

This Month:

White Christmas 2004
Support Local Merchants
Birding in the Valley
A Sacred Ministry
Jeepers Giving Back
Boys & Girls Club - Pharr
Christmas Entertainment
RV & Outdoor Show 2016

IN PRINT, ON-LINE & ON FACEBOOK

The Valley Spotlight

**FREE
TAKE ME HOME**

December 2015

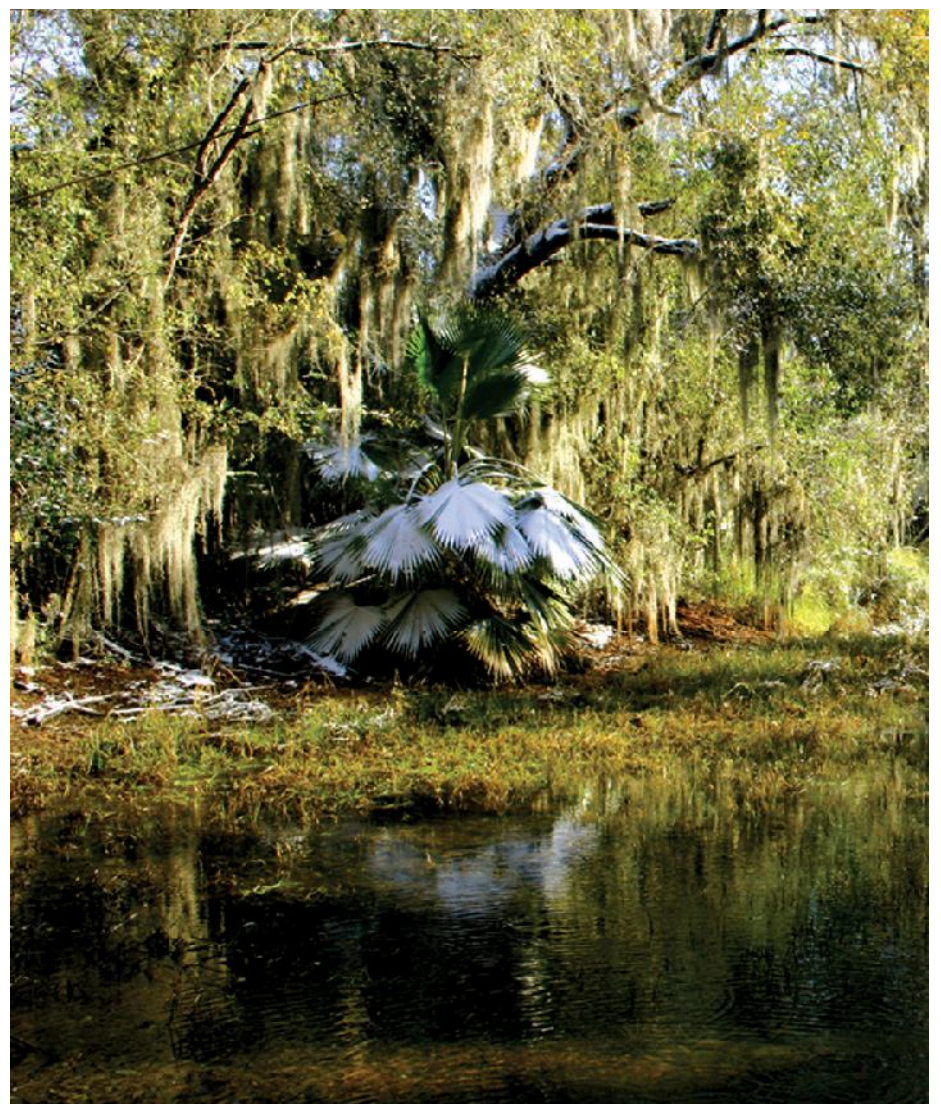
The Little Paper You'll Want To Keep & Share

Vol. 2 No. 7

**Christmas morning two thousand and four
A day to remember like none before
Crystalline snow clinging to Spanish moss
Local wildlife confused, at a total loss**

**Throughout the Valley, folks stayed up all night
Delighted to play in a blanket of white
Not having been seen in over one hundred years
White Christmas in the Valley brought seasonal cheer**

Photographs taken by Rod Graham at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Alamo on Christmas morning 2004
By Noon it was completely gone, just a pleasant memory and a reminder of why we love South Texas!



Keep Your Money Circulating In Our Local Economy

I hate to shop! by Rod Graham

Perhaps this attitude is a “man thing” because my wife loves to shop. We do agree on this point however, we prefer to shop at locally owned businesses. My reason for this preference is simple. I want to get my shopping over with as quickly as possible. I want to go into a store, find what I’m looking for, pay for it and be done in the shortest amount of time possible.

When I shop at my hometown hardware store I am greeted at the door by an employee asking me if they can help. I tell them what I am looking for and they personally take me to the item’s location. They are able to answer any question I may have regarding the item I am

considering purchasing.

In one of the mega chain hardware stores I first have to locate an employee. When I finally do find someone I am told to go look in aisle 23 and God forbid I should ask a question about a product. The most common answer I get is “I don’t know, I just work here”.

Aside from the sheer convenience of shopping a hometown store there is also the economic impact to be considered. “Throughout the United States, only about 33.6% of the revenue from national chains is reinvested into the community, which is very low compared to the 64.8% return from local businesses.

A study in Austin, Texas found that

\$100 spent at a local bookstore produced \$45 worth of local economic activity, and \$100 at the chain store Borders brought back only \$13.

