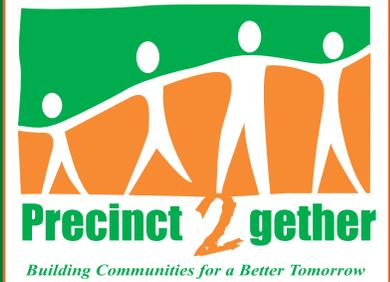


The Senior CHIT★CHAT

Summer 2008



A Publication for Precinct2gether from Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia

Introducing Burnet Park



Precinct2gether seniors experience Burnet Park.

Every Chit-Chat reader can ask their children – or their children’s children who’ve already had fifth grade history – “Who was the first president of the Republic of Texas?” Those who have been to David G. Burnet Park already know the answer! If you have not been to David G. Burnet Park, you might want to plan a family outing.

The newest jewel in the Precinct Two Parks system opened with live music, an old fashioned fried chicken dinner and family fun in March. Precinct-2gether had a role in the festivities and will continue to have a role as fund-raising has begun to purchase a statue of the man for whom the park is named.

Located about a mile south of I-10 as

you head to the Lynchburg Ferry, the park is the actual homestead of David G. Burnet. Presented with this knowledge and the fact that the only recognition was a small historical marker, Commissioner Sylvia Garcia decided this important historical site deserved better. Several years and nearly \$2 million later, the result is an outstanding example of combining education, green space and fun for the betterment of the community.

A walking trail spans the perimeter of the park. All along the trail are cast metal markers with historical facts important to Texas history and the battle for freedom.

A full playground includes a hand-cranked “ferry” children can use to pretend to cross the channel. Permanent restrooms are in place and landscaping has been added along with period fencing built to replicate the fences used more than 150 years ago.

Burnet Park’s second phase is in the planning stage and will include a small pavilion and a replica of David G. Burnet’s home. The staff has worked diligently to ensure history is preserved wherever possible.

In fact, construction and landscaping were held up for more than a month as an archaeological *continued on page 4*

Things to Know

Barrett, J.D. Walker Celebrate Juneteenth

Juneteenth was established to commemorate the announcement of the ending of slavery in Texas. Barrett Station/Riley Chambers and J.D. Walker Community Centers are holding Juneteenth celebrations this year.

On June 19, seniors at the Barrett Center will have a combination monthly birthday and Juneteenth Celebration from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. that will feature a BBQ, table games and a DJ.

J.D. Walker is involved in several events including a Juneteenth Celebration Pageant from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on June 13; a Juneteenth Parade beginning at 10 a.m. on June 14; Apollo Talent Night on June 18 from 7 p.m. – 10 p.m.; and a Juneteenth Gospel Choir Concert on June 19.

For more information, call the Barrett Station/Riley Chambers Center at 281-328-4713 or J.D. Walker Center at 281-426-3551. *continued on page 4*



▶ Mark Your Calendar

The following are some major events for seniors taking place at Harris County Precinct Two community centers during June, July and August. The community/activity center which is hosting the event follows the name of each activity:

JUNE

June 2 South Channel Council Meetings, Bay Area, EHCAC

June 4 North Channel Network Meeting, Flukinger

June 5 Gospel Night, Flukinger

June 6 Lunch & A Movie, Bay Area

June 10 Summer Party/ Senior Birthdays, San Jacinto

June 10 Gospel Night, San Jacinto

June 11 Nursing Home Party, Grayson

June 12 Father's Day Breakfast, North East

June 14 Juneteenth Parade & Celebration, Walker

June 17 Gospel Night, Grayson

June 18 Hot Dog Social, EHCAC

June 18 Birthday/Father's Day Celebration, Walker

June 18 H.C. Smith 100th Birthday Party, Flukinger

June 19 Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex

June 19 Juneteenth Gospel Night, Walker

June 20 North Channel Centers Hawaiian Luau, Baldree Building

June 20 Dinner & A Movie, EHCAC

June 27 North Channel's Garden Party, Baldree Building

June 27 Hometown Opry, EHCAC

JULY

July 2 Uncle Sam Party, Flukinger

July 2 North Channel Network Meeting, Flukinger

July 2 Patriotic Picnic, North East

July 3 Uncle Sam Party, Grayson

July 3 July 4th Party, San Jacinto

July 7 South Channel Council Meetings, Bay Area, EHCAC

July 8 Gospel Night, San Jacinto

July 11 Lunch & A Movie, Bay Area

July 15 Gospel Night, Grayson

July 16 North Channel Ladies Lunch & A Movie, Baldree Building

July 16 Birthday Celebrations/Uncle Sam, Walker

July 17 Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex

July 22 Dinner & A Movie, EHCAC

July 24 North Channel's Murder Mystery, Baldree Building

July 25 Hometown Opry, EHCAC

July 30 North Channel's Breakfast With The Guys, Flukinger

AUGUST

Aug. 1 Lunch & A Movie, Bay Area

Aug. 4 South Channel Council Meetings, Bay Area, EHCAC

Aug. 6 North Channel Network Meeting, Flukinger

Aug. 7 Gospel Night, Flukinger

Aug. 8 North Channel's Bingo Party, Baldree Building

Aug. 12 Gospel Night, San Jacinto

Aug. 15 Dinner & A Movie, EHCAC

Aug. 15 Ice Cream Social, North East

Aug. 19 Gospel Night, Grayson

Aug. 21 Inner City's Network Meeting, Martinez Annex

Aug. 22 Summer Social, Baldree Building

Aug. 22 Hometown Opry, EHCAC

Aug. 27 North Channel Network Meeting, Flukinger

Monthly Birthday Celebrations

Second Tuesday: San Jacinto

Third Wednesday: Walker

Third Thursday: Barrett

Last Wednesday: Flukinger, Grayson, North East

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.

Monthly & Summer Dances

These dances are fund raisers for Precinct2gether:

Second Thursday:	Grayson
Third Tuesday:	Bay Area (ballroom dancing)
Third Thursday:	East Harris County (EHCAC) (country-and-western dancing)
Fourth Friday:	San Jacinto - no charge to attend (Pick 'N Grin Band)
Last Thursday:	EHCAC (Latin Rhythm)
July 11:	EHCAC (River Road Boys Band)
Aug. 8:	North East (Tejano Dance)

A Message from Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner

Sylvia R. Garcia



Sometimes I wonder if the “next” generation has the same sense about savings that most of us who read Chit-Chat have. We either grew up much poorer than many families today or we grew up during years of war when you didn’t dare throw anything away that could be used again.

With a cover story about our newest park in this issue of Chit-Chat, I wanted to focus on being “green.” Because being green is actually about saving – saving resources of all kinds. With David G. Burnet Park, we are saving the valuable resource of history in Precinct Two. At the same time, I am ensuring in our parks system that we properly maintain as much green space as possible.

But being green has come to mean so much more in the last several decades. I am proud to say that in Precinct Two, we are doing our part.

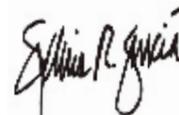
There is a national program called Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), which sets standards for

building design that is energy efficient and environmentally friendly. Already at the Gene Green Beltway 8 Park, which is scheduled to open in early fall, we have built public restrooms to meet these design standards. Currently in the design phase, the John Phelps Courthouse Annex for the Pasadena area will meet LEED standards to the extent that we can make them work within our budgetary limits.

Precinct Two was the first precinct in Harris County to purchase hybrid cars as part of our fleet. We also are retrofitting our larger buses to run cleaner and emit fewer pollutants.

I am proud of the efforts we are making to stay “green” in Precinct Two. I know that you will help me in celebrating our green spaces and staying “green” in the choices we make when using energy.

After all, what a new generation likes to call being “green” is what we have been practicing for years – saving resources when possible and taking care of those around us.



Enjoying her time at J.D. Walker

The Chit-Chat’s Featured Employee: Patty Thierry

For more than 11 years, Patty Thierry has been a valuable member of the team at the J.D. Walker Community Center. Thierry came to the Center in November 1996 as an administrative assistant, was promoted to assistant director in 2004 and became the director earlier this year. Prior to joining Harris County Precinct Two, Thierry was an administrative secretary within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Every day Thierry is at J.D. Walker by 7 a.m. to prepare for the day’s activities and confirm bus schedules for outings.

“Sometimes we just sit and they tell me stories of their past or families.”

