

The Senior CHIT★CHAT

Summer 2009



A Publication for Precinct2gether from Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia

JD Walker Community Center



*Serving Seniors
Since 1978*

For more than 30 years, seniors in the McNair and surrounding communities have had the opportunity to gather for activities and socializing at the JD Walker Community Center. The Center became a popular community landmark and was expanded in June 1993. The Center is located next to a Precinct Two park that has five gazeboes and playground equipment.

Approximately 750 seniors and other community members visit JD Walker every month. “We offer a variety of activities for our seniors,” explained Patty Thierry, Center director. “They include crafts, sewing, healthy cooking and exercise classes, monthly bingo, games, computer classes and a monthly birthday party. The favorite annual activity seems to be the birthday party where we recognize our volunteer of the year.”

Two agencies currently are housed at JD Walker. Harris County Social Services is at the Center on Mondays and Wednesdays and the Gulf Coast Community Services is available Tuesdays through Thursdays. In addition, several local groups hold meetings at the Center including Girl Scouts, U.S. Census Bureau, Top Ladies of Distinction, Top Teens of America, Carver Alumni Association, Alpha Kappa Sorority and Latino Legacy Dance Group.

JD Walker’s facilities also are open for special events such as weddings, baby showers, dances, banquets and quinceneras. The multi-purpose room has a capacity for 400 people.

If you live in the area and aren’t familiar with the JD Walker Community Center, stop by for a visit. The Center is located at 7613 Wade Road, Baytown. For more information, call 281-426-3551.

Things to Know

Precinct2gether receives award

Every year, the North Channel Chamber of Commerce recognizes two businesses or organizations that played a major role in the lives of the people of the North Channel community. Precinct2gether received a 2008 Business/Organization award during the Chamber’s 32nd Annual Membership Banquet. Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia accepted this award that recognizes the work Precinct2gether does for both seniors and youth. *continued on page 5*

Photo: Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia (center), Helen Berrott-Tims, Harris County Precinct Two general superintendent (right), and Charles Grant, Ph.D., education and special projects liaison.



▶ Mark Your Calendar



The following are some events for seniors taking place during June, July and August. If the event is hosted at one of Harris County Precinct Two's community centers, the center's name follows the activity. An * indicates this event is not at a Precinct Two community center:

JUNE

- June 1** South Channel Council Meetings, Bay Area and EHCAC
- June 3** North Channel Network Meeting, Flukinger
- June 4** Gospel Night, Flukinger
- June 5** Lunch & A Movie, EHCAC
- June 5** Lunch & A Movie, Bay Area
- June 6** Chili Cookoff, Flukinger
- June 8** Healthy Living Class, North East
- June 9** Gospel Night, San Jacinto
- June 10** Alzheimer's Workshop, Flukinger
- June 10** Nursing Home Party, Grayson's Baldree Building
- June 11** Father's Day Breakfast, North East

- June 16** Gospel Night, Grayson
- June 18** Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex*
- June 19** Juneteenth Celebration, Barrett
- June 19** Father's Day Breakfast, San Jacinto
- June 19** Luau for North Channel Centers, Flukinger
- June 20** Juneteenth Parade, Walker
- June 23** Nursing Home Party, EHCAC
- June 26** Hometown Opry, EHCAC
- June 30** North Channel's Garden Party, Grayson's Baldree Building

JULY

- July 1** Hot Dog Social, EHCAC
- July 1** Uncle Sam Party, Flukinger
- July 1** Patriotic Picnic, North East
- July 2** Lunch & A Movie, Bay Area
- July 2** Fourth of July Party, San Jacinto

Monthly Birthday Celebrations

- Second Tuesday:** San Jacinto, Walker
- Third Thursday:** Barrett
- Last Wednesday:** Flukinger, Grayson, North East

