I began my career with the Travis County Sheriff’s Office on June 25, 1980. I had applied with the Sheriff’s Office after having been a Military Police Investigator at Ft. Hood, a patrolman and narcotics detective with the Copperas Cove Police Department, and a Sergeant Investigator with the Burnet County Sheriff’s Office. The Travis County Sheriff at the time was Raymond Frank, and I think the number of total employees for the Sheriff’s Office was in the neighborhood of 300. Sheriff Frank, “the Sheriff who shoots straight,” as his slogan went, would interview each new employee personally. After several cancelled appointments, I finally was able to meet with the Sheriff and my interview consisted of him reviewing my application and stating “I’ll give you a try” and that was it.

The starting salary for a patrol deputy at the time was $900/month, which was a big pay raise from what I had previously been paid. My first issue uniforms had been previously worn and had iron-on patches to cover the holes in the pants, and tears in the shirts had to be mended. The issued handgun at the time was a Smith & Wesson, .357-caliber revolver, that had been chrome-
Annually, the Travis County Sheriff’s Office (TCSO) meets with the Travis County Commissioner’s Court to substantiate and to quantify existing programs, as well as to demonstrate the need for proposed budgetary increases. Throughout this process it is important that we all remember that the TCSO is one of numerous departments/agencies which provide a valuable service to the citizens of Travis County. In the end, it is a laborious responsibility of the Travis County Commissioner’s Court to determine appropriate and necessary funding for Travis County and our responsibility to move forward and be productive, as well as accountable with the funding provided.

So, as we embark on the new fiscal year it is critical to revisit the Travis County Sheriff’s Office (TCSO) Mission, Vision, and Values, specifically Full Accountability: Being answerable and responsible for our actions; moreover, how we embody TCSO.

In order for us to continue building community trust, in addition to augmenting transparency for our agency, it is our obligation that we all be accountable. This mission is a two-prong approach; to be accountable is to take responsibility for our own personal actions on and off the job, as well as to step-out and guarantee our service as a public servant. Without full accountability the agency fails to function effectively and efficiently. As public servants it is imperative that every employee take ownership for his or her actions, but it is also extremely important that a clear course of action be communicated so that success can be achieved.

I believe TCSO is a 100-percent working agency, but also I recognize, that at times, not all TCSO employees believe in the direction of the agency. Not agreeing with the direction is not flawed in nature. However, it is essential that the employee take full responsibility by conveying their concerns with productive suggestions and not with detrimental actions. Productive suggestions could, at the conclusion, prove to be for the greater good of the agency. Nevertheless, in the end, it is of the essence that the employee be productive and accountable to their upmost ability while executing their final assignment; this action will enhance the agency’s Mission - being committed to professionalism, partnership and community.

Ultimately, we must remember that minimally, everyone must accept responsibility for their own decisions, shortcomings or mistakes; not find fault or shift blame to others, and readily assume full accountability for the actions of the group or subordinates.

In closing, I look forward to the year ahead as we all serve the citizens of Travis County with full accountability and innovative proposals.
Sheriff’s Office sponsors food drive to benefit Capital Area Food Bank

There are many needy families and individuals in our community that go without proper food due to a variety of factors including low wages, job loss, injuries, illness, age, domestic violence or divorce. While all of us are susceptible to hard times, children and the elderly are at the most risk.

From July 21 through August 10, 2008, the Sheriff’s Office sponsored a food drive to benefit the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). With the TCSO’s generous support the donations will provide 5,015 meals to deserving families and individuals in our community, which equates to 1,862 pounds of food and $705. An extra accolade goes out to Warehouse/Facilities Officers Matt Yarborough and Terry Burns who were assigned the auxiliary duty of assuring the collections were delivered to the CAFB weekly, and maintaining a running count of the total donated. Officers Yarborough and Burns went above and beyond expectations and encouraged their section to ultimately donate 1,027 pounds of food and $470. A big “thank you” to all who donated!

In this issue ...

BPOC Graduation 4  
Training Survey 5  
TCSO Recipe 6  
Agency Wellness 9  
Operation SOS 11  
Employee Profile 24

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

On July 30, one of my bus drivers became aware that she was being followed by a pick-up truck. She observed that the other vehicle was being operated in an unsafe manner, i.e. running stop signs and tailgating her. At this time she requested our dispatch center to seek assistance from the Travis County Sheriff’s Office. Sergeant Frank Lofton, Senior Deputy Henry Schuessler and Deputy Daniel Lincoln responded in a very timely manner and handled a hearing-impaired, extremely confused, young lady in a very professional manner. After the situation concluded, Sergeant Lofton made telephone contact with my driver and explained the outcome of the call. I would like to thank and commend these officers who, in my opinion took care of a situation that could have had resulted in injury to the young lady or someone else.

Sincerely yours,
Kirby Campbell
Leander Independent School District

The Five Point Press

Editor
Managing Editor
Graphic Designer
Kelly Page
Jeannie Maldonado
Carrie Fortner

Thanks to these employees who contributed articles, pictures and ideas:

Florence Bizemana
Lisa Brown
Bennie Cureton
Joel Delabousaye
Nicole Durand
Joe Flores
Lisa Glatt
Kabery Harris
Tracy Hill-Borzy
Jerry Kovar
Josie Matthais
Jamie Page
Mark Sawa
Leah Stubbs
Carri Turner
Roger Wade
Janie Whisenant
Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

I am writing to commend one of your deputies, **Senior Deputy Christopher Douglas**. On Aug. 9, I was registered in the Holiday Inn at I-35 and Wells Branch Parkway. In the early evening there was a disturbance at the hotel involving guests and hotel employees. I was not involved, but had the opportunity to observe **Deputy Douglas** deal with the situation. His demeanor was nothing short of excellent. He was very courteous and confident in his manner. Before he left, all parties were satisfied and the disturbance was settled.

Since my company is having serious theft problems in Austin and Travis County, I stopped **Deputy Douglas** as he was leaving. He appeared to be interested in our problem, asked for additional information, and promised to do what he could to help us. He asked all the right questions and his knowledge of the law was obvious. Most importantly, he seemed genuinely concerned about my circumstance. This is the mark of a good officer in my opinion.

**Deputy Douglas** is obviously a good officer, a credit to your department, and Travis County. The citizens of your county are lucky to have him on the job.

Sincerely,
Larry Findley
Corporate Security
Griffin Industries, Inc.
Staff says they want formal training program for all supervisors

By Lieutenant Jamie Page
Training Academy

Sheriff Greg Hamilton and Dr. Barry Bales, Ph.D., an assistant Dean for Professional Development at the LBJ School of Public Affairs - UT at Austin met with Major Mark Sawa, Captain Art Cardenas and me this past May to discuss the development of a “Leadership Academy” for the Sheriff’s Office. It was decided to use the Training Academy as the vehicle to create an agency-wide survey to help develop this endeavor.

