

TEXAS ANGLER
EDUCATION PROGRAM**Reel Lines**

Issue Number 23

4200 Smith School Road • Austin, Texas 78744

January 2008

New & NoteworthyANN MILLER –
Aquatic Education Coordinator

I am happy to announce TPWD's partnership with Junior Anglers and Hunters of America (JrAHA). Although we have been working with the organization for well over a year (see story on page 3), we didn't announce our partnership until this issue. I hope many of you will consider an affiliation with this organization since our goals are very closely aligned and the organization is breaking new ground (both literally and figuratively) in being able to connect kids to the outdoors. I expect the next couple of years to be exciting ones for JrAHA and that supporting their efforts will be very rewarding.

On a completely different note, if some things have taken a while to get to you in the last month or two, please bear with us because we will be experiencing the challenge of staff changes and remodeling at headquarters. In our warehouse, Rita Williamson has retired and in our office, Lilia Hughes resigned due to family obligations. We are in the midst of replacing both of those positions ... so Karen, Mac (in the warehouse) and I are taking up the slack for processing your orders for materials.

We are moving temporarily out of our offices here at HQ so that new flooring can be installed. If your needs for angler education materials or information are not being met, please send either Karen Marks or me a gentle reminder. We'll get to it as soon as possible.

*(Continued on page 2)***Ascarate Fishing Club Teams up with Wounded Warriors**

TONI VAN DEPUTTE – Area Chief, El Paso

The sun was just breaking over the Franklin Mountains when we gathered at Ascarate Lake in El Paso. It was October 20, 2007, and the Ascarate Fishing Club was hosting a Kids Fish Day. And, thankfully, we were prepared for the onslaught of several hundred kids. But, a few days ago, our 30-member club was wondering how we could manage the expected crowds. Our last fishing event in July netted 637 young anglers. With the help of the Suntarians, a local service organization, we had ample assistance with the event. But, we were concerned about this event because the Suntarians were busy with another huge event. Luckily, we learned that when one door closes, another door opens.

Early in the week before our scheduled event, while taping the ankle of one of my athletes, I was asked what I was going to do on Saturday. I said I would be working with some kids at Ascarate Lake at our club's Kid Fish Day. By chance, one of the coaches overheard our conversation and asked if we could use some help. Boy was I excited!

(Continued on page 2)

New & Noteworthy

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

It's always great to hear from our volunteers around the state. I know our cover story from Toni Van DePutte in El Paso will touch your hearts while articles from Dr. Rey Ramirez in Brownsville and Larry Condra from Abilene remind us that fishing knows no boundaries.

Thanks to David Neyses (Huntsville State Park) for sharing his innovative teaching aid on how to handle a catfish safely (page 11), and

to Jerry Vaughan (Ray Roberts Lake State Park) for sharing his handy and easy-to-make rod holder (page 11). As always, our partners and volunteers are the backbone of our Angler Education family and we appreciate all of your contributions.

May 2008 bring you many opportunities to fish and share your love of fishing with others.

The Angler Education "100 Club"

Below is a list of 13 OUTSTANDING Angler Education instructors who documented over 100 hours each of volunteer time this past fiscal year (September 2006 – August 2007). Six of the 13 have seen their names on this list for the second year in a row (**). Although we thank everyone, even those who are able to volunteer only occasionally, we can't thank these particular individuals enough and hope that each one feels a tremendous amount of satisfaction knowing that their efforts are touching many lives in a positive way. Three cheers for the "100 Club"!

Brietz, Stanley **	Corsicana	Martz, Keith **	Highland Village
Brown, Jimmy	San Angelo	Mclendon, Walter	Lufkin
Condra, Larry	Abilene	Mueller, Tim	Katy
Fletcher, Kenneth **	San Antonio	Petrick, Michael **	Plano
Green, D'Anna	Stephenville	Scott III, Trey **	Round Rock
Harrison, Guy	Kerrville	Slayton, Randy	Corpus Christi
Kubena, Keith **	Stockdale		

Ascarate Fishing Club, continued

The coach is an active member of the U.S. Army. A teacher-coach who was called up after 9/11, Lt. Colonel Ron Quite is in charge of the troops at Fort Bliss called the "Wounded Warriors." The troops are soldiers who have been injured in Afghanistan or Iraq. Those who were ambulatory would be able to do community service with our group. We needed assistance in measuring fish, fixing rods, and handing out bait. Door two opened and in walked 16 wonderful soldiers who not only signed up to serve our country, but also gave their weekend to help the kids of El Paso.

As the sun came over the mountain, the kids came to fish. The laughter and squeals of over three hundred kids signaled a job well done. Twenty-seven fish were caught from the lake and dozens more were caught in our kiddies' pool. Awards were given out in three different groups as well as a grand champion prize.

But the biggest winners of the day were us. There is a brotherhood that exists among soldiers that bridges generations and conflicts; their kinship, depth of understanding, and sense of honor pervaded the entire event. They knew how to listen and work with unspoken words. Conversations were generated by scars and artificial knees. There were friendships that were established and a definite partnership in fishing. We look forward to working closely with our Wounded Warriors.

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Carter Smith

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"To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

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www.tpwd.state.tx.us

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New Center to Provide Access to Nature in Downtown Houston

On December 17, Ed Gerhardt, five board members and a group of supporters took a big step towards realizing a dream, their dream of connecting inner city youth to the outdoors through fishing and hunting. The nonprofit organization, Junior Anglers and Hunters of America (JrAHA), signed their portion of a 50-year lease for land in the heart of downtown Houston, at the soon-to-be-built Metro Intermodal Terminal at North Main and White Oak Bayou. Finalization of the lease document is expected in late January when the property appraisal is completed.

This five-acre campus will house a well-stocked, two-acre fishing pond and training center, with docks, classroom space and room for an archery range. It is to be the "green part" of Houston's new Grand Central Station. Light rail, commuter rail and buses from throughout metropolitan Houston will embark/disembark only 200 yards' walking distance to the Outdoors Center. Collaborating schools and family support organizations will have cost-effective and convenient transportation alternatives to bring youth to the center where they can receive fishing, boating safety, archery and hunting instruction.