- July 2** Gospel Night, Flukinger
- July 6** South Channel Council Meetings, Bay Area & EHCAC
- July 10-11** Christmas in July, Bay Area
- July 13** Healthy Living Class, North East
- July 14** North Channel Ladies Lunch & A Movie, Heritage Hall*
- July 14** Gospel Night, San Jacinto
- July 16** Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex*
- July 21** Gospel Night, Grayson
- July 23** North Channel's Murder Mystery Party, Grayson's Baldree Building
- July 24** Lunch & A Movie, EHCAC
- July 28** North Channel's Breakfast With The Guys, Barrett
- July 31** Hometown Opry, EHCAC

- Aug. 6** Gospel Night, Flukinger
- Aug. 7** Lunch & A Movie, Bay Area
- Aug. 7** South Channel Volunteer Lunch, EHCAC
- Aug. 8** Alzheimer's Workshop, Flukinger
- Aug. 10** Healthy Living Class, North East
- Aug. 11** Gospel Night, San Jacinto
- Aug. 11** Summer Party, San Jacinto
- Aug. 13** Nursing Home Party, Flukinger
- Aug. 13** North Channel's Bingo Party, Grayson's Baldree Building
- Aug. 14** Ice Cream Social, North East
- Aug. 18** Gospel Night, Grayson
- Aug. 20** Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex*
- Aug. 25** Lunch & A Movie, EHCAC
- Aug. 28** Hometown Opry, EHCAC



Chit-Chat info:

The Senior Chit-Chat is a publication of Precinct2gether, a non-profit corporation, chartered under Texas law and granted exemption from federal income tax under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This publication may not be reproduced without written permission from Precinct2gether. Questions about the Chit-Chat should be directed to Precinct2gether at 713-455-4869 or by mail to 13828 Corpus Christi, Houston, TX 77015.

Community Center Dances:

Proceeds benefit Precinct2gether:



Second Thursday:	Grayson
Third Tuesday:	Bay Area (ballroom dancing)
Third Thursday:	East Harris County (EHCAC) (country-and-western dancing)
Third Friday:	East Harris County (EHCAC) (Latin rhythm)
Fourth Friday:	San Jacinto - no charge to attend (Pick 'N Grin Band)

A Message from Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner *Sylvia R. Garcia*

Spring is a wonderful time of year! As much as spring renews the senses each year, so do the seniors I have the opportunity to work with and meet every day.

In this issue of Chit Chat, you will find information on Harris County Precinct Two's first dog park (see page 5)! I mention this not only because I know so many of you love your dogs but because creating the dog park – or any other new activity area that we bring to Precinct Two – shows innovation and a zest for life which are the hallmarks of our Precinct2gether family.

Even if you don't have a dog, I encourage you to visit our new dog park or find one of the others that seem to be springing up. At the grand opening of our dog park, I wasn't accompanied by a dog but I still found it to be an invigorating afternoon.

The point is that as we progressed through the planning and design for a dog park, I was reminded of the lessons I constantly learn from those of you I am lucky enough to know through Precinct2gether.

Having never gone through the process of building a dog park, it was a challenge to all of us within the precinct to do something new. I am proud of the result.

The same "can do" spirit that each of our senior groups exhibit shows through in a brand new facility. We are not slowing down in Precinct Two; we continue to move forward to make our community a better place to live.

As always, I am grateful for the example and the leadership coming from you!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sylvia R. Garcia".

ARE YOU READY FOR HURRICANE SEASON?



While there are many benefits to living on the Texas Gulf Coast, hurricanes certainly are not one of them. Early preparation for possible hurricane strikes is crucial for all Harris County residents. The following are some things to do now before the area is under a hurricane warning:

- ✓ Develop an emergency supply kit. A list of items to include can be found at <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html>.
- ✓ Determine an evacuation plan. If you know you will need assistance to evacuate, register with the Transportation Assistance Registry at 2-1-1.
- ✓ Decide if you will bring any pets with you and, if not, what you will do with them.
- ✓ Create an emergency document file. This should include family records, medical records, wills, deed, social security information, bank accounts and tax records.
- ✓ Make sure your medicine or at-home medical treatments are on hand. Keep an accurate list of all prescriptions.
- ✓ Develop a list of important phone numbers that include family, friends, physicians and hotels/motels on various evacuation routes.
- ✓ Keep your car's gas tank as close to full as possible.