A leadership survey that would solicit valuable input from all employees was created by the Training Academy in July. Carrie Fortner, Community Liaison, assisted in the survey design and format. Fortner was able to deliver the leadership survey to our agency electronically on Aug. 1.

The survey was made available for all employees to participate for a three-week period. During this time, we received more than 600 responses. Survey responses were tabulated and will be used in conjunction with the LBJ School of Public Affairs to help develop Sheriff Hamilton’s “Leadership Academy” for all Sheriff’s Office employees (this will be a new course and is not to be confused with Introduction to Supervision).

“Survey Says”
(Richard Dawson-Family Feud ’76-’85)
■ 93-percent believed a “Leadership Academy” would benefit their careers.
■ 69-percent wanted the “Leadership Academy” open to all employees.

Ten leadership topics were presented to all survey respondents to rank in order of importance. The top three survey results were
■ Understanding FTO Programs
■ Labor Law
■ Communications Across Cultural Lines

A second set of leadership topics were presented to current supervisors to rank in order of importance. The top three survey results were:
■ Understanding Wellness
■ Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
■ Understanding Budgets & Expenditures

The final survey question asked all respondents who should primarily instruct at the “Leadership Academy.” Subject-Matter Experts (SME) with Law Enforcement and/or Corrections experience was the overwhelming survey choice. Sergeants and above came in a distant second.

Employees interested in reviewing the entire survey summary and survey comments may go the Everyone drive (Q:drive), click on the “Training” folder and scroll down to PDF files “Survey Summary” and “Survey Comments.” Survey results have been forwarded to Dr. Bales for his review. I will keep everyone up to date when noteworthy developments occur.

Employee Input

A TCSheriff email has been sent asking for employee input to increase and enhance the use of resources (people, technology, programs, and equipment) for efficiency and effectiveness. Please visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/saspc8m=56w17Kls01R7cEhCWONA_3d_3d
Range structure complete, plans made for opening

The near-completed Range, which is on the northwest corner of the Travis County Correctional Complex, adjacent to the Training Academy.

TCSO Recipe: Breakfast Crescent

2 cans Pillsbury Crescent Rolls
2 8-oz. pkgs. Philadelphia Cream Cheese
1 stick Butter
1 ¼ cups Sugar
1 tsp. Vanilla
1 tbsp. Cinnamon

Lay 1 can of Crescent rolls in the bottom of a 9x13 pan. Mix cream cheese, 1 cup sugar and vanilla together. Pour on top of Crescent. Lay the other can of Crescent roll dough on top of Cream cheese mixture. Melt Butter and pour on top. Mix ¼ cup of sugar and Cinnamon together and sprinkle on top of Crescent dough. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-45 minutes.

Submitted by Janie Whisenant, HR Specialist I

Photo by Carrie Fortner

Although the construction of the structure is complete, there are still some finishing touches that need to take place before we will be up and running for training and qualifications.

Currently, the Range is in a restricted portion of the complex, and it is not permissible to drive to the Range at the current time. Notification regarding scheduling of training and qualifications, to include Range Operational Protocol, Safety Protocol and the dates and times of the Grand Opening will be made via TCSheriff email by the Training Academy.

By Major Mark Sawa
Administrative & Support

TSCO named ‘Best of Austin’

Sheriff Greg Hamilton and the Travis County Sheriff’s Office were named “Best Law-Abiding Law Enforcers.” According to the Austin Chronicle, “Under newly-enacted House Bill 2391, Sheriff Hamilton and TCSO have speedily implemented the cite-and-release law for various misdemeanors, thereby saving citizens unnecessary jail time and the taxpayers mucho administrative and incarceration dollars. We applaud the county forces for understanding the importance of the law and applaud their willingness to take appropriate action.”
Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

On behalf of Eanes ISD, I would like to recognize and thank the Travis County Sheriff’s Office for the assistance provided during the operation of the Eanes ISD hurricane evacuation shelters. Your agency’s efforts were truly above and beyond the scope of routine job duties, and were greatly appreciated. We could not have successfully run a shelter without a true team effort.

In a trying situation such as this one, a community-wide effort truly makes a difference. The Westlake community was a wonderful host for these evacuees for which they were very grateful. In fact, the group at Westlake High School gave us a letter before they departed stating, in part, “As a displaced people, you have shown us great courtesy, respect for God’s love, and for this we thank God for the hope and love of human kindness.” We know the evacuees have a long road ahead of them rebuilding their lives. We all wish them the best in the coming months.

Thank you again for your willingness to go the extra mile by supporting our school district in a challenging situation.

Sincerely,
Nola H. Wellman, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Eanes Independent School District

---

Turner, Stanley take top honors at TPF K-9 Games

Senior Deputy Brian Turner and his partner, Falco (pictured above), recently achieved a Tactical Gold Medal at the Texas Police Athletic Association games. Senior Certified Peace Officer Michael Stanley, and his partner, Hutch were awarded a Gold Medal in Obedience.

Family News

Emma Dugger King, mother of Dunson King, celebrated her 100th birthday, Aug. 13. She was born in Travis County, attended local schools and worked at the Texas Highway Department. She resigned in 1935 to marry Dunson King Sr., her husband of 66 years. She has been a member of Hyde Park United Methodist Church since 1921.

Mary Loryn Briceño was born Aug. 5, 2008, 7 lbs. and 19 1/2 inches long, to Ben and Florence Briceño.

Congratulations to grandparents, Sergeant Tommy Wooley and his wife, Beth. Baby boy Bowen L. Pannell was born July 3, weighing 6 lbs, 15 oz.

Congratulations to Deputy Steven Robles and his wife on the birth of their new son. He weighed 7 lbs. 6 oz., and 20 inches long.

Congratulations to mother, Mai Dang, Accountant Associate, on the birth her son, Elijah Tran, weighing 6 lbs. 1 oz. and 19 1/2 inches long.
First Row, left to right: Lieutenant Jamie Page, Captain Art Cardenas, Major Mark Sawa, Chief Jim Sylvester, Sheriff Greg Hamilton, Major Darren Long, Captain Bennie Cureton and Captain Cyril Friday. Middle Row, left to right: Sergeant William Poole, Officer Nolan Nurse, Officer Juan Alvarez, Officer Craig Davis, Officer Elizabeth Flores, Officer Joseph Lawless, Officer Russell Jones, Officer David Kuhlman and Detective Greg Lawson (guest speaker). Top Row, left to right: Officer James Traynor, Officer Roland Villarreal, Officer Julio Ramos, Officer Joshua Farmer, Officer Tamara Brown, Officer Sara Whitethorn and Senior Certified Peace Officer Victor Moreno.
Better mind, body and soul leads to Wellness

By Captain Bennie Cureton
Travis County Correctional Complex

Wellness and can keep track of it on the United Healthcare's Web page. Now, let’s delve into the different areas of Wellness.