Of course, Junior Anglers and Hunters of America volunteer instructors are not waiting around until their center is open (projected opening in two years). They are already offering basic and advanced fishing and hunting classes to youth and families in the Houston area. JrAHA has partnered with Aquatic Education and Hunter Education staff, Houston ISD, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and others to teach fishing and hunting basics to inner-city youth. Last year alone, Ed led JrAHA volunteers to teach 398 folks (mostly youth) how to fish and documented 191 volunteer hours. This year, plans are in place to support Houston ISD physical education teachers in teaching archery, boating and fishing through their high-school-level Outdoor Adventure classes. The potential to mentor thousands of youth in fishing, hunting and boating is awesome.

Knowing a bit about Ed Gerhardt explains how his drive and passion has taken him in this direction. Even though he has had hunting and fishing trips around the world (Tanzania, Borneo, Alaska, the western United States and Canada), one trip stands out, according to Ed. In 1995, he took his (then) six-year-old granddaughter on a fly-fishing trip to all the great rivers of the western United States and Canada and on up to Alaska (including Brooks Falls with the grizzlies) from June into September, camping out in a tent nearly the entire 90 days. After only a few weeks into the trip she was able to cast effectively, as well as select appropriate flies, tie proper knots, make a realistic presentation, time effective hookups, and land the trout or salmon all by herself. Then she practiced releasing the fish safely back to the stream if it wasn't going to be eaten that night.

Seeing his grandchild adapt so readily to fishing and nature was a reaffirmation of the theory that all human beings are biologically and spiritually attracted to nature as hunters and gatherers. The correlate, however, is that as time continues to pass, children's attachment to nature diminishes due to social and economic influences described in Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods—Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*.

This national trend, in which our children are separated from nature (nature deficit), is due to many factors including overloaded schedules, preoccupation with TV and video games (virtual experiences, including virtual fishing and hunting), fear of the outdoors, lack of open spaces in our cities and neighborhoods, and fear of strangers. The book, which explains the issue and the price we all pay for this situation, aligned perfectly with Ed Gerhardt's passion for introducing youth to the joys and personal benefits of connecting to the outdoors through hunting and fishing, and partially inspired his drive to create JrAHA and the innovative outdoor center in downtown Houston.



Signing 50-year lease from JrAHA: Standing from left to right: Garry Sullivan, Jamie Walter, Michael Shirley, Dr. Ronald Johnson, Robert Kester, David Lavine and Ed Gerhardt. Kevin Cunningham (TPWD). Todd Mason, seated, is the Vice President of Houston Metro.

Ed and the rest of JrAHA's leadership invite others to join JrAHA to stem the tide of children's increasing and alarming "nature deficit disorder." You may get involved as a volunteer instructor or as a financial contributor to the organization. Volunteers are the backbone of the organization, however, and Ed will be happy to discuss volunteer opportunities with anyone with a passion for sharing their love of the outdoors with our youth.

Contact Ed Gerhardt at elg@jraha.org and visit the JrAHA Web site to see images and plans for the new center at www.jraha.org/

A Fish Tail Tale

KEVIN CUNNINGHAM – Aquatic Education Specialist, Houston

Being a young person, I grew up around fishermen always talking about how good things were before all the regulations, development, people and fishing pressure came about. I used to hear stories about infinite limits, limitless schools of fish, and quality fishing days measured only by the abundance of your catch. And though I found myself inspired and dreamy about such tall tales of times gone by, I never thought I would ever share one of my own, until now.

It was a bright, sunny Thursday afternoon in September—not the most ideal for fishing, but a nice day nonetheless. I was invited to go fishing with two field biologists, Derek and Chad, from the Coastal Fisheries Division. Both are accomplished anglers and fished more often than many of us would hope to in a lifetime. I can't count the number of times I've heard fishing reports and seen pictures of their catch. Today, I and another friend would be joining them for a trip to the North Jetty in Galveston to pursue Spanish mackerel. Derek and Chad had been there a few days before and lost everything they had to the mackerels' sharp teeth.

Armed with wire leaders, 2 quarts of live shrimp, and enough rods to make the boat look like a radar mast, we headed out to the end of the five-mile-long jetty. Anxious and hopeful, I waited as Derek and Chad positioned the 20-foot skiff just off the rip-rap in 60 feet of water. Free-lining live shrimp on wire leaders off the back of the boat, we waited as peak-tide water pounded through deep cuts in between the rocks. Ordinarily, we would be competing with numerous other boats while our bait attempted to evade unwanted fish for the voracious bites and long-runs of the mackerel. But today, there were no other boats or mackerel to be found at the jetty, let alone any bites from fish of any kind.

Hours passed as we moved to different spots and sweat built along our sun-burned brows. Yet, still no action. Just as we were about to move again, I noticed a brown mud-colored blob moving towards the boat. As excitement grew, we cast into the blob only to see a large school of cow-nose rays glide underneath the boat. Disappointed, yet undiscouraged, we continued to fish.

Then we noticed another blob moving towards the boat. This time the brown blob was red. Thinking the rays had returned, we paid no attention to the blob until it was right on top of us. All of a sudden, my rod bent and nearly shot into the water. It was a hard solid pull, not like that of a mackerel.

(Continued on page 6)





With Baited Breath

STEVE CAMPBELL
Aquatic Education –
North Texas/
Panhandle

**“I have the
soul of an
artist and
none of
the talent.”**

Fish Music

If you were privy to the May 2007 Area Chiefs meeting or didn't read the July 2007 issue of *Reel Lines* ("Of Seafood and Song" by Ann Miller, p. 8) or glanced over "Fun to Fish With Parks and Wildlife" (p. 9), you may not be aware that we now have fish music. The concept for Fish Music began over two years ago after the conclusion of the 2005 Area Chiefs meeting.

The Plan

While driving back to DFW, I reviewed in my mind all that had taken place over the weekend. I began to think how diversified fishing is in Texas; there are those who fish specifically for a species of fish and those who fish with a particular type of tackle. How do you bring such diversity together in such a manner that all of their needs are met AND we have fun in the process? If you know me at all, you know that I am all about the fun!

Not far from the gates of Parrie Haynes, it hit me—a sing-along. But this wouldn't be the typical singing of familiar camp fire music like "Row, Row Your Boat" or "The Bear Went Over the Mountain." No! This would be the Mother of All Sing-Alongs!