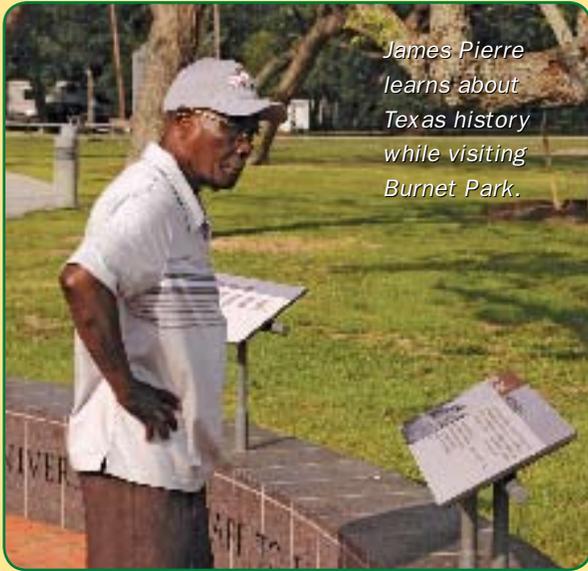
“We have a very active group of seniors at J.D. Walker so we work to keep them busy,” said Thierry. Activities at the Center include monthly bingo, grocery shopping, birthday parties and special events such as picnics, and the Cinco

de Mayo and Juneteenth celebrations. Currently, Thierry is working to schedule a new computer class in the Center’s computer lab.

Being able to network with other Precinct2gether staff is one of Thierry’s favorite things about her job. “If you have a question or need some information, there is always another person to talk to,” said Thierry. “We have a very dedicated staff here at J.D. Walker. Our team of Linda Aguilar, Eva Fontenot, John Windfont and Brian Lopez works very well together. I also love spending time with the seniors. Sometimes we just sit and they tell me stories of their past or families.”

Outside of work, Thierry is often found with her husband, three children and two grandchildren. Her hobbies include walking and bicycling.





James Pierre learns about Texas history while visiting Burnet Park.

Introducing Burnet Park

continued from the cover

dig was conducted at the site. A report from this dig was presented to Precinct Two and the Texas Historical Commission.

The site overlooks what now is called Burnet Bay. By the way, for those of you who do not know the answer to the question at the start of this article, David G. Burnet was the first provisional president of the Republic of Texas. That means Sam Houston (who many people assume was the first president) was actually the second president of the Republic.

Burnet Park is just one of many improvements the Parks Department is working on all along Independence Parkway. This historic roadway crosses the channel and passes the San Jacinto Monument and the Battleship Texas.

Precinct Two encourages seniors and their families to take an outing to the heart of our State and our Precinct's great beginnings.



Seniors stay young at heart at Burnet Park.

Things to Know *continued from the cover*

Thanks to Precinct Two's Terrence Redd

Terrence Redd, a bus driver for Harris County Precinct Two since 2004, experienced something few others do – he saved a life.



During the Precinct2gether Inner City Senior Olympic Luncheon, one of the attendees began choking on food.

Another senior tried to help her but it was not until Redd came on the scene and was able to properly use the Heimlich maneuver that the food was dislodged.

Redd credits a safety class taught to all Precinct Two bus drivers for giving him the skills to perform the lifesaving technique. Precinct Two thanks Redd for his quick actions!

Start your holiday shopping in July!

The annual Precinct2gether Christmas in July arts, crafts and antique market is scheduled for Friday, July 18, from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., and Saturday, July 19, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Bay Area Community Center. Christmas in July features live entertainment, music and food as well as a market with numerous choices for your holiday gift giving including jewelry, Christmas ornaments, quilts, toys, wood art, clothing, "Red Hat" items and much more. Call 281-326-2955 for more information.

Hot Dog Social Set for June

Come out and enjoy the annual Hot Dog Social, Wednesday, June 18, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the East Harris County Activity Center. For just \$5, attendees receive two hot dogs, chips, dessert and a drink. To-go plates are available. Proceeds from this social will benefit Precinct2gether. For more information, call 281-479-4232.

National Night Out Date Changes

Traditionally, National Night Out (NNO) is held in August. For the first time in the event's history, Texas is testing having National Night Out on Oct. 7, 2008, when the weather is a bit cooler. Harris County Precinct Two Community Centers hosting NNO events will have them on this new date.