The Mind
Our thoughts generally direct us to do, to be or to have something. Improving our thoughts is a good way to improve our Wellness. Remember the old saying “Knowledge is Power.” If you do not believe this, then just ask those officers who finished on the Top Ten of the promotional list this year. They had to focus their thoughts on their goals spending the time to gain the knowledge in several different areas to make it to the top. The Sheriff is a firm believer in training and has brought in several sensational trainers, some at his own expense, to help get the supervisors of this agency thinking as professionals and working toward the same goals using the same basic leadership principles.

The Soul
We all have this little voice inside us giving us direction. I believe that our connection to God can be weakened or strengthened by how we develop this insight. I also believe that we have free will and can choose to listen or not. It is kind of like the cartoons I used to watch when I was younger where there is an angel sitting on each shoulder. One is giving you good advice and the other is giving you bad. If one is stronger than the other (has been developed more) then we are more likely to listen to that advice

See WELLNESS, Page 19
Lofton arrested for ‘big heart’ in MDA Lock Up

On Sept. 5, Sergeant Frank Lofton accepted the challenge and agreed to be “arrested” for having a “big heart” in the fun, Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) Lock-Up. MDA is a National agency dedicated to conquering more than 40 diseases that affect a million Americans of all ages.

Without hesitation, Sergeant Lofton sent word out to his co-workers, friends and those he knew in the community to help raise funds. His original goal was $2,000. On Oct. 15, he was locked up at the Pasta House Restaurant on RR 620 and had to pay bail to be released. All donations given in on his behalf totaled more than $2,400; this total more than exceeded his goal, which secured his release, allowing him to return to work.

We are proud that with the help of West Command and others, Sergeant Lofton not only met his goal of $2,000, but surpassed it! Sergeant Lofton’s hard work will provide help and hope to kids and adults served by MDA in our community.

Listed below are some of the services and costs associated with MDA:

- $85 - Funds One Minute of Research
- $100 - Support Group Session
- $800 - Send one child to MDA Summer Camp
- $2,000 - Assist with Wheelchair or Leg Braces

The donations raised by Sergeant Lofton will be able to provide several of these services to Jerry’s Kids. This effort gives testament to his character and dedication to the community he serves. We are proud to have him as one of the supervisors in this agency. Way to go Sarge!


Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

Please allow me to take a few minutes of your valuable time to commend a member of your department, who my family and I had the pleasure of meeting last week. We were on vacation at Lake Travis and staying in a condominium in Point Venture. On July 10, we were pulling our boat to the park to launch for a day on the lake. As we have done several times before, my wife, son and daughter-in-law were riding in the boat as I drove my truck. I was approaching the last intersection before arriving at the gate to the park and a deputy on patrol was stopping for a stop sign at the cross street to our left. As we were proceeding through the intersection the deputy honked and told me to enter the park and pull over, which I did. I exited my truck to walk back to his location where he asked for my driver’s license and insurance, which I produced. He identified himself as Senior Deputy Jeff Givens with the Travis County Sheriff’s Office. He explained it was not legal to pull a boat with persons riding in it and seemed genuinely concerned for their safety. During our discussion Deputy Givens learned we were on vacation and we had a very pleasant discussion of the Travis County area and he suggested several nearby areas for us to visit.

You are very fortunate to have Deputy Givens as a member of your department. Not only is he a very professional law enforcement officer of high character, but he is also an excellent ambassador for Travis County.

I would like to request that this letter be placed in Deputy Givens’ personnel file as a permanent record of his outstanding service to the citizens, not only of Travis County, but also to all citizens of Texas and those visiting from other states. I also request that Deputy Givens be notified of this letter so he knows that the work he is doing is greatly appreciated by my family and myself.

Sincerely,
Don Thompson
Operation SOS continues holiday campaigns for active duty personnel

Operation SOS held two very successful fundraisers this year. On Armed Forces Day, members of the SOS, Cultural Committee and many other staff volunteers sold hot dogs, popcorn and cotton candy at the Ruiz Building to employees and the public.

Our second event on Patriot Day was held at Del Valle. Both of these events were sponsored by the TCSOA, TCLEA and NLPOA. Local vendors donated the popcorn and cotton candy machine. Because of these generous contributions during these events, Operation SOS will be able to send $100 military gift cards to each of our active duty personnel at Christmas.

Operation SOS began in April 2003. This committee of dedicated employees annually hold fundraisers and letter-writing events for the Sheriff’s Office active duty personnel. During the past five years, the Sheriff’s Office has had an average of nine personnel on active military status at any given time. Operation SOS has raised nearly $6,000 through annual hot dog and sausage wrap sales. This money is used to send care packages and gift cards to the service members and their families. Since the inception of SOS, Sheriff Office employees have written 1,000 letters and cards of encouragement and appreciation for our troops. The Annual Christmas Card and Lettering Writing Event began Nov. 24. You may route your completed letters to Chaplain Tommy McIntosh by Dec. 5 and letters will be mailed on Dec. 10.

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

With great appreciation, I would like to thank Senior Certified Peace Officer Thomas Eaton for his assistance on July 3. An emotionally disturbed woman came to our office. I called and asked Officer Eaton to get a Mental Health deputy to assist us. Officer Eaton not only got a Mental Health deputy, but he came up and stood by until the Mental Health deputy arrived. The woman became aggressive and attempted to bite me. Using the woman’s momentum, I placed her on the ground and Officer Eaton assisted me in cuffing her and waited with me until the Mental Health deputy arrived. I am very thankful, not only for his assistance in contacting the Mental Health deputy, but for his initiative in coming up to make sure the situation was under control.

Thank you,
Sally I. Hernandez
Chief of Investigations, Travis County District Attorney’s Office

Promotional Awards

Deputized
Jerald Allen Reynolds
Trent Roe
Michael J. Scott

Lieutenant
Shane Poole

Sergeant
Jennifer Gould
Jackson Lee Jones
Robert Speer

Detective
James Sapp

Senior Deputy
Kevin Boissonneault
David Carroll
Steven Moore
Kimberly Orts
Charles Snoddy

Senior Corrections Officer
Matthew Balagia Derrick Lattimore
Robert Brown Bobby O’Neal
Johanna Kemp Chris Walsh
Roger Casanova Michael Leonard

Dispatcher
Melanie Rhodes

Senior Counselor
Kim Patton

Community Outreach Liaison
Nicole Durand
Service Awards

30-Year Award
Jamie Page - Lieutenant, Training Academy

25-Year Award
Mark Downer - Sergeant, TCCC - Bldg. ISD

20-Year Award
Guillermo Martinez - Senior Deputy, West Command - Motors; John Oman - Sergeant, TCCC - Bldg. ISD; Jacqueline Welch - Sergeant, TCCC - Food Services

