

# The Senior CHIT★CHAT



A Publication for East Harris County Senior Citizens from Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia

Fall 2007

## Things to Know

### Centers to Administer Flu Shots

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized in the United States every year from flu complications and approximately 36,000 people will die because of influenza. Seniors are included in the list of those who are at high risk of developing complications if they get the flu.

The most effective way to reduce the chance of contracting the flu is by getting a flu vaccination. Several Precinct Two community centers will have flu shots available for seniors.

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## Seniors enjoying activities at San Jacinto, Highlands Centers

Seniors living in Highlands have been lucky to have a Precinct Two community center available to them since 1980. It was in that year that the Highlands Community Center became one of the first Precinct Two centers. Strong participation at Highlands led to the construction of the San Jacinto Community Center in 1999. We also are happy to be able to serve Baytown seniors.

Activity is the name of the game for EHCSC at both San Jacinto and Highlands Centers. "The seniors at our center are known for the word 'go,'" explained Julie Connella, the Centers' director. "They always fill the bus during our monthly lunch and dinner clubs. We also offer monthly shopping, entertainment, field trips and ticketed events. Our seniors now say anytime you get on our bus, it will be an adventure!"

Numerous activities are available to seniors at San Jacinto and Highlands Centers including bingo, jewelry making, line dancing, Spanish lessons, computer classes, ceramics, quilting, bunco, table games and monthly birthday lunches. "We have a Gospel Night on the second Tuesday of every month that is a favorite *continued on page 4*



*The Pick 'N Grin Band plays at the San Jacinto Center every Friday of the month.*

# ▶ Mark Your Calendar

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

## SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 4-7** First week of bus booking calls

**Sept. 5** Grandparents Day Party for Grayson & Flukinger, Baldree Building

**Sept. 5** Grandparents Day Party, North East

**Sept. 5** Grandparents Day Party, San Jacinto

**Sept. 6** Gospel Night, Flukinger

**Sept. 10-13** Second week of bus booking calls

**Sept. 11** Gospel Night, San Jacinto

**Sept. 14** Fiestas Patrias Luncheon with Mariachi, North East

**Sept. 17** Gospel Night, Northeast

**Sept. 18** Volunteer Banquet for Grayson, Flukinger & San Jacinto, Baldree Building

**Sept. 21** Hometown Opry—'50s Night, EHCAC

**Sept. 27** Hispanic Conference on Aging, Humble Civic Center

## OCTOBER

**Oct. 4** Gospel Night, Flukinger

**Oct. 5-6** Fall Fund Raiser, North East

**Oct. 9** Gospel Night, San Jacinto

**Oct. 12** Tejano Dance, North East

**Oct. 15** Gospel Night, Northeast

**Oct. 16** Monster Mash—Costume Ballroom Dance, Bay Area

**Oct. 17** Nursing Home Party, Grayson

**Oct. 19** Hometown Opry, EHCAC

**Oct. 22-26** South Channel Senior Olympics, EHCAC

**Oct. 24** Costume Party with Hobo Stew Lunch, Flukinger

**Oct. 30** Inner City's Halloween Party, EHCAC

**Oct. 31** Halloween Party—Birthday Luncheon, North East

**Oct. 31** North Channel Centers' Fall Fest, Walker

## NOVEMBER

**Nov. 1** Nursing Home Party, Barrett

**Nov. 1** Gospel Night, Flukinger

**Nov. 2** Tamalada Friday, North East

**Nov. 8** Inner City's Senior Gala, Bay Area

**Nov. 9** North Channel's Big Band Gala, Bay Area

**Nov. 5** Thanksgiving Lunch, San Jacinto

**Nov. 13** Gospel Night, San Jacinto

**Nov. 14** Thanksgiving Lunch, North East

**Nov. 14** Fall Party, Flukinger

**Nov. 15** Fall Party, Grayson

**Nov. 16** Hometown Opry—Legends Night, EHCAC

**Nov. 19** Gospel Night, North East

**Nov. 29-30** EHCSC Precinct-Wide Holiday Celebration, San Jacinto College/North Campus Fine Arts Theater

## Chit-Chat info:

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**Monthly Dances** – These dances are fund raisers for the East Harris County Senior Citizens:

<b>Second Monday:</b>	North East
<b>Second Thursday:</b>	Grayson
<b>Third Tuesday:</b>	Bay Area (ballroom dancing)
<b>Third Thursday:</b>	East Harris County (EHCAC) (country-and-western dancing)
<b>Fourth Friday:</b>	San Jacinto (Pick 'N Grin Band)

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



In the next few weeks, you will be hearing a lot about a new program, My Medicare Matters, a comprehensive national education program of which I am proud to serve as a local spokesperson.

Although the program is national in scope, it really is a grassroots, community-based initiative designed to make sure you are aware of – and have access to – every possible assistance with your medical needs, with an emphasis on reducing prescription drug costs.

The Harris County program will be spearheaded by Gateway to Care, in concert with several other local groups such as the Better Business Bureau and the Area Agency on Aging. If you have Medicare and have questions about how to afford your prescription medications, call (713) 783-4616, ext. 260. While many of you are familiar with Medicare Part D, there are other programs available which can help reduce your out-of-pocket expenses.

On a related note, I was pleased that our senior program at the Northeast Community Center was chosen to host the recent visit of the Honorable

Josefina Carbonnel, assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for aging issues. Secretary Carbonnel asked our seniors if they had any questions, and they did not hesitate to share their concerns on a wide variety of issues!

During this gathering, Gateway to Care signed-up 17 of our seniors for a prescription drug benefit program. Keep an eye out for billboards around town calling attention to this important issue, and our new effort to make you aware of helpful programs.

Finally, let me add a personal note on the passing of Marvin Zindler. He was a great man whom I first came to know when I served as Chief Judge of the Houston Municipal Courts System. As you know, he was our honored guest at the 2006 Black and White Ball which raised funds for our seniors programs. He was a true friend to our seniors and to me. He will be missed.

## Helpful Resources on the Internet



*The World Wide Web makes it easier for everyone to get information without having to leave the computer. Following are some Web sites that provide information that may be useful to you:*

### > **Houston Bar Association's Elder Law Handbook**

<http://www.hba.org>  
*(select the "For the Public" tab and then choose handbooks to get to the Elder Law Handbook)*  
This 53-page handbook provides seniors with information on many legal questions including wills, trusts, consumer protection, elder abuse, tax issues and guardianship as well as a list of resource and referral phone numbers. You can download this handbook for free and it is available in English, Spanish, Korean and Mandarin Chinese.

### > **Houston Dynamo**

<http://houston.mlsnet.com/t200/>  
This site gives current and potential fans information on the Houston Dynamo, the winner of the 2006 Major League Soccer Cup.

### > **LifeGift**

<http://www.lifegift.org>  
Since 1987, this not-for-profit organization has been dedicated to recovering organs and tissue for individuals needing transplants in 109 Texas counties. Visit this Web site to learn more about donating organs and tissue.

### > **National Institute of Health's Senior Health**

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/>  
Developed by the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine, this Web site provides aging-related health information.

### > **Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Project**

<http://fireant.tamu.edu/>  
Fire ants are a problem for many Gulf Coast residents. This Web site provides research-based information for anyone who wants to learn more about managing fire ants.

## San Jacinto and Highlands Centers *continued from the cover*



with our seniors,” said Connella. “Every Friday, our Pick ‘N Grin band is on hand with three of the Friday events consisting of playing games and listening to the band and a fund-raising dance that starts at

12:30 p.m. on the fourth Friday of each month.”

Several other groups, including Highlands Chamber of Commerce, RV Friends, Highlands Select Baseball, Highlands Little League, Crosby Prop Nuts, Highlands Woods Homeowner Association and Highlands Pilot Club, use the Centers on a regular basis. The Spay-Neuter Assistance Program’s (SNAP) van is at the San Jacinto building every other month. Harris County Precinct Two Veteran Services now is located in the Highlands Center.