National chains often bring loss of employment. The opening of a Wal-Mart reduces retail employment by an average of 150 jobs in the county of its location.” (source: www.elocal.com)

Support your local business owner!

You may pay a few cents more for an item, but when you consider the gas money you would spend traveling to the big chain store, the extra time you will spend looking for the item, the mental anguish involved and the benefits to our local economy ... *isn't it worth it!*

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A burglar broke into a home.
He heard a soft voice say, “Jesus is watching you.”
Thinking it was his imagination, he continued his search.
Again, he hears: “Jesus is watching you.”
He turned his flashlight around and saw a parrot in a cage.
He asked the parrot if he was the one talking.
The parrot said, “Yes.” So he asked the parrot his name,
and the parrot replied, “Moses.”
The burglar asked, “What kind of people would name a parrot Moses?”
The parrot replied, “The same kind of people who would name their pit bull, Jesus.”

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True Tales of a Valley Birder

by Keith Hackland (alamoinn@aol.com) photo credits: Steve Sinclair

Birding Delta Lake, Hargill & Brushline Road

The Valley is a remarkable place to watch birds. There are sanctuaries, parks and refuges, and then there are also pastures, brush lines, fence lines, ponds, fields and yards that are not a part of any area set aside for birds, but also offer rich birding.

Mary Beth Stowe works for Alamo Inn B&B, Gear & Tours as a birding guide. She gets out birding regularly, and last weekend she and a birder friend visited these special areas at Delta Lake, Hargill, and Brushline Road.

The following account is Mary Beth Stowe's report on their trip and the highlights of what they saw. When she writes about bagging birds, she is using an old hunting term for successfully shooting birds (dead birds were retrieved and carried in a canvas bag), but in this context she means they watched them through binoculars and positively identified them. The whiskered fish being eaten by an Osprey she mentions would most likely have been a catfish.

"A good birder friend joined me this frigid morning (by South Texas standards) as I wanted to try and bag a couple of birds I needed for the year, so we started at the little FM 1015 Pond in hopes that the goose flocks would fly overhead early, which they did – not in huge flocks, but a small mixed group contained the coveted Ross' Goose, so I was glad to bag that!



We then revisited a flooded field we had passed on the way up (now in better light); the two White Pelicans we saw had left, but there were still lots of ducks and shorebirds in there.



We made our way to Delta Lake (bagging a Peregrine on the way), where cruising the park added an Osprey eating a strange fish with a long "whisker", a brilliant Vermilion Flycatcher, and a surprise Black Phoebe, which I thought was a little north for them!

A feeding flock in the back part of the park produced a Yellow, Pine, and "Audubon's" Warbler in addition to the regulars, and a couple of Solitary Sandpipers fed in a muddy area.

A Merlin was at the rest rooms, and a Kestrel posed on the way out. After a quick look at the lake itself, we checked out Nittler Road (as far as we could go), and bagged two needed Sprague's Pipits while checking some ducks that included a Canvasback!

Having gotten my two reasonable targets (my friend agreed that driving all the way to Boca Chica to try for a Gannet was a little much), we then headed over to Hargill, where the big surprise at the playa was a pair of Hooded Mergansers! A couple who was just "exploring" crawled by and told us about another wetland to the west, so we checked it out and found about a dozen Fulvous Whistling Ducks (among other things)!

We then headed up Brushline Road and had a nice selection of sparrows, including Black-throated and Vesper, along with a handful more cranes and water birds.

Brushline north of 186 actually had a water hazard nasty enough to make me turn back (which was a first on that road), so we called it quits and headed home with a whopping 103 species for the morning! Oh, and I can't forget about the White-striped Longtail butterfly that went batting by right in front of the car along Brushline!"

103 species is an excellent count for a morning in the field. It takes experienced birders to identify that many species in such a short time.

They would not have to look up any of these species in a field guide, thus they spend all their time watching.

Two or more people working together is also a great advantage, because typically birds surround a person, and also with driving one person cannot see every bird that is present.

The fall is a great time to bird. It is my favorite time because the birds are active, visible, not shy, and with migrants moving through and wintering birds coming in, these added to our resident birds increases the volume of birds several hundred percent. So anyone with a spare hour or more should get out there and do some birding.



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Photo Credit Reid & Pam Allen



A Sacred Ministry

By Deborah S. Boyce, APR

“Despite all the darkness, human hope is based on the instinct that at the deepest level of reality some intimate kindness holds sway. This is the heart of blessing.”

John O’Donohue (1956-2008)

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley’s refugee relief effort at the Humanitarian Respite Center at Sacred Heart Church, in McAllen, TX. Ranging in age from 8 to 80, our volunteers represent all faith communities. They belong to churches and service groups, and represent elementary, middle and high schools, colleges and universities, not only here in the Rio Grande Valley, but across the United States and the world!

Some volunteer a few hours one to three days a week, some volunteer nearly every day of the week! Others spend a weekend, a week, or two, in concentrated service. But all come together for one common purpose – to welcome and serve the strangers in our midst.

Here are just a few of the reasons why this sacred ministry continues to draw our volunteers back, to serve again and again.

I’m doing Peace Corps work right here in the United States!

Over 28,000 refugees from 35 countries around the world have been served since the Humanitarian Respite Center opened June 9, 2014, in Sacred Heart Church’s Community Hall. While most are from the Central American countries of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, increasing numbers hail from Asia, Africa, South America and Europe.

My heart goes out to these families! I can’t imagine leaving everything behind, to flee to safety.

These families are fleeing increasing violence in their homelands, and their journey to the United States is arduous.