15-Year Award
Richard Brown - Security Coordinator, CJC - Central Command Security; Rueben Garcia - Detective, West Command - Patrol; Timothy Henry - Senior Certified Peace Officer, TCCC - Bldg. 3/5-9; Brady Hoermann - Senior Certified Peace Officer, CJC - Transportation; J.W. Jarmon - Senior Certified Peace Officer, TCCC - HSB; Fred Lemcke - Sergeant, TCJ; Toby Miller - Senior Deputy, West Command - Motors; Roger Murray - Senior Deputy, East Command - Traffic; William Poole - Sergeant - Training Academy; Craig Smith - Detective, Central Command; John Williams - Senior Deputy, East Command - Traffic

10-Year Award
Shane Dembowski - Senior Certified Peace Officer, Central Booking Facility; Lawrence Goodloe - Senior Corrections Officer, TCJ; J.T. Hall - Senior Certified Peace Officer, CTECC - Central Command Security; Vicente Jaramillo - Senior Certified Peace Officer, CJC - Transportation; Makara Kry - Senior Deputy, West Command - School Resource; Nelda Pena - Sergeant, Central Booking Facility; Alesia Turner-Cale - Security Coordinator, TCCC - Work Release Program

5-Year Award
Alvin Gilcrease - Senior Corrections Officer, TCJ

5-Years Safe Driving Award
James Rubio - Senior Corrections Officer, CJC - Transportation

Women In Partnership marks first year of networking

WIP is open to all female employees from all areas of the Travis County Sheriff’s Office and all are encouraged to join. Our members come from administration and support, corrections, dispatch, law enforcement, and the medical area. They range from new hires with only months under their belt to captains with decades of service and experience.

On Nov. 28, WIP will celebrate the first anniversary as an organization. WIP has offered our members multiple training opportunities, including a ropes course and wellness training with Dr. Esther Weekes. WIP sponsored a Women In Criminal Justice Seminar, which was designed to educate women about criminal justice, as well as recruit for the Travis County Sheriff’s Office. Nearly 130 women from the community attended the event and by the end of the evening, more than 80 employment applications had been submitted. WIP produced its first newsletter, which Chief Jim Sylvester presented to a nationwide criminal justice seminar. So much has been accomplished during the first year and the future looks busy. WIP plans to sponsor health & fitness seminars, starting a running/walking group and writing the by-laws.

WIP is looking forward to the future and focusing on mentoring, networking and increasing our recruiting efforts.

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

On behalf of our Zyle Road neighbors, thank you for your help in providing deputies and fireman for the our National Night Out. We are especially appreciative to Senior Corrections Officer James Kitchens and Senior Deputy Vincent Galloway, as well as the others who were so gracious, friendly and {who} listened and answered questions. The kids loved the fire equipment, and the men were very patient with the climbing and questions. I regret that they could not join us for hotdogs. It was a very good evening for about 35 of our neighbors. Thanks again,
Mary Murray
Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

I would like to personally commend Senior Deputy Brett Spicer, Senior Deputy Keith Kunz and EMT–LP Jay Paladino (Paramedic City of Austin EMS) for actions they took on July 5.

I was boating on Lake Travis with my wife, 5-year-old daughter, two neighbors, their daughter and a friend of their daughter, when 1 ½ hour into our excursion the motor in my boat malfunctioned leaving us without power drifting 24 miles from our starting point of Mansfield Dam.

After unsuccessful attempts at fixing the motor it became apparent that I needed to get my guests back to dry land and get my boat out of the lake. I attempted to flag down passing boaters for assistance with no luck. After some time passed I remembered that I had the business card of Deputy Spicer in my wallet. I called Deputy Spicer to ask for guidance as I knew he was a lake patrol officer.

It was luck that Deputy Spicer was on duty this day. Even though Deputy Spicer was busy finishing up paperwork from the night before (the 4th of July), and calls were already stacking up, Deputy Spicer was able to find Deputy Kunz and EMT–LP Paladino (who was operating the Sheriff’s boat along with Deputy Kunz) and send them to assist me.

Deputy Kunz and EMT–LP Paladino were courteous, professional and knowledgeable in their assessment of my boat problem and though unable to get my boat operating, they quickly attached tow ropes to my boat and towed my boat, and family and friends to the nearest marina where they could disembark and secure my boat.

The assistance did not stop there. Deputy Kunz and EMT – LP Paladino knew my vehicle and trailer were at Mansfield Dam and my family and guests were still 24 miles from our vehicles. Deputy Kunz and EMT-LP Paladino decided to give me and my neighbor a courtesy lift from the marina back to Mansfield Dam so we could retrieve our vehicles and trailer. Less than half-way into the courtesy lift we transferred into Deputy Spicer’s boat as it was faster and Deputy Spicer completed the courtesy transport to Mansfield Dam.

As a law enforcement officer myself, I know that holiday weekends can be very busy and hard on your officers as they are working when others are playing. Your officers and EMT’s were very professional and courteous as they went out of their way in assisting my family and guests in getting to safety and securing my property. If your staff only did half of the job they did for me I would still commend them. I know that your lake patrol staff goes out of their way to ensure that boaters enjoy the lake in a safe and pleasurable atmosphere. Your officers and EMTs should be commended for a job well done.

Keep up the good work!
Sergeant Philip Linsalata
Austin Police Department

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your office for the continued efforts in assisting families affected by non-payment of child support. In the past year, the two Austin offices were successful in collecting $68,556,530.61 in child support payments on cases with Travis County court orders. Without you and the assistance of the Travis courts this would not have been possible.

Sincerely,
Rita Ortiz Charlene McClain
Scott Hamilton Deborah Bray
Texas Attorney General’s Office, Child Support Division

Perfect Attendance Awards

Six Years
Elizies Williams Jr. - Senior Corrections Officer, TCCC - Bldg. 1

Four Years
Sylvia Leal - Senior Deputy, Crime Suppression Unit

Three Years
James Kitchens - Senior Corrections Officer, Community Outreach Unit

Two Years
Willis Passage Jr. - Senior Corrections Officer, TCJ
Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...  

On July 16, the San Marcos Police Department, along with the Hays County Sheriff’s Office, the Austin Police Department, the US Marshal’s Service, the FBI and the Immigration Customs Enforcement Service launched an investigation into a human-trafficking ring, which was reported to be holding at least three people hostage in the San Marcos area. During the afternoon of the July 16, the investigation unfolded very quickly and it became apparent that hostages would need to be rescued quickly.

Members of your SWAT Team, under the guidance of Lieutenant Terry Pickering, were requested to respond to San Marcos and assist the Hays County SWAT Team with what was becoming a very complicated, dynamic investigation. Your staff responded without hesitation and quickly began working with our team to develop plans and contingencies for the ever-changing investigation.

Within two hours of arriving in San Marcos, members of your SWAT Team entered and secured the primary location of the hostages and rescued more than 25 illegal immigrants who were being held against their will in deplorable conditions. They took control of a very chaotic scene and immediately tended to medical issues of many of the hostages. The team stayed on scene for hours assisting with the investigation and truly going above and beyond the call of duty.