Edith Cook-Cole

Enjoying Life One Amazing Day at a Time



Oprah Winfrey once said, “That whisper you keep hearing is the universe trying to get your attention.” For many people, that little whisper is ignored but not for the energetic Edith Fae Cook-Cole. This active member of the Channelview Senior Citizens and Precinct Two’s Flukinger Center not only had an inspiring career that spanned several decades but she has tackled a second career during retirement that will pass on a piece of Texas history to future generations.

A native of Crosby, Texas, and graduate of Crosby High School, Cook-Cole earned both a bachelor’s degree in nutrition and a master’s degree in institution management from Texas Women’s University. Cook-Cole was a highly respected dietician throughout her career. She spent more than 20 years with Memorial Hermann Hospital where she rose to the position of director of dietetics. In 1984, the Texas Dietetic Association selected her as the Texas Distinguished Dietitian. Even after her retirement from Memorial Hermann, Cole spent many years working as a food systems consultant and consultant dietitian.

Cook-Cole originally thought retirement would be a quiet time. She and her beloved husband, Charles, moved to Crosby in 1986 and lived in the home built by her paternal grandparents in 1911.

The celebration of Texas’ sesquicentennial turned out to be a milestone in Cook-Cole’s life. She began working on a history of the Crosby area and had planned to create an audio archive of taped interviews of members of the community discussing their memories of Crosby. Most of her subjects turned out to be uncomfortable with being taped so Cook-Cole began compiling notes of her interviews and historic research.

Though she never dreamed of becoming an author, Cook-Cole realized that the information she had collected needed to be preserved in a way that future Texans could learn about Crosby. She penned, *Crosby’s Heritage Preserved, 1823-1949*, which was well received both by the people of Crosby and many others across the state, including Gov. Rick Perry who named her a “Yellow Rose of Texas” in January 2008. First created by former Gov. Allen Shivers in the late 1950s, the “Yellow Rose of Texas” award recognizes Texas women for their “significant contributions to their communities and to Texas in the preservation of our history, the accomplishments of our present and the building of our future.”

In addition to her accomplishments as a dietitian and historian, Cook-Cole also has had a notable impact on the senior community. She is a long-time member of the Channelview Senior Citizens where she not only served as its president but has been actively involved with many of the group’s special projects.

Cook-Cole also is a regular at the Flukinger Community Center and is on the Center’s Advisory Council. She’s a true believer in the work being done by Precinct2gether. “We really appreciate the work being done by Toni Drews, Flukinger Center director, and each member of her staff,” said Cook-Cole. “By their actions and deeds, they demonstrate that seniors are very important people.”

“That whisper you keep hearing is the universe trying to get your attention.”

Things to Know



It's never too early for holiday shopping!

Christmas in July, the annual Precinct2gether Christmas in July arts, crafts and antique market, is scheduled for July 10-11 at the Bay Area Community Center. This free admission event features live entertainment, music and food as well as a market with a wide variety of items. Call 281-326-2955 for more information.



New park met with enthusiastic 'bow-wows'

Harris County Precinct Two has become home to a dog park that was greeted enthusiastically by dog owners and their canine friends during the park's opening on May. 3. Located at Bay Area Park, 7500 Bay Area Blvd., the Precinct's first dog park is divided into two sections for small (under 20 pounds) and large dogs and is open daily from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m.

"We've begun with the basics...trails, water fountains, shaded areas in addition to the natural shade from trees and wash bays for the pets," Garcia said. "The result is a great, open space with amenities in which dogs and their owners can feel unconstrained and safe."

