 68th year of the this parade.