I wish to thank and commend Lieutenant Terry Pickering and every member of your SWAT Team for their assistance and professionalism during this investigation.

Sincerely,
Chief Howard E. Williams
San Marcos Police Department

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

I am excited to announce that we learned today Travis County has been selected by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges as a Child Victims Act Model Court. This selection is a true complement to our community and the hard work that so many people here do every day to improve the lives of children and families. We understand that a total of twenty-five courts from across the nation applied for this designation and only six new model courts were selected, so this is truly an honor for Travis County.

This award will bring to our community a great number of resources designed to support our ongoing efforts to achieve innovation and excellence in court practices. It will help provide the information, materials, faculty, and mentors necessary to assist us in assessing our current practices and achieving substantive, sustainable change.

Thank you again for the letter you provided in support of our application. Your enthusiasm and kind words were important in helping to demonstrate our community’s commitment to this effort. I will be in touch with you soon as we learn more details. I look forward to working with you in a collaborative manner to implement model court activities for our community.

Sincerely,
Judge Darlene Byrne
126th District Court

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

On behalf of the family of Albert Block, RMC, USN (retired) a Pearl Harbor Survivor, we would like to extend our sincere thank you and appreciation to your deputies, Sergeant Manny Manicias, Senior Deputy Deke Pierce, Senior Deputy Robert Ingraham, Senior Deputy Rodney Blackmon and Senior Deputy Greg Epperson. These officers volunteered to provide escort for my husband’s funeral procession from Cook Walden in North Austin to the Texas State Veteran’s Cemetery in Killeen. Though not required, they volunteered to provide this escort the entire distance in a manner which offered the highest military courtesy and honor for my husband and his survivors. Albert was a World War II veteran who survived the sinking of three ships. He led a full life and dedicated so much to his family, country, and the State of Texas. The example set by each of your deputies was exemplary and in keeping with the highest standards of the Travis County Sheriff’s Office and the State of Texas.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Imogene Block & Family
Dear Sheriff Hamilton...

It is with great pleasure and a heart full of joy that I take this opportunity to praise the great efforts and hard work of one of your finest employees.

After finding myself a victim of identity theft, I was devastated to learn that APD was of no help in assisting me to apprehend the suspect. I was forced to do my own homework in which I was able to basically deliver the person of interest to them on a silver platter.

APD informed me that (because of) the dollar amount involved ($1,000.00), it was considered to be a “low priority” case and advised me to file a report with the other jurisdiction involved (Pflugerville, Travis County, Round Rock). They said their manpower was limited and reserved for more serious crimes. I was told that since Austin is within Travis county’s jurisdiction, Travis County would be able to investigate the charges that occurred in Austin along with the charges that occurred in Travis County.

Words cannot explain the emptiness that I felt after realizing that I had just been treated like a second rate citizen. I understand that this was not as serious as a homicide but, never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that APD would just close the door on a crime that was an open and shut case; although it was a “low priority” to them, it was still my livelihood that was at stake.

After filing a report with the other Departments, I felt like an angel had been sent in the form of Detective Patrick Gardner from the Travis County Sheriff’s Office. Detective Gardner took the bull by the horns and refused to let go until he had all the evidence that was necessary in order to put together a case that would warrant charges being filed.

Detective Gardner took on this case as if it was personal; after finding out that the suspect was under investigation with RRPD for the same type of charges involving someone else, he poured his heart and soul into this case and went full force – above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that this individual would be arrested before victimizing any one else.

Throughout the investigation, as an act of caring and concern, Detective Gardner would make a point to periodically update me on the status of the case; by him going the extra mile, I was able to re-build my trust in “law enforcement” and put my mind at ease knowing that because of Detective Gardner’s hard work, the suspect’s luck had just run out and he would not be able to slip through the system this time.

If your department has any type of program that recognizes employees for exhibiting superior deeds, this is definitely one employee that should be rewarded for the great work that he has demonstrated in my life and the integrity that he brings to your office. Detective Gardner is an employee that doesn’t just do an excellent job but he actually cares about the people that he comes in contact with.

This is the kind of service that makes the difference between an employee that simply works for a paycheck and one that works to achieve personal gratification of a job well done; it doesn’t get any better than that.

Sincerely,
Almeater J. Smith

---

A World For Children School Supplies Drive

TCSO employees joined efforts agency-wide to provide school supplies for foster kids with A World For Children. Above, Senior Corrections Officer Heather Marquez, Security Coordinator James Villegas and Cadet Corrections Officer Joshua Osorio load school supplies collected at TCCC. Senior Corrections Officer James Kitchens collected five bins full of crayons, spiral notebooks, backpacks, pencils, pens, glue, construction paper and erasers. Way to go TCSO!

---

Dear Sheriff Hamilton...

Thank you for selecting me as the recipient of the Sheriff’s Association Scholarship. I am also appreciative and proud of the photograph memorializing this special event.

It was an honor and pleasure to meet you and your staff. Again, thank you for everything you have done to support me in my pursuit of an education and career in law enforcement.

Erica Mattock
University of Texas student
Spring 2008 Sheriff’s Association of Texas Scholarship Recipient
(Erica’s father is Sgt. Joe Mattock, Texas DPS - Criminal Intelligence Division and her mother is Karen Mattock, Deputy Chief for the Texas Attorney General’s Office - Law Enforcement Defense Division)
Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

Our 17-year-old daughter was involved in a tragic car/truck accident Highway 71, west of Bee Creek Road where three teenagers were killed. Our daughter was one of the fortunate five who survived the accident, but she suffered critical, life-threatening injuries. Feb. 16, 2008, was the worst day of our lives. Much of what we experienced those first few days following the accident are a blur, but we remember the kind, courteous and professional treatment of two Travis County Sheriff’s Office personnel in particular, Brian Lynch (volunteer) of Victim Services and Senior Deputy Darrell Gibson, who was one of the first responders at the accident scene. Brian was our first contact with the Sheriff’s Office. We cannot imagine doing what Brian faces every day, but his respectful attitude, quiet demeanor and willingness to help us in anyway that he could was very comforting and reassuring in a stressful situation. Likewise, Deputy Darrell Gibson showed tremendous caring concern and support to our family during our daughter’s hospital stay and even afterward while she recuperated at home. He, and his wife Angela, continue to show their kindness by staying in touch to inquire about her status. Almost seven months later, we’re happy to be able to say that she is nearly recovered from her injuries, back in school and working to return to the soccer field.

Please accept (our donation to the 100 Club of Central Texas) of $2,000 in appreciation of Brian Lynch, Deputy Gibson, and all of the other Sheriff’s officers, fire and EMS personnel, heroes and all who responded to the accident. The work these people do is so valuable to our community, yet so often taken for granted. We very much appreciate all that they did for us, and what they do everyday.