The plan was to take songs that most of the participants had a real good chance of having heard more than once in their lifetime and also taking into consideration the longevity of some participant's lifetimes. Well-known songs and themes to old television shows would work. Being that there would be a small number under the age of 30, I knew I would be grateful that TV Land existed on cable television. And between Temple and Waco, I had written the first song.

I took the "M*A*S*H" theme song, "Suicide is Painless," and turned it into "Fly Fishing is Painless." Of course, I couldn't write while I was driving, so I had to resort to singing it over and over to myself as the pavement of I-35 fell away beneath my wheels. I must have been some sight to my fellow motorists. Once I hit Waco, I pulled over to the first parking lot I could find and began furiously to jot down the lyrics.

Personally, I Blame PBS

I've been asked, from where does the inspiration for this music come? I dunno; it just happens.

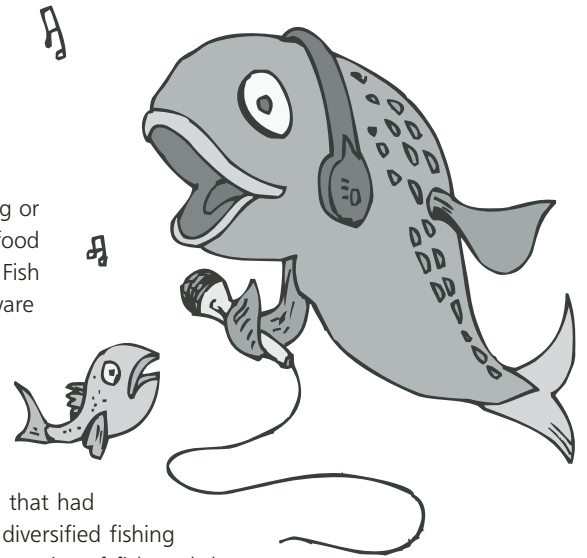
Sometimes I'll be driving down the road and a line from a song will come to me. I sometimes will hear a tune on the radio and while pushing a cart through my local grocery. At the time of his writing, the public television station is in its third week of a pledge drive. Lately they've been airing Doo-Wop and other oldies specials. Let's just say that during this time frame my mind and my pen have not been idle.

If I'm lucky, their lyrics will be easy to change. A number of the ideas I get work out just fine, but the vast majority do not and are filed away. Perhaps someday I'll return to them or someone else will find them and complete the task. The song books handed out at the 2007 Area Chief meeting were somewhat like an iceberg. The songs sung that night were but the tip of the potential body of work.

Rules of the Trade

Obscure songs will not work; given the varied ages and backgrounds of those who might be participating, the tune must be one easily identifiable by the majority of the group. For this reason, TV theme music, commercial jingles and songs from artists with a long run, and that have produced many popular tunes, work best.

The guitar chords must be simple and easy to play. One reason for this is so that novice guitarists can be recruited to assist. The other is, I may have to play them someday. The following Steve-ism best sums up my limited capabilities: "I have the soul of an artist and none of the talent." When we premiered the fish music, we were fortunate to have the ever-lovely and skillful Ernie Gammage accompany for us.



(Continued on page 6)

A Fish Tail Tale, continued

Everyone else was hooked up, too. Euphoric hype gripped the boat as we peered into the water and gazed at hundreds of bull redfish swimming all around us—chasing one another like cattle stampeding across a plain.

We fought the reds, which were a bit much for our lightweight tackle; each measured at least 36 inches (roughly 18 pounds). Unfortunately, I had lost mine during the fight and the fish were gone. Although discouraged, I was pleased to see such a large school of bull redfish—something I had only read and heard about in old fish stories. Plus, we had landed and released three of the large fish.

Then, out of the corners of our eyes, we spied a large red mass moving away from us about a quarter-mile away. It was so large you couldn't miss it. We chased the redfish and cast right into the middle of the red mass. In an instant we were all hooked up again. In the 15 minutes it took to land the fish, the school had disappeared again. After releasing our fish we looked up for the moving red mass and chased it down again, hooking up with more fish. We did this for about an hour and a half until the school disappeared forever.

On our last hookup we were waiting for Derek to bring in the last fish. His fish was larger than the others, measuring at least 46 inches. During the fight, however, the fish made an unusually hard pull and then went limp. Thinking the fish was lost, Derek pulled the line only to feel dead weight at the end. Upon surfacing, we saw a pool of blood and a half-eaten redfish. A huge shark had bitten Derek's fish in half. Amazingly, the fish was unaware of what had happened and was still trying to swim. So we put the fish out of its misery and threw it, or half thereof, in the icebox.

It was an exciting and fulfilling day. By the time it was over we had landed at least 20 bull reds and lost several more. Furthermore, we had shared in an experience that paralleled some of the greater fishing stories. And like all fish stories, when properly aged, it will grow taller with each retelling, so that by the time I'm well aged, the fish will have been twice as long and the tackle half as light. Most importantly, it was an opportunity to be outside and on the water, sharing in fellowship and building positive memories.

If there are any fish stories you would like to tell, please contact us so we can share yours.



“Of all the liars among mankind, the fisherman is the most trustworthy.”

William Sherwood Fox



With Baited Breath, continued

Organizing the syllables needed for each line can be difficult. When I took Pete Seeger's *Old Time Rock and Roll*, making it *Old Time Cane Fishin' Pole*, I found that I had included an extra syllable. This was due equally to the way Pete recorded this song and my towering, but faulty memory. Fortunately, this mistake was discovered just before the debut, and song books were altered by hand.

I created something I call a *Syllablizer*. This is nothing more than an Excel spread sheet. I type a syllable of the original lyrics in each cell and the altered ones in the row below. This also helps with chord placement.

Recognizing the rhyming scheme of the tune you are stealing ... er ... I mean altering, is important. When I wrote the first song, I was more interested in content and storytelling and ignored any sense of rhyming. These patterns can be as simple as A-A, B-B, CC or far more complicated. Often I experience writer's or *rhymers*' block. This is easily remedied with the aid of the Internet. Try a visit to the Rhyme Zone:

www.rhymezone.com/ or do a Google Search by entering "rhyming dictionary online." These tools have saved my bacon and my iambic pentameter on more than one occasion.

The Gift That Keeps on Giving

When I initiated this project, the goal was not just to have a couple of fish songs to sing around a campfire. The goal was for this project to grow, but not from my efforts alone. TPWD and the Stink Bait Band need your contributions. So stop tapping your feet as you listen to the Muzak in the elevator and write some fish tune of your own.