Attention garage sale fans

Save the date for the annual Fall Fundraiser at the North East Community Center which will be held on Friday, Oct. 3, from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and on Saturday, Oct. 4, from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. In addition to a large garage sale, the event will feature a craft sale, sweet shop, silent auction, raffle and concessions. Proceeds will benefit Precinct2gether. For more information, call 281-442-7950.

Elia Mata



Herself to Seniors



The word retirement often conjures images of slowing down, taking it easy and not working. For Elia Mata, the 11 years since she has retired have been a whirlwind of activity with much of her time being spent giving back to her community.

The 72-year-old Mata had a 37-year career with Nabisco. When she retired in 1997, she and her husband, Sam, spent the next three years traveling through the United States and visiting Canada. After her traveling adventures ended, Mata found a new passion in volunteering.

"I have the utmost respect for Mrs. Mata as she is an intelligent, well spoken, kind and generous person who offers her time and talents whenever possible," explained Mary Guerrero, Precinct2gether's Inner City Senior Program senior coordinator. "The Inner City Program is very proud to count Mrs. and Mr. Mata among our volunteers."

Whether it's a special event, a trip to see the Astros or a dance, Mata is a fixture at Inner City functions. "The Inner City program events are so much fun and I really enjoy being able to help out," said Mata.

Mata also is a regular volunteer at the M.D. Anderson Senior Center, a program of Neighborhood Centers. She has served as this program's president, vice president and trip coordinator. Her time at the M.D. Anderson Senior Center also introduced her to the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) which is an organization that coordinates volunteers who are 55 years old and over with groups that need their help.

When her husband had heart surgery in 2000 at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, Mata was so touched by the staff and volunteers at the hospital that she decided to also give her time to St. Luke's. "I volunteer every Tuesday in the heart surgery wing and simply love it," said Mata. "Working

here, I get to meet people from so many other countries and I'm able to help interpret for those who only speak Spanish."

Mata's volunteer activities also include helping out as much as she can at Jacinto City Methodist Church where she works on special events and in the food pantry.

Her dedication to her community has not gone unnoticed. U.S. Rep. Gene Green was the impetus behind Mata representing Houston's District 29 at the 2005 White House Conference on Aging held in Washington, D.C. Mata also was an appointed member of the Area Planning Advisory Council.

In 2007, Mata was honored with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, which is bestowed upon Americans who go above and beyond with the amount of hours they volunteer. "I was so honored to receive this award from President Bush," Mata explained. "Volunteering, though, is not about being recognized but about giving from your heart. I think that when you have compassion and love for others, you want to share your blessings. As long as God keeps me going and I have money for gas, I'll be volunteering!"

When Mata isn't at one of her many volunteer activities, she enjoys being with her husband, three children, five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. An enthusiastic Astros fan, Mata is always ready to head down to Minute Maid Park for a game.

Mata strongly encourages all her fellow seniors to find a volunteer activity and get involved. "Almost everywhere you go, volunteers are needed," she said. "Every time I volunteer, I really feel as if I'm accomplishing something that I couldn't have when I was working full-time. Volunteering keeps me young and it's just so much fun!"

Summer Heat, Hurricane Season on the Horizon

There are two things that residents of the Texas Gulf Coast know as summer approaches: summer is always hot and the chance of a hurricane headed to the state is a constant possibility. Though you can't wish away the heat or a hurricane threat, you can do several things to keep yourself and your family safe.

Dealing with Houston's HEAT



High temperatures and rising humidity can be a dangerous combination. There are several steps seniors can take to beat the heat:

- > Drink plenty of fluids. Drink at least six eight-ounce non-caffeinated/non-alcohol drinks every day. Check with your physician to find out if any of your medications are diuretics, which means they remove salt and fluid volume from the body. If you are taking a diuretic, ask your doctor if you should increase your fluid intake.
- > Dress for the season. Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose clothing. Wear a light hat

or baseball cap to deflect the sun from your face. Use sunscreen to avoid sunburn, which can increase body temperature.

- > Run errands or do any outside chores in the early morning or evening when it is coolest.
- > Spend time in air-conditioned places. If you can't afford to run your air conditioner all day, visit your community center during its operational hours, the library, a shopping center or other air conditioned facilities to cool off. During peak hours, fans alone are not enough to keep you cool. Without a cooling unit, fans simply blow hot air.