The San Jacinto Center is available for rental for special occasions. The main room has a 300-person capacity, 15 round tables, 80 8-foot long tables and a kitchen with professional appliances.

If you live in the Highlands or Baytown area, stop by the San Jacinto & Highlands Centers for a tour or call 281-426-7561 for more information.

## Conference Set to Focus on Senior Issues

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual “Bajo el Mismo Techo/Under the Same Roof” Conference, sponsored by the Houston Chapter affiliate of the National Hispanic Council on Aging, is set for Thursday, Sept. 27, at the Humble Civic Center. Held in conjunction with Hispanic Heritage Month, this event features educational and informational presentations that focus on issues impacting seniors.

The first National Hispanic Council on Aging in Houston was held in 1991 and had 30 participants. More than 700 seniors attended the 2006 conference and even more are expected this year. East Harris County Senior Citizens has been an active participant in this conference for the last 12 years and the use of Precinct Two’s buses for transporting seniors has played an important part in the event’s growth.

Speakers at this year’s conference include Texas State House of Representative Rick Noriega and Houston City Council member-at-large, position three, Melissa Noriega. Conference highlights include a continental breakfast, health screenings, exhibit booths and entertainment.

Numerous exhibitors will be at this year’s conference including Harris County Social Services, Social Security Administration, Better Business Bureau Education Foundation, AARP Foundation, Harris County Area Agency on Aging, Alzheimer’s Association and Houston Area Parkinson Society.

There is no charge to attend “Bajo el Mismo Techo/Under the Same Roof.” The Humble Civic Center is located at 8233 Will Clayton



*Health screenings, including blood pressure checks, are among the activities that will be occurring during “Bajo el Mismo Techo/Under the Same Roof.”*

Pkwy. and a map to the Center is available online at <http://www.humblecc.com/maps.html>.

For more information on “Bajo el Mismo Techo/Under the Same Roof,” call 713-626-7114 or Mary Guerrero at 713-514-0185.

# Seniors Preparing for Holiday Variety Show

In the past, Precinct Two has hosted a holiday party for seniors as a way to celebrate the season. In 2007, the holiday celebration will be a theatrical variety production that seniors not only will get to attend but will be the performers.

“Holiday 2gether” is set to debut on Nov. 29 and Nov. 30 with performances for seniors on both days at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the theater of the fine arts building on the North campus of the San Jacinto College District.

More than 100 seniors are taking part in this show and have been working on it since auditions were held this past April. “We’re really looking forward to having a great time and putting everybody in the holiday spirit with ‘Holiday 2gether,’” said Malcolm Barrett, director of the Riley Chambers/Barrett Community Center and the co-organizer of the production. “Seniors participating in the show come from all over Precinct Two and everyone seems to be enjoying our rehearsals as we prepare for the show.” There also will be surprise cameo appearances by Precinct Two staff.

The co-organizer and director of the show is Bobbi Yarbrough who also works at Barrett Community Center.

Drawing upon her college degree in theater and shows she has written in the past, Yarbrough has staged the

show, written all necessary dialogue and is running the rehearsals.

One of the goals that both Barrett and Yarbrough have for the show is finding a way for every senior who wanted to participate to be able to showcase his or her talent. “Not only do we have seniors who are dancing, singing and acting but our crafters and artists also will be taking part in the production,” explained Yarbrough. “All our seniors are giving 100 percent to rehearsals so the performance will be truly entertaining for everyone who comes. It’s such a blessing for me to be able to work on this show and we’re all looking forward to having the curtain come up on Nov. 29.”

Center directors and coordinators will have more information for seniors about the show as the date draws closer. Tickets, which will be free for seniors, are required to attend a performance.