We offer them a safe haven and serve their immediate basic humanitarian needs with love and compassion. Most arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs, but all leave here with so much more ~ restored human dignity and renewed faith and hope to continue on their journey.

My desire to serve the Lord pulls me in. We are His hands and feet.

We live the Gospel of Matthew each and every day: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me.” (Matthew 25:35-36) “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

The families are so thankful and appreciative! And they are with us, for such a short time.

The families are so grateful for the loving care and compassion they receive, many don vests and volunteer to assist other refugee families during their short stay with us!

Our love has no boundaries. We are all one family under God. I feel blessed to share God’s love!

We share a connection even if we do not share a common language. In the short time the families are with us, they undergo a transformation, as do we. All of us are blessed by God’s grace in our lives. And when we say our goodbyes, many embrace, sharing prayers and blessings to protect, heal, and strengthen each other in the days ahead.

“A blessing is a form of grace, a divine kindness,” writes John

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and
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O’Donohue, a Catholic priest, poet and scholar, in *To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings*.

“A blessing can start a journey of transformation. Where before gravity and deadness prevailed, there is now a new sense of animation and lightness. Where there was grief, a new sense of presence comes alive. In the wall of blindness a window of vision opens.”

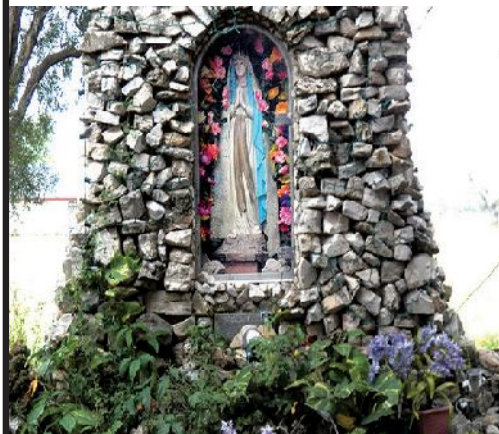
To fully understand the depths of this sacred ministry, you need to experience it. Once you have, you come away forever changed, with new eyes to see and an ever-

expanding, compassionate heart, ready to serve.

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley’s Humanitarian Respite Center at Sacred Heart Church, in McAllen, TX, is open seven days a week, including holidays, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., or until the last refugee is served. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. The ability to speak Spanish is helpful, but not necessary. For more information on supporting this humanitarian relief effort, please go to www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org

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Jeep Enthusiasts Giving Back to The Community

by Alyssa Cavazos

It is the season of giving and this month's Jeep Night was dedicated to just that. November was committed to collecting canned goods for the local food drive. Monster Car Wash in Edinburg was generous enough to allow our Jeepers to hold their Jeep Night at their establishment. Once the evening began, Jeep after Jeep showed up jam packed and filled to the brim with canned goods ready to be donated. The next few hours were spent socializing and enjoying all Monster Car Wash had to offer.

We want to give a special thanks to RGV Pro Lighting for hosting this very important event. Giving back to our community is always our main focus.

Our appreciation to Texas Jeep Crawlers, Texas Off-Road Republic, South Texas Rebels, Calaveras and all their members for joining us each month to make each Jeep Night a memorable one.



This month Jeep Night wanted to show gratitude not only to our Jeepers but most importantly to God. The Sunday following Jeep Night we were invited to Sunday morning service at Logos Community Church where Pastor Tom Weaver delivered a special message to those in attendance. Following the service Jeepers made a Jeep run to Sofie's 'SS' Saloon where lunch was provided, barbecue courtesy of Burns Motors and David Nunez.

December's Jeep Night theme will be "Toy Drive". Award will be given to the Jeep Club as a whole who brings the most toys to be donated. Our Jeep Night Facebook page will be updated with the location of December's Jeep Night, as well as any new information.

For any questions feel free to contact Big Lew at 956-984-4454.

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6	9	5		2				

Sudoku No.: 13629

EASY

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7	4						1	
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Sudoku No.: 38975

MEDIUM

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Sudoku No.: 67945

HARD

Fill in each square with one digit, using only the numbers one through nine | Numbers cannot repeat within an individual box of nine squares
 Numbers cannot repeat down a column | Numbers cannot repeat across a row

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Call 956-457-8600

Spotlight on the Boy's and Girl's Club of Pharr

by Freddy Mata - Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Pharr, Texas
The Boys & Girls Club of Pharr is a United Way of South Texas Agency and a City of Pharr Partner.

What Are We Thankful For?

We are THANKFUL for having the opportunity to positively shape the lives of our community youth; to ensure they reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Each school day, the Boys & Girls Club of Pharr serves just over 1,400 community youth in the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo area. The youth are served through 5 in-school sites (during the school day) and 2 traditional after school facilities. During the school day, students attending our Boys & Girls Club sessions participate in a variety of prevention, art and physical fitness programs. Each year, the goal of us conducting programs at local school sites is as follows: we want to educate the students in Kinder-5th grade on how to resist the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, we want to expose students to the greatness of creating art and we want everyone to be able to participate in daily physical fitness activities. Our programs at school sites are conducted throughout the entire year, so students get the Drug-Free message year round.