Enjoy 'Breakfast with the Guys'

On Tuesday, July 28, from 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., all senior men in the North Channel/Baytown area are invited to the Barrett Community Center for a free "Breakfast with the Guys." While there is no cost for this program, reservations are required and must be made by July 22 by calling 281-452-7598.



Alzheimer's Association hosts caregiver workshop

The Houston and Southeast Texas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is hosting a three-part Alzheimer's caregiver training series. Held at the Flukinger Community Center, this program includes a session on May 20 focusing on normal aging vs. dementia. The second workshop on June 10 is titled, "Food for Thought: Tips on Building a Healthier Brain." The final session, "Before the Burnout: Stress Management for Caregivers" will be held July 8.

Each workshop begins at noon and runs for 90 minutes. Participants may attend one, two or three of the sessions. Lunch will be served for \$3.50. RSVPs are required and can be made by calling 281-457-1810.

Annual hot dog social set for July 1

Hot dogs are a part of almost every fun summer gathering. Come enjoy a summer treat at the annual Hot Dog Social fund raiser on July 1 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the East Harris County Activity Center. Just \$5 pays for two hot dogs, chips, dessert and tea. For more information, call 281-479-4232.



Join the fun at the Chili Cookoff

Precinct2gether, the Channelview Senior Citizens and the Smokin' 44's are hosting a chili cookoff on June 6 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the Flukinger Community Center. The \$2 admission fee covers your tasting cup and two tickets to vote for your favorite team in the "People's Choice Award." This fund raiser will have a live band and DJ entertainment. For more information, call 281-457-1810.

Precinct2gether Seniors Take to the Road

Precinct2gether seniors certainly are an active group. Visit any of the Precinct Two community centers on a weekday and you'll find a variety of classes ranging from floral design to tai chi, domino games to computer classes, Spanish classes to a quilting bee.

Some of the most anticipated activities actually don't occur in the Centers but start in their parking lots. These are the "on-the-bus" programs where seniors travel to different areas to experience a new town or activity.

Seniors who attend the Barrett Center had a great time on their road trip to Lake Charles, La., to Steamboat Bill's. "The bus ride alone, with the chance to visit with each other and sightsee, is a benefit of this trip," said Cassandra David, Center director. "The highlight of the trip is when we dine at Steamboat Bill's, a restaurant that has been voted as the best gumbo, crawfish and seafood in southwest Louisiana. This trip has been so much fun that we're planning other adventures to Galveston and Hot Springs, Ark."



Did you know there's a castle in Bellville, Texas? Newman's Castle is a handcrafted castle that is complete with a draw-bridge. Seniors from East Harris County Activity Center, Bay Area and Flukinger also have hit the road to see this amazing castle. "It was an adventure just getting to Newman's Castle, especially when we went through a gate that was surrounded by a thick forest, followed a long, winding dirt road and ended up at a castle built in the middle of the forest," said Toni Drews, Flukinger Center director. "The drawbridge is operated by what looks like a giant hamster wheel that you climb into. Almost everything here is homemade and we had the chance to look at everything, even the areas that are being worked on. We really had the best time!"



An overnight trip to Palestine, Texas, has been one of the favorite trips of the seniors from the San Jacinto Center. The highlight of this journey was a ride on the Texas State Railroad. "We road this historic train from Palestine to Rusk which brought us through the piney woods and hardwood creek bottoms of East Texas," said Julie Connella, Center director. "We saw rolling hills, nature and wildlife. It was really an enjoyable trip."

There are numerous other trips that seniors have taken with their friends from Precinct2gether such as Astros games, bluebonnet excursions, trips to museums and visits to Galveston. Senior groups signed up through their area coordinator also are able to book trips through the Precinct Two transportation department.

If you've never participated in an "on-the-bus" program, visit your community center director to find out what's next on the calendar!