The Time is NOW to Prepare for a Hurricane



Hurricane names for 2008, such as Cristobal or Paloma, may seem lighthearted but hurricane preparation is serious business. Don't wait until a hurricane warning is issued to prepare for the possibility of a hurricane:

- > Create an emergency supply kit. Ready.gov has a full list of items to keep in your kit (<http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html>).
- > Plan how you will leave and where you will go if an evacuation is ordered. If you have no family or friends to help you evacuate, make sure to register with Transportation Assistance Registry by calling 2-1-1.
- > Develop a list of family, friends, doctors and physicians phone numbers. Additionally, create a packet of important documents to take with you that can include this list of phone numbers; medical, home and life

insurance; mortgage paperwork; and Social Security information.

- > When your car reaches one-quarter of a tank of gas, refill it so you are prepared for an evacuation.
- > Know the difference between a hurricane watch and a warning. According to the National Hurricane Center, a hurricane watch is announced when a hurricane or hurricane-related hazard is a possible threat within a 36-hour period. A hurricane warning is issued when a hurricane with sustained winds of at least 74 miles per hour is expected in a coastal area in a 24-hour period or less.

For more information on disaster preparedness or how you can beat the summer heat, visit <http://www.hcoem.org> or call Harris County Precinct Two Safety Operations and Emergency Management at 713-455-0062.

Useful Web Resources

Following are some Web sites that provide information or services that may be useful to you:

The Digital TV: <http://www.dtv.gov/publications.html>

On Feb. 17, 2009, all U.S. full-power broadcast television stations will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and begin broadcasting only in digital. Find out more about whether or not you will be impacted by the digital TV (DTV) transition by visiting this Web site.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: <http://fcs.tamu.edu/families/aging/grg/index.php>

More than 8 percent of U.S. children are being raised by a grandparent. This Web site provides information to help make this job a little easier.

Food Safety for Seniors: http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/food/fsseniors/page1.htm

This Web site was created to provide seniors with information on how to make sure what you eat is as safe as possible.

Recalls.com: <http://www.recalls.gov>

In an effort to better alert Americans about unsafe, hazardous or defective products, six federal agencies joined together to create this Web site that serves as a "one-stop shop" for recalls from the U.S. government.

Senior Corps: <http://www.seniorcorps.gov>

This organization connects more than 500,000 Americans who are 55 years old or older with volunteer opportunities such as mentoring, serving as a companion or putting job skills and experience to work in the community.

Seniors Create ONE-OF-A-KIND Jewelry



Jewelry making is a popular senior activity.



Amanda Flores displays a necklace she created.

Harris County Precinct Two's Community Centers offer seniors a wide range of classes and activities where they can meet new friends, learn a new skill or just have a good time. Jewelry-making classes are a program that combines all of these elements into one project.

Julie Connella, director of the San Jacinto/Highlands Community Center, began teaching her seniors a jewelry-making class about two years ago. "The seniors at our center simply love jewelry so I took a class so I could teach them," she explained. "We started off making necklaces and then moved on to bracelets, earrings and pearl knotting. Our seniors have enjoyed finding beads and other items that allow them to design unique pieces of jewelry. They also have received a lot of compliments from other seniors for their one-of-a-kind pieces."

This creative hobby not only gives seniors the chance to make unique jewelry for themselves and to give as gifts, but it also is a great place

to make new friends. "The jewelry class brings together seniors who previously may not have met because they usually participate in other activities. Many new friendships were created during this time," said Connella.

Once all the interested seniors had the jewelry-making techniques down, the San Jacinto class stopped meeting but will begin again later this year as new seniors have joined the Center who want to learn this craft. Even though she is not currently running a class at her center, Connella has brought her artistic skills to several other Precinct Two community centers by teaching their staff how to run a similar program at their center.

Lucy Rubio, community aide at the Grayson Community Center, is one of Connella's former students. "We took the class at another center and we all enjoyed it so I began teaching a jewelry-making class at Grayson once a month," said Rubio. "It's a really popular class and everyone who has taken it has had a great time."





Precinct2gether
 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

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 & Riley 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

**Transportation
 Voucher Program**

281-326-2955

Veterans Services

281-426-2832 or

281-843-2019