After school, at our 2 traditional sites (Central and South Pharr), community youth participate in a wider variety of programs. Students get to our facility using several methods: our after school transportation program, they walk or their parents drop them off. From the moment that youth and teens enter our facility, they know what the expectations are for the day in each program area. The very first program that club members participate in is Power Hour. This program helps them develop academic, behavioral and social skills through homework completion and tutoring. This program is so important, that we have extended the hours to ensure that EVERYONE completes their homework on a daily basis, even if it takes until 9:00pm. Once club members complete their homework and it is pure checked by our staff and volunteers, they are able to join the other programs that are being conducted which include: technology education, arts & crafts, fully stocked game room, physical fitness activities in our gym and outside recreation. In addition to offering these impactful programs, club members also receive a complete, USDA approved supper. By the time that youth and teens get to our club, they would have gone 3-4 hours without eating anything, so they



are really hungry.

We are proud to say that we have partnered with the Texas Department of Agriculture to be able to provide after school meals for our members. Another great thing about our after school feeding program is that we are able to survey our club members about the food we serve, and are able to change it up to offer a wider variety of food, as long as its USDA approved.

Parents have until 8:00pm for youth and until 9:00pm for teens to pick up their children, but

it is common for youth and teens to tell their parents to pick them up as late as possible, because they want to stay participating in our after school programs.

Daily, I (Executive Director/CPO) conduct walk throughs at both of our after school facilities. I am ENCOURAGED and THANKFUL each day for what I get to see. I see: children sharing pool sticks, teens taking leadership positions in clubs, youth & teens participating in fun physical fitness activities, teens learning valuable job skills through their participation in our job training program, a lot of homework assignments being completed, children completing their art pieces and feeling accomplished, youth & teens eating home cooked meals and liking them, children learning how to properly use a computer and safely surf the internet, youth & teens being positively mentored by our club staff.

In our hearts, we honestly feel that we are having positive impacts in the lives of the youth and teens which we serve. We are THANKFUL for having the opportunity to positively shape the lives of our community youth; to ensure they reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

End Of Year Contributions - The Gift Of A Great Future

You have the opportunity to positively influence and impact the youth and teens of our community by supporting the Boys & Girls Club of Pharr. Since 1971 the Boys & Girls Club of Pharr has provided a safe, nurturing environment for all young people, especially those who need us most, in Pharr and surrounding communities. Today's youth face greater challenges and stresses than ever before. Challenges such as making ends meet, a parent losing a job, health concerns, divorce and the drop-out rate along with crime, drugs and delinquency are just some issues our youth face. Without havens like Boys & Girls Clubs, children have fewer opportunities to receive positive guidance and support.

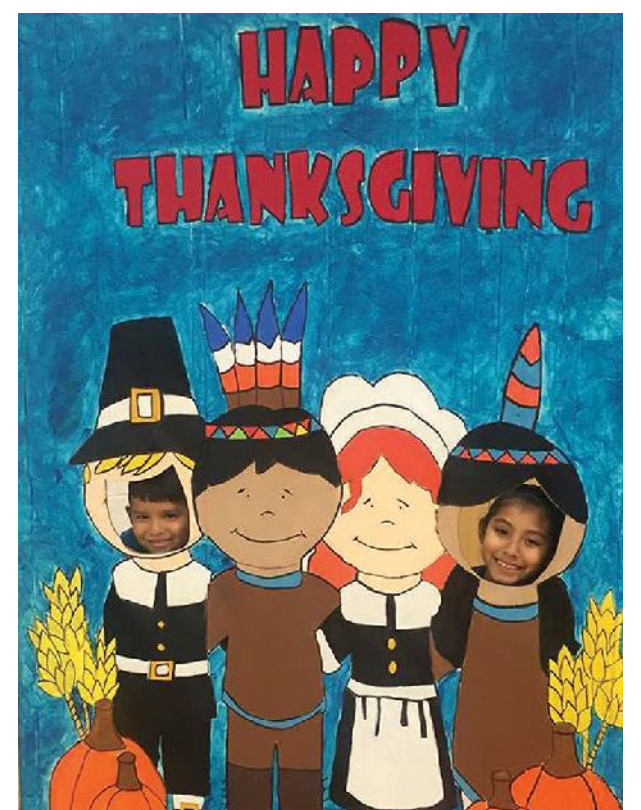


The headlines around the world right now paint a not-so-good picture. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that giving is a way for people and communities to pull together.

While the world and national news are a bit disturbing at times, what is quite certain is that there is no better time to support your Club and help change and in some cases, save, the life of a child. This holiday season, please give generously and invest in our vital work. No investment is too minimal to ensure the future of our children. After all, for they are our children, we will either profit by or pay for what they become - Poet James Baldwin.

The Boys & Girls Club of Pharr is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. What this means is, we all have to give our money, one way or the other . . . why not give it to us, instead of Uncle Sam.

Boys & Girls Club of Pharr, 1026 S. Fir Street, Pharr TX 78577 (956) 655-9108.