Sincerely,
Clay and Diane Singleton
The 100 Club of Central Texas

---

TCSO, APD team up for successful NNO

By Officer James Kitchens
Community Outreach Unit

Travis County Sheriff’s Office and the Austin Police Department teamed up this year to coordinate more than 300 event locations varying from neighbors turning on their front porch lights to gathering together in their neighborhoods within Travis County on 2008 National Night Out (NNO). These events represent the culmination of a year of cooperative efforts between law enforcement and the community we serve.

This year’s event was the largest ever-involving 37 million people in 15,449 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories and military bases worldwide. The Travis County Sheriff’s Office has been selected as a National Award Winner for outstanding participation in the “25th Annual National Night Out” crime, drug and violence prevention program. Additionally, TCSO placed 14th in the nation. I would like to thank each and every one who participated in any way to make this year’s event such a success. Thank you for all of your photos that were submitted -- this was a big help.

---

Best Practices Delivery of Service Award

Heather Farrell, Business Analyst II; Lieutenant Robin Osborn; Liz Chupco and Judy Pittsford with County ITS; and Chief Jim Sylvester were presented the Best Practices Delivery of Service Award at County Commissioner’s Court.
Brown Santa gears up for annual toy drive, fun run

By Tracy Hill-Dorty
Brown Santa Chairman

The Sheriff’s Office is committed to helping others through the Brown Santa program by putting smiles on many faces and helping families establish strong and festive holiday traditions. We want to reach out to families because we know that it may be the most difficult time for people in need.

Brown Santa Headquarters, 15400 Long Vista Drive, Suite 101, off Bratton Lane, opened its doors to the public on Nov. 17 and will be open until Dec. 20. The hours of operation are Monday through Thursday, from 10am to 8pm; Friday and Saturday, from 9am to 6pm; and Sunday, Noon to 6pm. The week of Thanksgiving there are adjusted hours. You can check all hours of operation and delivery dates on the Brown Santa Web site, www.brownsanta.org.

Collection barrels will be in Travis County buildings beginning Dec.1 through December 13.

It all started in 1981 with a few deputies helping a few families with food and gifts and today Brown Santa currently serves 1,200 families. This year our goal is to support 1,500 families in the unincorporated areas of Travis County. You can help us reach our goal and make a difference by donating a toy, donating funds, wrapping gifts, sorting food, making boxes, and volunteering your time. Here are some of the ways you can help:

- **Toy Donation**: Donate new and unwrapped toys into one of the many barrels placed in all county buildings, as well as a variety of local businesses.
- **Monetary Donation**: Funds are used to assist with the purchase of turkeys and other items not donated. You may mail your tax deductible donations to:
  
  Travis County Brown Santa
  P.O. Box 207
  Austin, Texas  78767-0207

- **Wrapping Gifts**: Individuals and small groups can show up any time, and large groups are welcome to schedule times to wrap gifts at tracy.hill@co.travis.tx.us or call 24-SANTA or 247-2682.
- **Food Donation**: Donate non-perishable food items in unopened containers such as corn, green beans, cranberry sauce, instant potatoes, stuffing mix, cake mix and cake icing.
- **Fun Runs**: Come out and participate in the Brown Santa 5K and Kids K run. You can volunteer and/or register for the 5K and Kids K at www.tcsheriff.org/brownsanta5k.

5th Annual Brown Santa 5K/Kids K
Travis County Expo Center
7311 Decker Lane
Sunday, Dec. 7
5K begins at 8:15am
Kids K begins at 10 a.m.

Check out the many ways you can support this very worthwhile cause by visiting the Brown Santa Web site www.brownsanta.org or call 24-SANTA (247-2682). Brown Santa volunteers are an integral piece that makes this program a success year after year.

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

It’s not often that I encounter really outstanding service so when I do receive something that’s above the norm, I go out of my way to say thanks.

Someone broke into one of my work trailers while we were closed over a weekend. The would-be thieves cut the lock, presumable looking for things to steal. Since we kept our trailer empty, they simply moved on so fortunately, we’re just out a couple of locks.

I almost felt silly calling the Sheriff’s Office to report the incident but I thought it important to let your agency know that someone had intended to do us harm by stealing if they’d had a chance. Only a few minutes from my call to your office, Senior Deputy Brian Berrios came to our shop and took a full report. He handled the incident seriously and thanked us for following though with reporting it. I would like to commend Deputy Berrios. His timely and professional attitude towards and incident was far more than I expected. I work hard to make ends meet and the thought of someone stealing my livelihood does not set with me!

Thanks again. We appreciate all that you and your staff do for Travis County.

Sincerely,
Greg Ringer
Ringer Windows, Owner
Snakes
Texas has 10 species of rattlesnakes, more than any other state except Arizona. Only three of these species interact with humans: the western diamondback, the prairie, and the eastern timber or canebrake. The western diamondback accounts for almost all the serious cases of venomous poisonings in the state. About 7,000 people are bitten by venomous snakes in the U.S. annually. Only 0.02% (one out of 500) venomous snakebites result in death and on average, one to two people die each year in Texas. Roughly half of all venomous snakebites are dry. That is, the snake does not inject venom into the victim.

Armadillos
The armadillo is the state mammal of Texas. Armadillos always give birth to 4 identical young – the only mammal to do so. Contrary to popular belief, the nine-banded armadillo CANNOT roll itself into a ball to escape predators! Only one of the 20-odd varieties of armadillos – the three-banded armadillo (Tolypeutes tricinctus) – is able to roll up. The other types are covered with too many bony plates to allow them to curl up. A single armadillo may have up to 15 burrows (each 8 inches in diameter and 2 – 25 feet long) in its 10 – acre range and outside of the breeding season, adult armadillos generally live alone.

Joke
Why did the chicken cross the road? To show the armadillo that it could be done.

Horny Toads
If you grew up in Texas, you know what a Horny Toad is. Correctly identified as the Horned Lizard they don’t adjust well to captivity. In 1967 the state of Texas began protecting the horny toads and it is no longer legal to keep one as a pet.

Fishing
Did you know that the Texas resident who catches the largest fish of the season is awarded a lifetime fishing license for the state of Texas?

Women in Partnership …
Women in Partnership participated in the annual “Out of The Darkness” Suicide Prevention Walk/Run on Sept. 6, in addition to the Community Outreach Unit and Captain Art Cardenas assisting with the facilitation of the event.

Representing TCSO’s Women in Partnership, Captain Lisa Brown participated in the Vibha 8th Annual “Dream Mile 5K Walk/Run.” The event was held on Oct. 8, 2008 at the East Mall, UT campus. For more information about the Vibha organization, please visit their website at www.vibha.org.
ACS welcomes Kelly Page to board of directors

The Austin Children’s Shelter is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Kelly Page to the Austin Children’s Shelter Board of Directors.

Page is the community outreach director for the Travis County Sheriff’s Office and has 27 years experience working in the criminal justice setting primarily with local, state, and federal governmental agencies.

Much of her career has been focused on developing community relationships, program implementation, developing educational conferences/workshops, statute interpretation, and investigations.