Fish On!

Note: Proposed tunes for inclusion in the *Angler Education Hymnal* should be submitted to Steve Campbell, stephen.campbell@tpwd.state.tx.us

State-Fish Art Contest

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department invites Texas students grades 4 through 12 to enter their best fish art illustration in the State-Fish Art Contest, with winners traveling to Minnesota's Mall of America for the national competition!

The State-Fish Art Contest is part of a conservation education program that uses art as a creative springboard to get students interested in fish while providing lessons about the importance of conserving Texas' aquatic resources. Entries must be postmarked by March 31 to be eligible for judging. Educators can take advantage of a free lesson plan.

For details on the contest, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishart/



This contest is sponsored by Wildlife Forever and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Being a P.A.L.

LARRY CONDRA – Area Chief, Abilene

Even though my breath isn't baited like my good friend Steve Campbell, I'll do my best to bring *Reel Lines* readers up to date with an aquatics education program way out here in West Texas. A little over four years ago, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department awarded us a grant to build an outdoor program that would include aquatic education and chances for youngsters to learn useful skills such as fishing, camping, outdoor cooking, orienteering and the like.

As soon as the funding was confirmed, I contacted TPWD and attended my first class, taught by Steve Campbell on the shores of Joe Pool Lake. Even though I had been fishing for many years and had even dabbled in bass tournament fishing, I was a little unclear as to the best way to teach neophytes, especially young ones. Steve helped, as did the curriculum taught by TPWD.

In the fall of the 2003–2004 school year, the Abilene High School PALS (Peer Assistance & Leadership) took their elementary matches fishing for the first event in the AHS PALS OUTDOOR ADVENTURE program. The 50 AHS PALS took their little buddies fishing over three separate Saturdays in October and November. Our first trip was to Lake Brownwood State Park, and subsequent trips included Abilene State Park until 2007. A former PALS father has a special place on his ranch with good fertile water and fantastic facilities for a special trip. We experienced the best catching ratio of any trip ever.



Thank You, Trey Scott!

We're sending a special note of well wishes to Trey and Merle Scott, who have retired to a farm in Missouri. They have realized their dream and we are very happy for them. But, we miss them, our dear friends and loyal, hardworking volunteers. Thank you for all you have done!

Pictured here is Trey, teaching a youngster how to cast.

It is a lot of work to raise the funds each year to pay for all the expendables: bait, terminal tackle, food, snacks, bus transportation, etc.; but watching the kids as they catch what for many of them is their first fish makes it all worthwhile. I have a cabinet full of pictures of first catches, and the smiles and the sparkling eyes tell the tale. It is also a lot of work and requires enlisting the help of volunteers, both for funding and for their valuable time. Some of our volunteers have been bass club members, Dyess AFB personnel, teachers and Kiwanians.

Fishing can truly be a lifelong passion, and whether we are creating the next superstar on the professional bass angling circuit or not, we are creating in these little ones a pleasant memory of an outdoor activity that they can do with their children one day. Of all the things we do with them (fishing, camping, cooking in the outdoors, orienteering and archery), catching that first fish seems to be the thing that they remember the most.

My goal is not to make these kids proficient at any of the skills we teach them, as we are only able to do each thing one time, and for a short time at that. However, if we can spark an interest in doing things outdoors, such as fishing, camping, exploring, or maybe even hunting (we have added archery this year), I believe we will have helped make this new generation want to participate in outdoor activities and not just be mere spectators.

Texas Bass Brigade

DR. GARY VAN GELDER – Bass Brigade Team Leader

The Texas Bass Brigade needs you! After missing two years, Bass Brigade Youth Leadership Development training will be held July 7–11, 2008, at the LCRA facilities on Lake Buchanan. As a leader in your angling group, you recognize the need for developing fishing advocates and leaders for tomorrow.

You could help Bass Brigade in the following ways:

1. Recruit potential cadets and encouraging them to apply.
2. As a club or organization you can sponsor a qualified cadet.
3. Volunteer to assist with field instruction or to be a mentor chaperone for a group of five cadets.
4. Become a supporter with a cash donation or merchandise-in-kind.

Upon request, a 10-minute Bass Brigade DVD will be mailed to your street address.

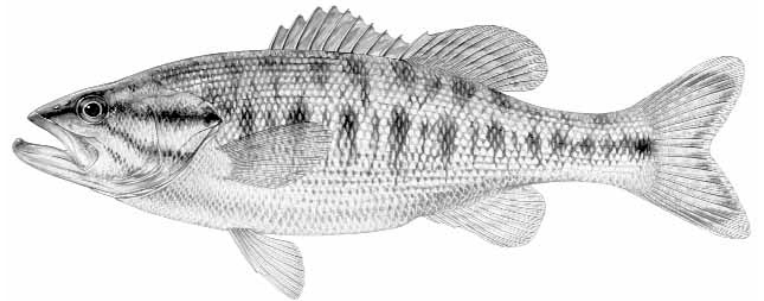
The mission of the Texas Brigades, Bass Brigade's parent organization, is developing tomorrow's outdoor leaders today. At Bass Brigade the curriculum includes bass biology and behavior, the aquatic food chain, habitat, fisheries management, resource conservation, and water

quality and rights. The training model builds leadership, teamwork, presentation development, verbal communication and public speaking skills. Cadets leave camp with a fisheries topic tri-fold poster, a PowerPoint presentation and the self-confidence to present both. Post-training, cadets are expected to use these skills and materials in presentations to their schools and communities.

The Texas Brigades provide unique personal development experiences. Cadets are 13- to 17-year-old males or females with strong academic records and positive attitudes who possess leadership potential, have solid character and are respected by peers and teachers. The development process is focused and intense. Five-year follow-up reveals strong retention of knowledge and skills. Cadets' parents rate the training as superior and life-changing. Words used by cadets to describe the experience include: educational, fascinating, motivating, exhilarating, challenging, unique, awesome, determined, over-powering. Cadet selection is competitive and merit-based.

**Application forms and information are available at
www.texasbrigades.org or call (800) 839-9453.
 Applications are due April 1, 2008.**

Please feel free to call with any questions. Brochures and letters to share with colleagues are available upon request.