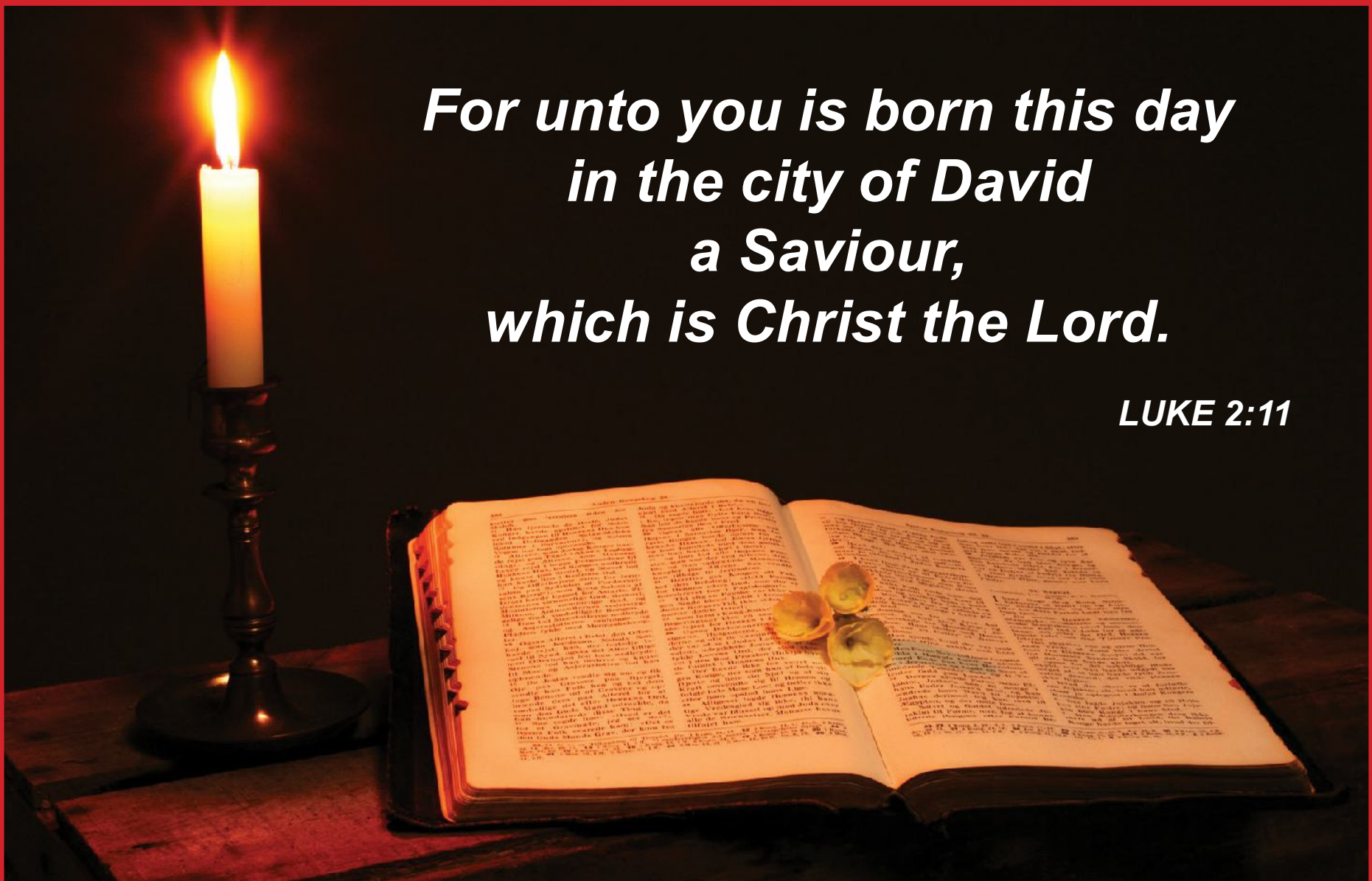
pictures:

2015 Thanksgiving Dinner at our Main Unit and South Pharr Unit

THANK YOU AND HAVE A VERY MEANINGFUL HOLIDAY SEASON!

*For unto you is born this day
in the city of David
a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.*

LUKE 2:11



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RAM



Jeep

Enjoy the Music of Christmas

The musical sounds of Christmas can be heard throughout the Rio Grande Valley during the month of December.

Here are some opportunities to hear Live Christmas Music performances.

Performances in Winter Texan Resort Parks are generally open for the public to attend.

Some resort parks have limited parking and therefore restrict public attendance.

You should call ahead to check it out for the Christmas Show you want to see.

You can find contact information for all Winter Texan Resort Parks at

www.WinterTexanInfo.com

You can also pick up a printed guide to these resort parks at any resort office in the Valley.



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12/5 .. First Baptist - Combes 2&7 PM
12/6 .. Enchanted Valley - Mission 2:00 PM
12/8 .. Alamo Rose - Alamo 7:00 PM
12/10 .. Val Halla - Edinburg 7:00 PM
12/11 .. Christ Church - Brownsville 6:00 PM
12/12 .. Sunshine Resort - Harlingen 7:00 PM
12/13 .. Southern Comfort - Weslaco 7:00 PM
12/15 .. Sleepy Valley - Mission 7:00 PM
12/17 .. Twin Palms - Rio Hondo 7:00 PM
12/19 .. Winter Haven - Pharr 7:00 PM
12/20 .. Alamo Palms - Alamo 6:00 PM
12/21 .. Bluebonnet - Mission 7:00 PM
12/22 .. Green Gate Grove - Mission 7:00 PM
12/23 .. Bit-O-Heaven - Donna 6:30 PM
12/28 .. Lemon Tree - Mission 7:00 PM

www.lindleycreek.com 417-326-9616

Christmas Love

By Ralph Kuster

The seasons spin and come to this another year to share our bliss to love and care and do our part to touch the life of a needful heart.

Come Christmas Love - Oh, Christmas Love the God-child Jesus and the Dove comforting cheer and love so dear when Christmas Love abides this year.

There is a cheerful price to pay to give one's time without delay a wanting soul needs you today let Christmas Love light the way.

Come Christmas Love - Oh, Christmas Love the God-child Jesus and the Dove comforting cheer and love so dear when Christmas Love abides this year.