During her years in this field, Page has helped develop a Teen Dating Violence campaign and now holds discussion groups on the topic with the teens at ACS.

Her role on the Board is program focused and she has connected the Shelter with experienced people in law enforcement to help coordinate planning of lighting and landscaping as it relates to security issues.

WELLNESS, continued from Page 9

and discount the other. That is why every chance we get it is a good idea to participate in the building of the good thoughts, ideas, programs, and partners to help keep the good advice strong. This department has started several of these types of programs, (Brick by Brick, Granny’s House, Brown Santa, and more) to participate is your choice. I choose to participate and I hope you do also.

The Body

Sheriff Hamilton implemented an annual physical checkup for every employee of this department. Again knowledge is a key factor of wellness. If we know where we are health wise, we know if we are improving, declining or need to take steps to keep from declining. The Sheriff also directed the Training Academy to begin working towards improving the physical fitness of the basic licensing classes. This has generated a multitude of discussion about injuries and the like, what wellness is and how do we get there. Getting in shape isn’t easy! I was in shape several years ago, to the point of running 10K races every year. I even have a gold medal for winning a Triathlon. As I aged, it became less and less fun and I made other things more important. I have since started whittling down this large belly but I think I am going to have to find a lager knife to work with. It’s awfully slow.

A year ago last August, I took that mandated physical. I did it, mainly, because it was mandated. Did I say mandated? Mandated is good because I am sure that I would have put it off until I was experiencing noticeable symptoms of something or other. My family doctor stated that I was in good health but he was seeing a slight increase in my PSA level. He felt that it might be a good idea to have further tests. I was a little skeptical and I hate tests, but decided to follow his directive and had it done. To my surprise they found the dreaded Cancer in my prostate. Because I was relatively young, (don’t say it!) I was told that my best option was to have it removed. I did so and a year later I can be called a survivor (not to be confused with the show).

I want to say thank you to Sheriff Hamilton, the Chief, and every other command staffer who took the stand for mandated physicals; it possibly saved my life. Let’s remember when we are discussing this wellness topic with others that what the department wants is what we want -- a better quality of life both at home and work!! Not to get anyone hurt or get anyone to resign. This program is for you.

To all of you, I say “Live Strong” and improve your WELLNESS!

It could possibly save your life!

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

You have a first-class Sheriff’s Office. I was really impressed with all your staff. Hopefully the training was well-received and made a difference in helping Travis County Sheriff’s Office be ever more effective. Thanks for all your hospitality and friendship.

Always at your service,
Dick Ayers
Director of the Center for Labor-Management Studies, Fredericksburg, Virginia

ACS welcomes Kelly Page to board of directors

The Austin Children’s Shelter is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Kelly Page to the Austin Children’s Shelter Board of Directors.

Page is the community outreach director for the Travis County Sheriff’s Office and has 27 years experience working in the criminal justice setting primarily with local, state, and federal governmental agencies.

Much of her career has been focused on developing community relationships, program implementation, developing educational conferences/workshops, statute interpretation, and investigations.

During her years in this field, Page has helped develop a Teen Dating Violence campaign and now holds discussion groups on the topic with the teens at ACS.

Her role on the Board is program focused and she has connected the Shelter with experienced people in law enforcement to help coordinate planning of lighting and landscaping as it relates to security issues.

WELLNESS, continued from Page 9

and discount the other. That is why every chance we get it is a good idea to participate in the building of the good thoughts, ideas, programs, and partners to help keep the good advice strong. This department has started several of these types of programs, (Brick by Brick, Granny’s House, Brown Santa, and more) to participate is your choice. I choose to participate and I hope you do also.

The Body

Sheriff Hamilton implemented an annual physical checkup for every employee of this department. Again knowledge is a key factor of wellness. If we know where we are health wise, we know if we are improving, declining or need to take steps to keep from declining. The Sheriff also directed the Training Academy to begin working towards improving the physical fitness of the basic licensing classes. This has generated a multitude of discussion about injuries and the like, what wellness is and how do we get there. Getting in shape isn’t easy! I was in shape several years ago, to the point of running 10K races every year. I even have a gold medal for winning a Triathlon. As I aged, it became less and less fun and I made other things more important. I have since started whittling down this large belly but I think I am going to have to find a lager knife to work with. It’s awfully slow.

A year ago last August, I took that mandated physical. I did it, mainly, because it was mandated. Did I say mandated? Mandated is good because I am sure that I would have put it off until I was experiencing noticeable symptoms of something or other. My family doctor stated that I was in good health but he was seeing a slight increase in my PSA level. He felt that it might be a good idea to have further tests. I was a little skeptical and I hate tests, but decided to follow his directive and had it done. To my surprise they found the dreaded Cancer in my prostate. Because I was relatively young, (don’t say it!) I was told that my best option was to have it removed. I did so and a year later I can be called a survivor (not to be confused with the show).

I want to say thank you to Sheriff Hamilton, the Chief, and every other command staffer who took the stand for mandated physicals; it possibly saved my life. Let’s remember when we are discussing this wellness topic with others that what the department wants is what we want -- a better quality of life both at home and work!! Not to get anyone hurt or get anyone to resign. This program is for you.

To all of you, I say “Live Strong” and improve your WELLNESS!

It could possibly save your life!
West Command officers receive recognition, training

By Captain Phyllis Clair
West Command

In early September, Commander Bennie J. Ellis of Highland Hills–Oak Hill Post 4443 Veterans of Foreign Wars paid a visit to the West Command. He was on a mission to find nominees for “VFW Post 4443 Gold Medal Award” in the field of Law Enforcement. Commander Ellis explained that the recipient would receive a plaque, $500 honorarium and be invited to attend the Voices of Democracy Banquet at “Mid-Winter Roundup.”

Obviously as public servants TCSO officers are not able to personally accept a monetary donation for their work. Captain Phyllis Clair and Commander Ellis agreed that the money would be best spent on specialized training that many line officers do not get the opportunity to attend.

West Command supervisors submitted documentation recommending one officer from each shift for the award. The glowing submissions inspired the judges to recognize all three of the officers and Commander Ellis advised that the monetary awards would be made as follows:

- **Senior Deputy Robert Frederick**, Day Shift Patrol First Place, $500
- **Senior Deputy Travis Bertram**, Evening Shift Patrol Second Place, $300
- **Senior Deputy Rolando Medina**, Midnight Shift Patrol, Third Place $150

Commander Ellis and Kasben Harris, Office Specialist Senior, coordinated plans and schedules arranging for all of the nominees to attend the infamous “Street Crimes Training” sponsored by John E. Reid and Associates. The cost for all three officers to attend was slightly more than the $950.00 and Commander Ellis came through again, and found the additional funds to completely cover the costs.

As the first place winner, Deputy Fredrick’s nomination packet will go on to the District level for additional award consideration and according to Commander Ellis thus far the judges are quite impressed.