Guadalupe Bass Restoration Initiative Gets a Boost

GUY HARRISON – Area Chief, Kerrville

In February of 2007, the contract between Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Federal Fish Hatchery in Uvalde, Texas, was finally consummated. This agreement between the two organizations cleared the way for the Federal Fish Hatchery to raise pure-strain Guadalupe Bass fingerlings in addition to fingerlings that would be raised at the Mountain Home State Fisheries and Research Center.

Around the first of March, 2007, five hundred pairs of Guadalupe Bass fingerlings were brought from Mountain Home to the Uvalde location. With both hatcheries raising fingerlings this year, the number of young fish for release into the Guadalupe River system will be significantly increased.

From late May to late June, around 81,500 pure-strain Guadalupe Bass fingerlings were released in both the North and South Fork of the Guadalupe River and nearby tributary streams. This was a sizable increase in the number of fingerlings released in the river last year. The goal for 2008 is to increase the number of fingerlings released to 125,000.

Brownsville All-Natural Stars Academy: A Perspective on Parent Participation

DR. REYNALDO RAMIREZ – Area Chief, Brownsville

Dr. Rey Ramirez (left) teaches casting.

The Brownsville All-Natural Stars Academy (BANSAs) focused on developing an understanding of environmental science concepts for fourth- and fifth-grade at-risk students. A parent was required to accompany them and participate in all of the academy activities. In late April 2007, I announced to them and their parents that they would be learning how to fish.

We were to meet about every two or three weeks for a year. The group met at Lincoln Park, one of the many parks maintained by the City of Brownsville. Since the beginning of the program a couple of months earlier, we had lost a few of the kids, but I was hoping that announcing that we were going to learn how to fish would make a difference in slowing down attrition. We needed a HOOK!

The kids thought the idea of learning to fish was “cool.” In fact, even one of the few male parents remarked in Spanish, “Ah esto si vengo!” or “To this I will come.” He had been taking turns with his wife to bring their child to the meetings. With that, I was pretty confident that at least one child would show up.

It is true; they were coming to learn how to fish. However, I had a hidden agenda as well. The real reason for attending was to get them to learn about the interactions that occur in aquatic environments. Oh, yes! And we wanted all of them to return a couple of weeks later.

The day finally came. The kids and parents showed up. Even the parent who said he would be there, was there. Fathers are sometimes the hardest parent to convince to bring their child to a learning camp. This parent was ready.

My assistants were students from my graduate science education class. Some of them are Angler Education instructors. If they weren't then, they will be soon. Each of them will attend an Angler Education instructor course in early February.

We covered the basic angler skills—identifying tackle, rigging it, and identifying natural and artificial baits. All these skills are fine, but those of you who have conducted angler classes know that you have to get to the casting games right away.

We were at the casting field within the first 30 minutes. There we reinforced the parts of the rod and were able to demonstrate different fishing outfits. They seemed just as excited catching plastic bass as if they were the real thing. In some ways, the plastic bass provide a better opportunity to be successful and show off their catch than if the kids were fishing in a pond. We photographed and gave each child a prize to document their successful catch. It was amazing to see parents involved and competing alongside their child. They loved the photographs, too.



After they returned to the outdoor classroom, they talked about different habitats and how fish use different strategies to look for food. Both children and parents learned about the ethical behavior that anglers should follow.

With their children at their side, it was going to be very difficult for any parent to take extra fish. We're even hoping that all have realized the importance of and appropriateness of “catch and release.” The children and their parent partner learned the value of wildlife and fisheries management. However, the value of this project extends even further.

The value of the angler education activities was directed to three groups. First, the children were involved in learning about science concepts that are not typical of most classrooms. Secondly, we hope that by having the parents come with the child, they will take their kids fishing, as well as take an interest in their children's education. And finally, the participating teachers can see first-hand the value of taking children outdoors to develop environmental skills, knowledge and values.

By the way, the parent that was excited about fishing also became excited about birds, butterflies, stars, and all of nature, and both parents came to all the activities.

As a special note, we are very thankful to the Shell Oil Company, which provided the funding through a mini-grant from the Texas Regional Collaborative for Excellence in Science Teaching. The academy activities were designed and implemented by graduate students involved in a masters program in curriculum and instruction at UT-Brownsville, and without their involvement, this project would not have been possible.

Dr. Ramirez is the Project Director for the Texas Regional Collaborative for Excellence in Science Teaching at the University of Texas at Brownsville and a TPWD Angler Education Area Chief. If you want more information about the Texas Regional Collaborative, visit www.theTRC.org.

Peacock Nymph

GUY HARRISON – Area Chief, Kerrville

The Peacock Nymph is one of the most productive patterns that I have used for taking trout stocked in Hill Country streams during the winter months. It may be used as an individual pattern or in combination with another fly.

In the summer months, I have used it as a dropper attached to a grasshopper pattern and have taken in many large sunfish.

Materials Required

Hook:	Mustard 3906B, or 9672 sizes 8 to 14
Thread:	Black
Body:	Peacock herls, green crystal flash
Ribbing:	Fine copper or gold wire
Hackle:	Brown or furnace for and aft
Head:	Thread

Tying Instructions

1. Place hook in vise and wrap hook shank with thread and lead wire (five to eight wraps at mid shank).
2. Wrap thread to bend of hook and tie in hackle (tail position). Take only three or four turns of hackle and tie off.
3. Tie in ribbing just in front of hackle, then tie in three or four peacock herls and one piece of green crystal flash. Advance thread to slightly behind the eye.
4. Starting just in front of the hackle, twist the peacock herls together with the strand of crystal flash into a rope. Wrap the herl-crystal flash rope forward to 1/10 of an inch from the hook eye and tie off.
5. Wrap the copper or gold wire with reverse wraps forward to create segments and tie off even with the peacock herl rope.
6. Tie in another brown or furnace hackle at the base of the peacock herl rope and take three for four tight turns forward, and then tie off. Create a nice cone-shaped thread head behind the eye. Secure the thread head with a whip finish and apply a coating of head cement. Your fly is tied.



To Be Finned or Not to Be Finned

DAVID NEYSES – Fishing Event Coordinator, Huntsville State Park

This catfish teaching aid was developed to help folks learn how simple it is to safely hold a catfish (for both the fish and the angler) while removing the hook.