*Wishing
all my friends
in the
Rio Grande Valley
the
warmest blessings
of the
Christmas
season!*
Ralph Kuster

Magic Valley Chorus Christmas Kick-Off



Magic Valley Chorus of Sweet Adelines International will present its annual Christmas kick-off shows on Friday, Saturday and Sunday December 4, 5 and 6 at 3:00 pm at the Tower Theater. The theater is located at 120 South Kansas Avenue in Weslaco. Tickets are \$5 at the door but must be reserved in advance by calling the theater at 956-969-2368.

Magic Valley Chorus is a group of women who sing a capella music, barbershop style. We sing a wide variety of songs; country, gospel, Broadway and movie musicals, pop and jazz, and of course, a variety of Christmas songs and carols.

We sing throughout the community at events such as the Hidalgo Festival of Lights, the World War II Veterans' Flight as well as retirement parks across the Valley. We also put on an annual show in February.

The women in our Chorus live from San Benito to Palmview and come together to rehearse every Monday night at St. Mark Methodist Church (Colonel Rowe and Pecan) in McAllen from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. We'd love to have women singers visit us any Monday night.

About half our members are Winter Texans who stay connected to the Chorus via the internet during the summer.

For further information about the Chorus or the show call Janet at 956-571-8660 or Shirley at 956-802-9663.

"Like" us on Facebook or visit our website
www.magicvalleychorus.com



**Find More
Christmas
Entertainment
at**
www.WinterTexanInfo.com

Bible Alive Theater Comes to the Valley

In a ministry partnership with Bibleville Conference Center, Bible Alive Theater will present their very first FREE full-cast Bible musical in the Rio Grande Valley on Saturday Dec. 12, 2015 at 10am and 2pm at the Bibleville main auditorium, 1346 N. Cesar Chavez Rd. in Alamo, TX!

Many of the cast and crew are from Bibleville, while others including our younger actors are from here in the valley. This is a cross-denominational effort with adults and youth from many different churches and denominations.

This original musical 'Isaiah's Christmas Story' was written by President and Co-Founder Myra Green who started the first Bible Alive Theater in Santa Fe, NM in 2008, where they are now in their 7th season. The play tells the traditional Christmas story from the viewpoint of the prophet Isaiah who had much to say about Jesus' birth 700 years before it occurred. It has many of our favorite Christmas carols in it too! It is the purpose of Bible Alive Theater to present the stories from the Bible as musical theater, adding the element of sight and sound to the Word of God. They want to encourage Christian artists, technicians and performers to use their God-given talents to worship and honor the God of the Bible, and lead others to do likewise.

The American culture is a culture of entertainment. As Christians in ministry they understand the culture and use entertainment as a way to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ through 'Bible Alive Theater'. The name says it all, the Bible put to music and presented through drama. Since 2001 Clif and Myra have traveled throughout the United States using drama and music to present faithful accounts of testimonies from the Bible. Myra has presented her solo events in many of the valley RV parks over the past 10 years and has several scheduled this season as well. Many original, full cast musicals have been presented in Santa Fe, NM (4 each year). Over 100 volunteers have participated in these Bible musicals and many have been written

by student members. Currently there are 21 different musicals that have been performed.

Alamo, TX is one of two new venues for Bible Alive Theater; the other is in Farmington, NM. People have come to know Jesus through these Bible musicals and many Christians have become motivated to study the Bible more intensely, so they may know Jesus more. Members are being plugged into their vision in many areas as they are being trained to proclaim the good news of the Bible through theater ministry.

BibleAliveTheater.com
or you can call
505-690-2548.

Myra Green, President
Bible Alive Theater
848 Palm
Alamo, TX 78516



Baking Up Memories

Christmas!!!

It will be here before we know it.

It's hard to think about the Christmas to come without reliving some memories of Christmases gone by.

All those twinkling trees and those delicious smells take us back to a time when the holiday was focused on family.

Family; what a precious gift! Maybe it was a candlelight service or reading the Christmas story together.

There was something about this time of year that made our family bond even stronger. Sitting around the table together with grandma proudly looking over her tasty delights, was how many of us remember that special day.

I could always count on seeing the family favorite dishes on Christmas!

Even though we now celebrate the season in south Texas, I still love to make my family's favorites (along with my mom who is also a Winter Texan!)

Here is one of my favorite recipes. Yes, I admit ... I love CHOCOLATE!!

TEXAS SHEET CAKE

Put in a sauce pan and bring to a boil:

- 1 Stick Butter
- 4 Tablespoons Cocoa
- 1/2 Cup Oil
- 1 Cup Water

Sift together:

- 2 Cups Flour
- 2 Cups Sugar

Pour chocolate sauce over dry ingredients and mix well.

Then add:

- 1/2 Cup Buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 2 Eggs
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla (I use Mexican vanilla!)

Pour mixture into a large, greased jellyroll pan.

Bake 20 minutes at 400 degrees.

While sheet cake is hot, frost with icing.

Icing:

- 1 Stick Butter
- 4 Tablespoons Cocoa
- 1/3 Cup Buttermilk
- 1 Pound Powdered Sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon Salt
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla
- 1 Cup chopped nuts (optional)

Bring butter, cocoa and buttermilk to boiling point. Remove from heat. Add remaining ingredients. Frost hot cake. Cool and cut!

Oh, and remember to
Count Your Blessings!