## Things to Know *continued from the cover*

The current 2007 flu shot schedule is as follows:

- Bay Area Community Center: Tuesday, Oct. 30
- East Harris County Activity Center: Friday, Nov. 2
- Grayson Community Center: Wednesday, Oct. 24
- North East Community Center: Friday, Oct. 12
- Ramsey & Flukinger Community Center: Wednesday, Oct. 17

To learn more about a center’s specific flu shot details/reservations, please call the center directly (a phone list is on the back cover of the Chit-Chat).

### Free Diabetes Program Set for Fall

The Texas Cooperative Extension - Harris County’s “Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes” program will be offered at the North East Community Center on five Mondays (Sept. 10, 17, 24, Oct 1 and 8) from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and at Bayshore Medical Center on Oct. 2, 4, 9, 11, 15 and 17 from 10 a.m. to Noon.

The Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes program is a series of nutrition and self-care lessons for adults with Type 2 Diabetes that will enable participants to better manage their disease and avoid long-term

complications. The classes do build on one another so participants should plan on attending the majority, if not all, of the sessions.

There is no charge to attend this program. For more information or to sign up for this program, call 281-855-5626 or 281-855-5627.

### Free UHCL classes to be held at Bay Area Center

In partnership with the Bay Area Community Center, the University of Houston at Clear Lake’s Clear Lake Association of Senior Programs (CLASP) will be holding free monthly mini-courses on a variety of subjects related to every day living and maintaining a healthy mind and body. Upcoming classes include:

- Sept. 11: The Tropical Plants of Moody Gardens by Donita Brannon
- Oct. 9: The Science of Happiness by Robert Bartsch, Ph.D.
- Nov. 13: Topic to be determined

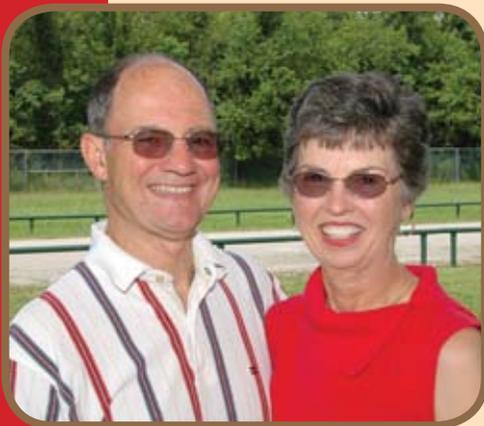
Classes will be at the Bay Area Center from 10:30 a.m. until Noon. To register, call 281-326-2955.

# Keeping Their Senior Groups

## *On the Go...*



*Nadean and Calvin Whitaker*



*Carolyn and Robert Francis*

Seniors living in the Precinct Two community are fortunate to have access to many different activities arranged by the Inner City, North Channel, South Channel and Nursing Home coordinators. Each month, these four coordinators meet with representative of hundreds of groups who are interested in learning more about activities which can include sporting events, musical and dramatic theater, museum visits and special programs.

Being a volunteer leader for one of these groups is an important undertaking. Two couples representing four groups have become regulars at the monthly meetings and indispensable to the groups they represent.

Retired teachers Carolyn and Robert Francis seem to have an inexhaustible level of energy. Carolyn spent 30 years with Baytown Lee High School and was the head of the business education department and a microcomputer applications and accounting teacher when she retired in 1998 while Robert served as the head of the math department and as a math teacher at Sterling High School.

Since they've retired, both have been active with Relay for Life, an American Cancer Society annual fundraiser where Carolyn has served as the co-chair of the Luminaria Committee. They also volunteer with the Baytown Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association, Plumwood Neighborhood Crime Watch, St. John's United Methodist Church and

on the board of directors for the local Crime Stoppers. Carolyn's accounting skills have been put to good use as she serves as the treasurer of several local groups.

At the North Channel meetings, Carolyn represents the St. John's United Methodist Church seniors group while Robert serves for the Baytown Area Retired School Employees Association. Their groups enjoy attending Astros games, musicals, IMAX productions and museums. "We haven't found anything yet that they don't like to do," explained Carolyn.

The Francises have been married for 41 years and were recognized by *The Baytown Sun* as its 2005 Citizens of the Year for their volunteering. When the couple isn't working with their senior groups or at one of their volunteer activities, you'll often find them at a country-and-western dance.