Punch three small holes in a water bottle with a small diameter nail (see the photo). Make sure the nail is small so that the pipe cleaners will be snug. Insert pipe cleaners through the holes. For additional stability, hot-glue the three “fins” where they exit the bottle. Where the two pipe cleaners touch inside the bottle, go in quickly through the bottle opening with a dot of glue on a pencil (or something else long) to glue the two pipe cleaners together. Tape narrowly cut strips of paper to the end of the bottle to replicate the “whiskers” and get a little laugh.



Jerry Vaughan's Rod Holder



Materials

1x6 or 2x6 board at least 3 feet long

3/4" dry wall screws (number will vary according to number of rods)

1 package spring-loaded clothespins

Instructions

1. After deciding how many rods are to be held (which determines the length of the board), place the board flat on a working surface and mark the placement of each clothespin allowing 3" between each clothespin and allowing the notched portion of the clothespin to hang over the edge of the board.
2. Lay the clothespin on its side and mount it by running the screw in the coiled portion of the clothespin (only run the screw in enough to hold, not tight on the clothespin). The clothespin should turn freely.
3. Once the clothespins are mounted, the board may be placed on a table or tailgate of a pickup. Once there, the fishing rods are held by the notch on the clothespin and the handles of the rods rest on the ground.



Normally I set the table close to the sign-in table so that as folks sign in they can be directed to the rods and serve themselves. The rods stay orderly and untangled.

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center News

It has been over six months since the Richard M. Hart and Johnny Morris Conservation Center was completed. We were awarded the Sport Fish Restoration Award for Aquatic Education presented by the American Fisheries Society's Fisheries Administrators Section for expanded aquatic education opportunities made possible by the new center.

Again this year, TFFC will host the Texas State-Fish Art contest with winners going to Wildlife Forever's national contest in Minnesota. Every Texas entrant will receive a fishing lure from Strike King Lure Company. In addition, the Toyota Texas Bass Classic Foundation will provide funding for prizes for Texas winners, and for travel expenses for Texas winners and their chaperones to the national expo at the Mall of America in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in July 2008. The Foundation also funds a traveling exhibit (in preparation) featuring the amazing artwork of the contestants.

The Trinity River Project, a collaboration with the Texas Wildlife Association, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Trinity River Authority, Texas Extension Service and two schools in the Trinity watershed successfully concluded with a visit to TFFC and a Web conference between the schools in which they were able to share the data they collected at two study sites, one rural and one urban. The goal is to raise awareness of the importance of water, the impacts that human activities have on water, and the role that land management activities play in the quality and quantity of water supplies. Plans are for this pilot project to be expanded to other schools in the Trinity watershed.



Our partnership with Stephen F. Austin State University continues to grow and mature. The annual Wetland Adventure this year involved 90 SFASU preservice teachers and 570 students in hands-on, minds-on activities in our wetland. We continue to progress in our five-year comprehensive interpretive plan. New graphics are on the drawing board for our wetland trail walk and aquaria. An interactive young child discovery area funded by a grant from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is being readied for the spring.

TFFC EVENT SCHEDULE

January–February 2008	Rainbow Trout Harvest	Catch and keep rainbow trout at the Center's 1.5-acre fishing pond. No fishing license or trout stamp needed. Regular entrance fee plus \$5 for the opportunity to harvest five fish per person. No minimum size limit. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. (903) 676-BASS.
March 8, 2008	Fly-Fish Texas	Join fly-fishing experts from around Texas and beyond to learn everything from the basics of fly-tying and casting to how to fish all kinds of waters from mountain streams to coastal bays. Come prepared to wrap your hands around a fly rod, tie a woolly booger, paddle a kayak and learn about the latest gear and techniques. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Free with admission to the center. For more information, call (903) 670-2222. (903) 676-BASS.
April 5, 2008	Outdoor Fools Day	Learn outdoor skills and get hands-on experience in a variety of areas—camping, fishing, birding, hunting and boating. Representatives of various divisions of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, outdoor businesses and conservation organizations will be on hand to help you get ready to see it's true: Life's Better Outside. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Free with admission to Center. For more information, call (903) 670-2222. (903) 676-BASS.
May 3, 2008	Cinco De Mayo	Celebrate the joint heritage of Texas and Mexico with food, games, music and more. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. (903) 676-BASS.
June 7, 2008	Free Fishing Day	Celebrate the start of National Fishing Week with free fishing at TFFC. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Regular admission to the Center will be charged. For more information, call (903) 676-BASS.

State Parks Offer Great Fishing, Family Events and Volunteer Opportunities

State parks have some awesome events scheduled for this spring and summer, all organized by Fishing Event Coordinators that are part of our Angler Education family. See the schedule below (and contact information) if you would like to volunteer to help at one or more of these events. And, don't forget that you don't need a license to fish within the boundaries of a state park! The fishing can be awesome!



PARK	DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION	PARK	DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION
Eisenhower stevehollensed@texoma.net	1/26	Texoma Tie-In	Galveston Island davemurph07@yahoo.com	4/12	Family Fishing Fun Program
	4/19	Basic Fishing Class		5/17	Family Fishing Fun Program
	5/3	Youth Fishing Derby		6/21	Advanced Fishing Program
	6/7	Youth Fishing Derby		7/19	Family Fishing Picnic
	6/21	Texoma On the Fly			
	7/12	Youth Fishing Derby			
Bonham don.mccommas@us.army.mil	4/19	Jr. Angler Fishing Program	Blanco cathrin@cathringaida.com	3/15	Family Fishing Day
	5/10	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		6/7	Family Fishing Day
	5/24	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		6/15	Father's Day Fish
	6/14	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		6/21	Family Fishing Day
	6/24	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		6/18	Full Moon Fish
				7/5	Family Fishing Day
Bastrop bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu	6/14	Jr. Angler Fishing Program	McKinney Falls lroberts12@austin.rr.com	7/18	Full Moon Fish
	7/19	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		7/19	Family Fishing Day
Buescher bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu	3/19	Jr. Angler Fishing Program	Ray Roberts Lake jerry.vaughan@tpwd.state.tx.us	3/29	Family Fishing Fun Day
	6/7	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		4/26	Fishapalooza
	7/12	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		6/14	Daddy and Me Fishing Day
	8/7	Jr. Angler Fishing Program		7/26	Family Fishing Fun Day
Palmetto fishpalmettopark@sbcglobal.net	3/29	Family Fishing Fun Program	Tyler gdebenport@yahoo.com	3/15	Fish "On" at Lake Ray Roberts
	4/26	Family Fishing Fun Program		4/19	Fish "On" at Lake Ray Roberts
	5/24	Family Fishing Fun Program		5/17	Fish "On" at Lake Ray Roberts
		6/21		Fish "On" at Lake Ray Roberts	
		8/2		Fish "On" at Lake Ray Roberts	
Huntsville proudamerican@att.net	3/15	Learn to Fish Program	Tyler gdebenport@yahoo.com	2/8	Trout Fishing Clinic
	4/12	Learn to Fish Program		6/7	Kid's Fishing Derby
	5/3	Learn to Fish Program		6/12	Kid's Shore Fishing Clinic
	6/21	Learn to Fish Program		7/17	Kid's Shore Fishing Clinic
	9/13	Advanced Fishing Program		7/31	Kid's Fishing Clinic - Boat Fishing
	10/11	Learn to Fish Program		8/14	Kid's Shore Fishing Clinic
		8/16	Kid's Fishing Clinic - Boat Fishing		