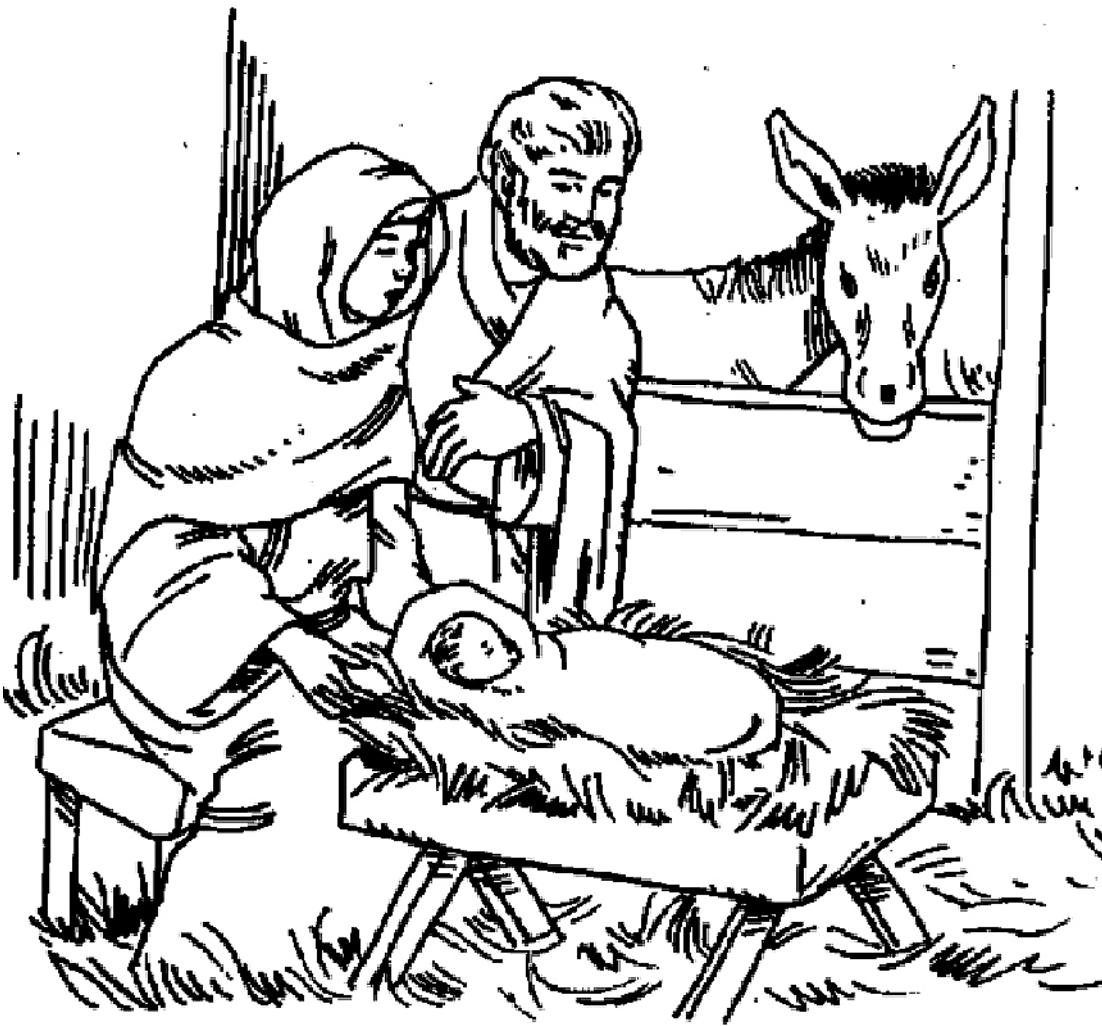
Kathie Greer
Mom and guitar player for
Lindley Creek a.k.a.
The Greer Family Band



For Kids Only

No matter how old you are!

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



*Away in a manger
No crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head.*

**Remember
the
Reason
for the
Season!**

Find these words
associated with Christmas
in the puzzle at the right

BELLS
CAROLS
CHEER
HOLIDAY
JESUS
JOY

MUSIC
ORNAMENTS
PRESENTS
SANTA
STAR

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



Take the Christmas Stocking through the maze
to hang it by the fireplace

Christmas Is More Than Fun

by Ange Duvall

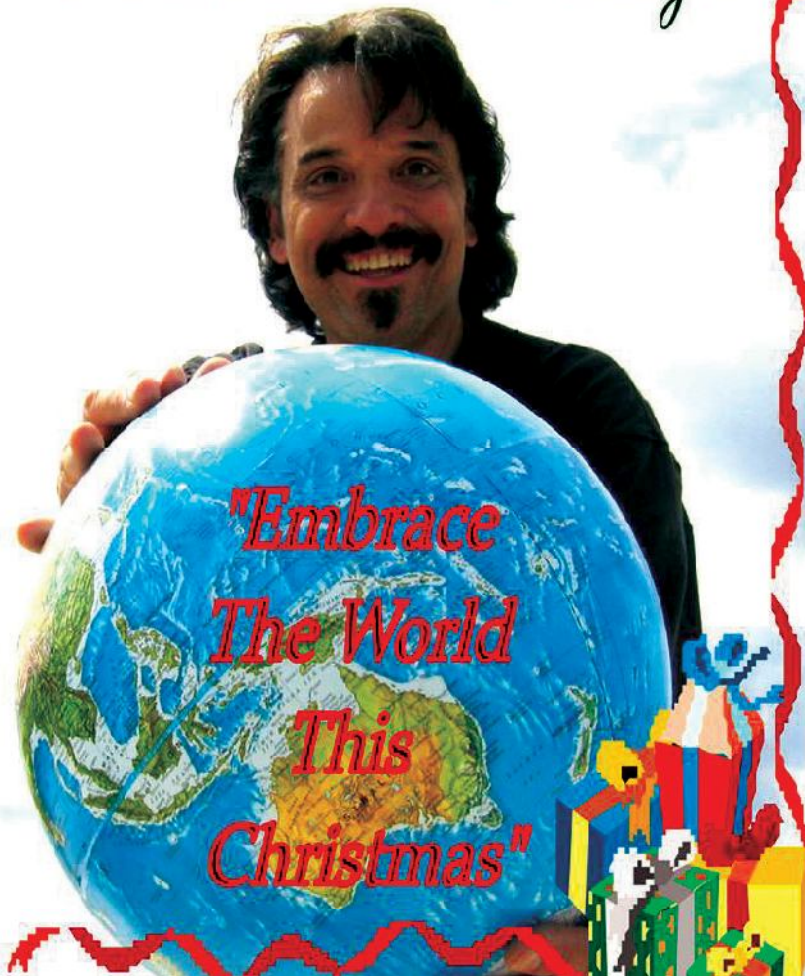
Get out your light jacket,
Christmas is almost here,
We have rain than makes a racket,
But mostly it's bright and clear.