Nadean and Calvin Whitaker are two of the long-time supporters of Precinct Two senior programming who first became involved during the tenure of Commissioner Fonteno. Nadean is a retired secretary for the Deer Park Independent School District and also owned Lynchburg Ceramic Shop. Calvin retired from ExxonMobil where he was a long-range planner. Prior to his retirement, he served on the Exxon Club board and the committee for Better Postal Service. After retirement, Calvin served on the

*Volunteerism is at the core of the East Harris County Senior Citizens program.*

## Serving Precinct Two Seniors Is a Family Tradition

### The Chit-Chat's Featured Employee: Stacey Bush



Mothers often are credited for inspiring their children. This certainly is true in the case of Stacey Bush, Harris County Precinct Two's North Channel senior coordinator. "My mother, Shirley Kober, had been the director of the James Driver (now the North East Center) and the Ramsey Community Centers and I had volunteered to help her with parties and events," explained Bush. "I really loved working with her and it was my dream to be a part of the senior programming team."

Bush's dream started to become a reality eight years ago when she was hired as a receptionist at the East Harris County Activity Center. Six months later, she was promoted to the position of South Channel assistant senior coordinator and two-and-one-half years ago, she accepted the position of North Channel senior coordinator.

"It was so hard leaving South Channel after being there for more than five years but I still have the opportunity of seeing the South

Channel seniors and keeping up with them," explained Bush.

In her current role, Bush is in charge of activities, fundraising, budgeting and ticketed events for the 149 North Channel senior groups. "Each month, we have meetings for all the groups to discuss upcoming events as well as share trip ideas and current information," said Bush. In 2006,

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*"What I truly love the most about my job is just being with the seniors and ... how they make a tremendous difference in my life"*

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the North Channel senior groups took a total of 793 Harris County bus trips, covering 85,212 miles on their journeys and transporting 12,671 seniors.

Since Bush joined the North Channel area team, some new events have been added to the

annual calendar including Ladies Lunch and a Movie, Summer Social (set for Aug. 24, 2007) and trips to the Galveston IMAX and Galveston musicals.

When Bush isn't working with her seniors, she usually is spending time with her husband of nine years and her three children on what they affectionately call the "Bush Farm" that includes a cat, two dogs, chickens and a horse. She enjoys salt-water fishing and camping with her family.

Stacey Bush's dream job has been even better than she'd anticipated as she enjoys working with her colleagues and the East Harris County Senior Citizens' members every day. "What I truly love the most about my job is just being with the seniors and seeing what a difference we can make in their lives and, in turn, how they make a tremendous difference in my life," said Bush.

M.B.A. Medical Board and currently is a trustee on the San Jacinto Baptist Association Board and the ExxonMobil Retiree Club Board. The Whitakers are among several of our seniors whose volunteer efforts bring donations to EHCSC from the ExxonMobil Foundation's Volunteers in Action Program (VIP).

Each month, Nadean represents the Tall Bridge SAMS R.V. Club and Calvin is the representative for First Baptist Church Baytown at North Channel coordinator meetings. "Our groups really enjoy attending plays, sporting events, going out to eat and taking short trips," said Nadean. "We recently attended a performance of South Pacific at the Galveston Musicals and had a wonderful time."

In addition to serving as senior group representatives, the Whitakers help out at many other EHCSC activities including the annual Fish Fry, summer food baskets program and Senior Olympics.

Nadean and Calvin celebrated their 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary in May. They enjoy spending time with their only son and daughter-in-law, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Volunteerism is at the core of the East Harris County Senior Citizens program. The Francises and the Whitakers are just two examples of the fantastic volunteers who make our programs successful.



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 Houston, TX 77015

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**The East Harris County Senior Citizens welcomes all new participants!**

EHCS 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.

*East Harris County Senior Citizens 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  
 281-479-4232

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

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

**Transportation Voucher Program**  
 281-326-2955

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