Lessons Learned

ROBIN KOLTON – Area Chief, Austin

While fishing at Kentucky Lake, Kentucky, as a co-angler with the Women's Bassmaster Tour, I learned some valuable lessons and thought I would share my insights to hopefully prevent the same situations from happening to you.

Day One Lesson:

Live Wells – When you have fish in the live wells, check them often. I had a bass in the live well with the recirculation pump running. I checked the fish ever so often. It had been about 45 minutes since I had checked on the bass, so I lifted the lid to the live well, and the live well was bone dry. Needless to say, my fish had met with an untimely death.

The live well switches were in the correct position, the plugs were in place, and it is a mystery as to why the water drained out of the live well. During the weigh-in I lost .4 ounces due to penalties. So in the future, please pay attention to the water level and ensure that the live well is always working – LESSON LEARNED.



Day Two Lesson:

Crank Baits – When reeling in a crank bait, keep your rod tip down. A few feet before you reach the boat, pick up your rod tip, keep it extended up and pull the crank bait up at a direct vertical retrieve. I was watching Robin Babb of Livingston, Texas, retrieve her lure this way and was wondering why. A few minutes later I figured it out; I was reeling in my DD22 crank bait with my rod tip down and reeling it to the edge of the boat before lifting it out of the water. A very large smallmouth had followed my lure to the boat and did a quick U-turn upon seeing the boat. If I had been reeling up at a vertical direction at the end of the retrieve, I would have seen the smallmouth sooner and would have been able to stop the retrieve, and the smallmouth might have engaged the lure. I would possibly have had about a three-pound smallmouth in the live well instead of watching it swim away – LESSON LEARNED.

Stay tuned for more Lessons Learned.

A \$50,000 FISH

It was Labor Day, the very last day of the Coastal Conservation Association's State of Texas Angler's Rodeo, and seven-year-old Ben Ibarra decided that there must be at least one more large fish to be caught.

He wasn't wrong.

Fishing with dead shrimp, he landed an 8-pound, 14-ounce sheepshead, winning a \$50,000 college scholarship. Ben's fish overtook his closest rival, his 10-year-old sister Emily, taking her out of first place.

Ben, a Baytown resident, wants to use his scholarship to attend Lee College and become a TPWD game warden.

He claimed that his fish lost some weight by the time he made weigh-in, about 4 ounces to be precise.

We're sure that in the coming days, or years, with the retelling of the story of the one that didn't get away, Ben's fish may be able to regain some of its lost weight.

Ben's sister, Emily, didn't go home empty-handed as runner-up. She took home a \$500 gift certificate from Academy Sports and Outdoors. However, she did admit to shedding a few tears after Ben turned in a heavier stringer.

There's no crying in fishing, is there?

Condensed from a story appearing in the *Baytown Sun*, Sept. 12, 2007, "Baytown Angler Capture \$50,000 Scholarship" by Michael Pineda.

Welcome, New Instructors!

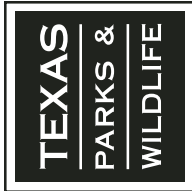
June-December, 2007

We encourage you to team up to teach. It's fun, easier, and a great way to support each other.

Just call the Austin office if you would like to team up with one of these new instructors.

If we have accidentally left someone off, please let us know.