Smiles are the uniform of the day,
Sparkling eyes full of wonder at the toys,
Special cookies and snacks make you gay,
The girls are even getting along with the boys.

The children are learning about a child,
His birth is a miracle of love,
He will be peaceful and mild,
You can wear him like a comfortable glove.

Jesus is having a Birthday,
Let's make him feel welcome and wanted,
For everlasting life He will show the way,
God's gift and wishes have been granted.

Marvell and The Messengers



Embrace The World This Christmas Marvell and The Messengers

Rhonnie Scheuerman and her co-writer Jim Harmon wrote this Christmas Classic for James Marvell. Over 100 performers from country, pop and gospel join Marvell on "Embrace The World This Christmas".

Listen carefully and you'll hear such legendary folks like Joanne Cash (Johnny Cash's sister), Country star Bobby G. Rice, Rock legend Troy Shondell, Christian Country award winners like Kim Ford, Gayla Earlene and Debbie White!

Also doing solo parts with Marvell you can hear Earl Montgomery writer of several George Jones hits, the famous Country Gospel duo Morgan & Morgan, Gene Higgins, president of HMG Nashville, Billy Hale president of CGMA, Americana artist Butch Ryan plus dozens of CGMA members' voices! It took 7 years to complete production of this song in many studios across America. Now you know why this hidden gem is a classic! Produced by the late Steve 'Bulldog' Bivins for Marvell Productions.

James Marvell will email you a FREE MP3 of 'Embrace The World This Christmas' courtesy of The Valley Spotlight.

Request yours at jmarvell7@yahoo.com

FREE TAX ASSISTANCE

Keep Money in your Pocket!

Get your Taxes prepared for FREE!
Free tax preparation assistance from trained volunteers is available in your community for working families earning less than \$54,000



**Call 211
For a Site near you!**

What you need to bring to the site:

- Valid identification.
- Social Security Cards for all household members.
- Forms W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, from all employers.
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Form 1099).
- A copy of last year's tax return if available.
- Bank Routing Numbers and Account Numbers for Direct Deposit.
- Total paid for day care provider and the day care provider's tax identifying number.
- To file taxes electronically on a married filing joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

Claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Even if you don't owe income tax, you could get money back from the IRS!

For Tax Year 2015	Income Limit	Maximum EITC Credits
Three or more qualifying children	\$47,747 if single \$53,267 married filing jointly	\$6242
Two qualifying children	\$44,454 if single \$49,974 married filing jointly	\$5548
One qualifying child	\$39,131 if single \$44,651 married filing jointly	\$3359
If you do not have a qualifying child	\$14,820 if single \$20,330 married filing jointly	\$503

Call (956) 607-9030 or email us at unitedwayvita9030@gmail.com

Goodwill Industries of South Texas, Inc. opens our seventh Goodwill store and donation station in the Rio Grande Valley on Thursday, December 3rd at 9 am.

The over 12,000 square foot store is located at 1323 W. Frontage Road, between H-E-B and Wal-Mart and provides shoppers an assortment of donated and new goods to purchase at affordable prices including name brand items. Goodwill also offers a drive-through donation station that makes donating to Goodwill convenient. Goodwill accepts clothing, furniture and household items.



We went to breakfast at a restaurant where the 'Senior Special' was two eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast for \$2.99.

"Sounds good," my wife said, "but I don't want the eggs."

"Then I'll have to charge you \$3.49 because you're ordering a la carte," the waitress warned her.

"You mean I'd have to pay more for not taking the eggs?" my wife asked incredulously.

"Yes," said the waitress.

"I'll take the special, then," my wife said.

"How do you want your eggs?" the waitress asked.

"Raw and in the shell," my wife replied.

She took the two eggs home and baked a cake.

Don't mess with Seniors!



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956-900-5140

FUNNEL CAKES

RASPAS

ICE CREAM

FRIED SNACKS

MUNCHIES

DRINKS



HOURS:

Mon. - Thur. 3 - 9 pm

Fri. & Sat. 3 - 10 pm

Sunday 2 - 8 pm



ONE BLOCK SOUTH OF WILLIE'S BBQ on ALAMO RD.

Willie's Sweets is having a Toy Drive

to benefit the children of Alamo. Drop off your donations of New Toys before December 14

JANUARY 14TH - 16TH

=THE=
ALL VALLEY
RV
=AND=
OUTDOOR SHOW

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Rio Grande Valley
Livestock Show
Grounds
Mercedes, TX

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For more information about being a vendor at this year's show call Marie Howard at 832-444-5808

from:
The Valley Spotlight

to:
Everyone in the Rio Grande Valley

Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year