“I Just Love the Seniors”

The Chit-Chat’s featured employee: Daniel Herrington

For more than 14 years, native Houstonian Daniel Herrington has been a part of the Harris County Precinct Two team. During this time, he always has been involved with various aspects of the senior program. Herrington began his Harris County career in the transportation department. After a few years, he moved to the Grayson Center where he worked as the reservation coordinator. His next position was working in the senior programs office. Just a few years later, Herrington went back to Grayson where he took on the position of assistant center director and was promoted to center director in 2007.

In his current role, Herrington juggles the day-to-day activities as the Grayson Center director along with his responsibility of coordinating the rental revenue reports for all Precinct Two community centers. “I’m always busy, always on the move,” said Herrington. “At our Center, the seniors come no matter the weather so I’m focused on maintaining their activities. The Grayson Center also is home to the Precinct Two Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Service Program, an important element of the senior program.”

As busy as his days are, Herrington truly enjoys being involved with the senior program. “I always knew I wanted to work with children or seniors,” said Herrington. “At the beginning of my career, I had the chance to work with kids and now I’m with the seniors. Our seniors really are a blessing to me.”

In addition to his Precinct2gether family, Herrington is very close with his own family. The youngest of four children, he has 12 nieces and nephews who he spends much time with. When he’s not with his family, Herrington is involved with his church community or spends time gardening, sightseeing and traveling.



Don’t Let Your Yard Be a Mosquito Farm



There’s nothing many Texans enjoy more than cultivating a garden and lawn. But did you know you also might be creating the perfect habitat for mosquitoes? Just a little standing water in containers, coolers or ornamental ponds may be a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

According to Precinct Two’s Standing Water Attack Team (SWAT), mosquitoes simply need a little water to develop. Some mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water and they hatch in just a day. Other mosquitoes lay their eggs in old tires, cans or other water-holding containers where they remain unhatched for weeks until they become covered with water.

While it may be impossible to have a completely mosquito-free yard, there are a few things that can be done to cut down on the mosquito population on your property. Empty, remove, cover or turn upside down any receptacle that would hold water. Repair leaky plumbing and outside faucets that may lead to standing water. If you have an ornamental pond, consider stocking it with mosquito-eating fish.

Learn more about mosquito control by reading SWAT’s brochure that can be found in the publication section of Harris County Precinct Two’s Web site at http://www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_garcia or call 281-440-SWAT.



Precinct2gether, Inc.
 13828 Corpus Christi
 Houston, TX 77015

Non-Profit
 PRST STD
 U.S. Postage PAID
 Deer Park, TX
 Permit No. 182

**Precinct2gether, welcomes
 all new participants!**

Precinct2gether serves Harris County Precinct Two seniors in Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Clear Lake, Crosby, Deer Park, El Lago, Galena Park, Highlands, Houston, Jacinto City, La Porte, McNair, Morgan’s Point, Nassau Bay, North Shore, Pasadena, Seabrook, Sheldon, Shore Acres, South Houston, Taylor Lake Village and Webster.

Precinct2gether, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

★ **DIRECTORY** ★

Department of Community Centers & Senior Programming

Precinct2gether Main Office
 281-862-9531

Precinct2gether TDD
 713-755-8919

Department of Community
 Centers & Senior
 Programming
 713-455-4869

Inner City Program
 713-514-0185

North Channel Program
 281-452-7598

Nursing Home Program
 281-479-7199

South Channel Program
 281-479-4232

Barrett Station & Chambers
 Community Centers
 281-328-4713

Bay Area
 Community Center
 281-326-2955

East Harris County
 Activity Center
 281-479-4232

Grayson Community Center
 713-455-3660

North East
 Community Center
 281-442-7950

Ramsey & Flukinger
 Community Center
 281-457-1810

San Jacinto & Highlands
 Community Centers
 281-426-7561

Walker Community Center
 281-426-3551

**Harris County Precinct Two
 Transportation Department**
 281-452-6071

Voucher Transportation
 281-326-6013

Veterans Services
 281-426-2832 or
 281-843-2019