ODAM, BILLY	ADKINS	SNELSON, KENNETH	EL PASO	FLATT, CLINT	MEXIA
VERNON, JOHN	ALEDO	WALP, LARRY	EL PASO	ECKOLS, THOMAS	MISSOURI CITY
DAY, TONY	ALLEN	WREN, SAMMIE	EL PASO	FREY III, HOWARD	NEW CANEY
BARBER, BRITTNEY	ALVIN	CUEVAS III, GUADALUPE	ELMENDORF	STEGALL, JOSH	OMAHA
SPARKS, JERRY	ALVIN	RAMIREZ, ROXANNE	FLOWER MOUND	BUMGUARDNER, KATHY	PALACIOS
WITTMER, CHARLES	ALVORD	HAERTLING, RICHARD	FORT WORTH	ERDELT, MARY KATHRYN	PALACIOS
DEGRANT, GREGORY	ARLINGTON	HENRY, AMY	FORT WORTH	FIGIROVA, MARISOL	PALACIOS
HANKINS, MARK	ARLINGTON	HOOT, WILLIAM	FORT WORTH	HARTER, SHARON	PALACIOS
JACOBSON, KEVIN	ARLINGTON	KAHLE, BRIAN	FORT WORTH	HUNTER, PAULETTE	PALACIOS
MIMS, RANDALL	ARLINGTON	MYERS, ROWDY	FORT WORTH	TODD, LISTON	PALACIOS
ALBORNOZ, FERNANDO	AUSTIN	PEAK, MARK	FORT WORTH	HOGAN, MELINDA	PAMPA
BURDICK, PAGE	AUSTIN	RICHARDS, SEAN	FORT WORTH	JIMENEZ, LAWRENCE	PASADENA
CAMPBELL, SCOTT	AUSTIN	TRAVIS, MARK	FORT WORTH	TANNER, TERRY	PORTER
CASTANEDA, ALBARO	AUSTIN	DEAN, NIGEL	FRIENDSWOOD	DICKSON, HEATHER	RICHMOND
CERVANTES, SARAH	AUSTIN	DONNELLY, JOHN	GALVESTON	KEY, DAVID	SAGINAW
DOUGLAS, ERIN	AUSTIN	DONNELLY, MARY HELEN	GALVESTON	AMBROSE, AUDREY	SAN ANTONIO
DUCK, JOE	AUSTIN	WILCOX-HINDMARCH, SIERRA	GALVESTON	BROWNING, JOE	SAN ANTONIO
JONES, NATHAN	AUSTIN	PRICE, ROBERT	GRANBURY	BURRUEL, AMANDA	SAN ANTONIO
KAISER, JOSHUA	AUSTIN	MOEHRING, JONATHAN	GRAND PRAIRIE	BUSTOS, NICHOLAS	SAN ANTONIO
LOPEZ, CARLOS	AUSTIN	BROWN, CHESLEY	GRANDBURY	DE LA ROSA, JORGE	SAN ANTONIO
LOPEZ, RAY	AUSTIN	FRY, JARED	GRAPEVINE	EMERSON, NICHOLAS	SAN ANTONIO
MALDONADO, CHRISTOPHER	AUSTIN	KASHNER, JENNIFER	GRAPEVINE	FRAGA, FERMIN	SAN ANTONIO
PATTON, TIMICA	AUSTIN	DREW, MICHAEL	HARPER	GARIBAY JR, PETE	SAN ANTONIO
PETTIGREW, LOUISE	AUSTIN	CALLAHAN, THOMAS	HONDO	GUERRERO, JOSE	SAN ANTONIO
POND, ADRIENNE	AUSTIN	TATSCH JR, TIMOTHY	HONDO	GUIDRY, CHRISTOPHER	SAN ANTONIO
RICICAR, JULIA	AUSTIN	ADKINS, ROBERT	HOUSTON	JAMES, JACQUELYN	SAN ANTONIO
STEED, KASEY	AUSTIN	CUNNINGHAM, MOLLY	HOUSTON	LENNOX JR, LYNN	SAN ANTONIO
STENNETT, CORI	AUSTIN	GRUEN, RICHARD	HOUSTON	ORTIZ, ARTURO "ART"	SAN ANTONIO
DESHAZO, JACK	AZLE	JONES, DONNELL	HOUSTON	RUIZ, ANGELITA	SAN ANTONIO
JENSEN, FRANKLIN (JOE)	BASTROP	TERRELL, DAMARCUS	HOUSTON	SALINAS, JR, MIKE	SAN ANTONIO
JUREK, TIFFANY	BAY CITY	TRAHAN, SHAUN	HOUSTON	TELZROW, JENNIFER	SAN ANTONIO
EVANS, RODNEY	BAYTOWN	WATSON JR, HOWARD	HOUSTON	VELA, MANUEL	SAN ANTONIO
PURGAHN, MICHAEL	BAYTOWN	WILLIAMS, TERRANCE	HOUSTON	POON, CHI	SAN MARCOS
SPIVEY, J. TODD	BELTON	FELTZ, JIM	JACKSBORO	BELL, GARY	SEABROOK
ARCHER, DALE	BLACKWELL	FLORES, GERALD	JOSHUA	NIX, TRACY	SEAGOVILLE
CLARKE, WILLIAM	BRAZORIA	GEBAUER, TIMOTHY	KATY	REYNOLDS, RUSSELL	SHADY SHORES
MOSES, TIMOTHY	BRAZORIA	SCANLAN, RUSSELL	KATY	TOMLINSON, JEFF	SHERMAN
SHIELDS, JAMES	BRAZORIA	DENNEY, SCOTT	KELLER	HOWLETT, ANITA	SPRING
PFEIL, RICHARD	BRYAN	JOHNSTON, BARRY	KELLER	HOWLETT, MICHAEL	SPRING
TEDRICK, CHARLES	BRYAN	KELLY, ANDREW	KELLER	HUMBIRD, SHEENA	SPRING
HEDRICK, MICHAEL	CHICO	LONG, RICHARD	KELLER	PARKS, MONTE	SPRING
SNYDER, JAMES	CLUTE	ABERNATHY, MATTHEW	KINGWOOD	PIRKLE, JOHN	SPRING
MORRIS, CHRISTI	COLLEGE STATION	FRY, KAYLEN	KINGWOOD	WILLIS, HARVEY	STAFFORD
PATTERSON, FRED	COLLEGE STATION	SAMFORD, CARTER	LA PORTE	KESSLER, SKIPPER	SWEENEY
YESTER, TOM	COPPERAS COVE	MAVRIS, JOHN	LAKE JACKSON	BRUNELL, CHRISTOPHER	TEMPLE
HARGROVE, AMANDA	CUERO	MOORE SR, NATHANIEL	LAKE JACKSON	MAREK, WILTON	TEMPLE
KIRWAN, STEVE	DALLAS	MORRIS, THOMAS (TOM)	LAKE JACKSON	ALLEN, BRENDA	TEXAS CITY
WINGER, TIM	DALLAS	AVEY, LINDA	LAKEHILLS	SCALF, JOHN	TEXAS CITY
YANDA, MARK	DALLAS	YARRISON, MICKI	LAKEHILLS	SCALF, ROGER	TEXAS CITY
LEDoux, MICHELLE	DEER PARK	VALLE, ANTONIO	LEAGUE CITY	HAMON, GERALD	VAN ALSTYNE
MARTINEZ, OSCAR	DEER PARK	VASILIAUSKAS, BYRON	LEWISVILLE	SLAVIK, DEBORAH	WACO
SPANNAGEL, RUSTY	DEVINE	VILLALPANDO, MICHELLE	MARTINDALE	SLAVIK, WILLIAM	WACO
BURCIAGA, RAMIRO	EL PASO	HADLEY, CHARLES	MC KINNEY	MCPHERSON, RICKY	WATAUGA
BUTLER, NORA	EL PASO	JANCO, JOHN	MC KINNEY	JOHNSON, JERRY	WEST COLUMBIA
DE LA ROSA, FRANK	EL PASO	JANCO, MARY	MC KINNEY	JOHNSON, LORRAINE	WEST COLUMBIA
HERNANDEZ, JUAN	EL PASO	BEAMSLEY, RODNEY	MCCALLEN		
OLVERA, SIMON	EL PASO	KELLER, PATRICK	MESQUITE		



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