The West Command is appreciative of the fact that Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4443 takes the time to recognize the good work of our troops. As Veterans, they are certainly aware of the sacrifices made by law enforcement officers and their families. We are proud to have been given this opportunity to shine in their eyes!

**Note:** These officers and Commander Ellis were recognized at our final promotional ceremony, Nov 20.

---

Dear Lieutenant Jerry Kovar and Sergeant Anthony Aranda:

Thank you very much for the courtesies extended by you and your staff to my client and me during our conference call to a meeting held in Houston, Texas, on June 23. I greatly appreciated your professionalism and assistance.

Sincerely,
Michael M. Simpson
Attorney At Law

---

State Award

**Senior Corrections Officer James Kitchens** was named Outstanding Crime Prevention Specialist by the Texas Crime Prevention Association at its annual conference. Officer Kitchens was nominated for his efforts in coordinating the Sheriff’s Office’s annual National Night Out event, as well as being an ambassador for those initiating Neighborhood Watch Programs. Also, Officer Kitchens has been elected President of the Central Texas Crime Prevention Association.

Photo by Carrie Fortner
County residents treated to ‘Extravaganza’

Sheriff Greg Hamilton, the Community Outreach Unit and many Sheriff’s Office volunteers sponsored the annual Extravaganza at the Wells Branch Municipal Utilities District, Oct. 4. Attendance surpassed the 4,000 mark for the event where county residents are treated to free entertainment and food from 11am to 4pm.

Battle of the Badges

The ‘Semi-Autos,’ comprised of deputies from Major Crimes, competed and won first place in this year’s Battle of the Badges bowling competition sponsored by the Bastrop County Sheriff’s Officers Association.

Scholarship Award

Pictured with Sheriff Greg Hamilton is Senior Corrections Officer Leslie Curry, this year’s recipient of the 2008 Sheriff’s Association of Texas Peace Officers’ Scholarship.

Marine Corps marks 233rd Anniversary

On Nov. 10, Marines, former and current, along with friends and colleagues of the Travis County Sheriff’s Office family gathered at the Training Academy to commemorate the 233rd birthday of the U. S. Marine Corps. Formal commemoration of the birthday of the Marine Corps began on Nov. 10, 1921. That particular date was chosen because on that day the Second Continental Congress resolved in 1775 to raise two battalions of Continental Marines.

Dear Sheriff Hamilton ...

I wanted to let you know my son was in your jail for almost one year. It was an employee, “Dee,” who was absolutely wonderful -- kept us both going. Kudos to Dee Rutledge, Senior Counselor.

Sincerely, Frances Musgrove, mother of Justin Brodmann
Outdoor program from TCSO, TNR Parks provides youth key to fishing, hunting

On Oct. 24, Badges, Bucks and Bass held its third Youth Hunt. This was the first hunt of our second season and we were hoping to break our non-harvesting history.

After several people dropped out of the hunt, we were left with only two youths. Facing cancellation because of their inability to pay the insurance costs, we found a person willing to sponsor the costs so we could proceed.

We were being provided this hunt by Double T Ranch, which is our second hunt from Bob Taylor. He generously offered the youth a chance to take on cull bucks, whitetail and axis does and/or hogs.

The weekend started with the usual paperwork, followed by a tour of the ranch house. After a snack of Moose tips and gravy cooked by Senior Deputy Robert Frederick, everyone turned in for a good night’s rest. The morning brought a crisp start to a beautiful day. Each youth was placed in a blind along with her father and a guide. After seeing several different animals, one decided to harvest a nice four-point buck. Back at the camp, she was able to demonstrate her skill at field dressing the deer. I have to say I have never seen a deer skinned using just the fingertips before.

After a short tour, it was time to return to the stands. Both girls were joined by their fathers and guides. Unfortunately neither youth was able to harvest an animal. After a meal of chili, we relaxed by an outdoor fire and reflected on the gifts from participating in this weekend. Would you believe that even after experiencing this tradition over each hunt we continue to enjoy the grateful comments and reflections on our experiences? After this they engaged in a father-daughter game of shuffleboard.

Morning brought us a warmer day and both girls went out to the blinds to pit their skills against the animals available. Unfortunately, this day the animals won and nothing was harvested. After cleaning up around the ranch, we finally departed for home.

We are still developing our program and need volunteers. If you are interested, please email badgesbucksandbass@co.travis.tx.us.

Combined Charities Campaign shows heart of Travis County

The 2008 Combined Charities Campaign began with a Halloween Festival at the Woodmansee Plaza. The Festival started with opening remarks by Judge Sam Biscoe and Campaign Chair Dana DeBeauvoir. The Sheriff’s Office Honor Guard posted colors and Senior Deputy Kimberly Orts sang the “Star Spangled Banner.”

The Festival included the “Haunted Jail,” raising $1,000 in just four hours. Employees from the Sheriff’s Office, County Clerk and the Auditor’s Office worked very hard to make this a great success. The proceeds are going to the American Cancer Society and the Austin Christopher House. There were a lot of great charities that gave information - the reason for this campaign. There are so many needy charities, so many people and worthy causes that need a helping hand.

The silent auction raised $2,240 with proceeds going to the Sheriff’s Memorial and Benevolent Society. The Co-Ed Softball Tournament, on Nov. 1 at the Del Valle Softball Fields, where three teams from the Sheriff’s Office participated. “Total Control, with Senior Corrections Officer Juan Campos as team captain; SWAT with Senior Deputy James Gonzales as team captain and “Transporters” with Lieutenant Debra Galloway as team captain. Winners are:

1st Place – Facilities Management
2nd Place – “Total Control” TCSO
3rd Place – County Attorney’s Office

Congratulations “Total Control!” The tournament raised a total of $1,300. If you have any questions regarding the campaign, contact Josie Matthias via e-mail or at 854-7271.
plated at a local bumper shop, and came with 18 rounds of ammunition. We had eight patrol cars that were utilized pretty much non-stop and detectives drove their personal vehicles and were paid mileage. It was not uncommon for there to be one patrol officer north of the river and one south of the river. If everyone was at work, we would hope all the cars were running or that some had not been wrecked; otherwise, you could have three deputies riding around in a single car. There was no FTO program to speak of, and more importantly, there were no real maps of the county other than hand drawings that had been passed down and updated from deputy to deputy.

I could go on and on describing what things were like more than 28 years ago. But the point I want to make is “we” have come a long way to where “we” are today. Anytime you feel things aren’t going too well stop and visit with some of the people who have been around for awhile - especially Lieutenant Jamie Page, who seems to have a keen recollection of events (and some you don’t really care to remember), and you gain a new appreciation for things you do have.

The Sheriff’s Office has been good to me and afforded me many opportunities for which I am very grateful. Having worked patrol for a little more than a year in 1981, I was selected to be one of the first of five people to comprise a narcotics unit for the Sheriff’s Office and we were assigned to the Organized Crime Task Force. In 1983, I returned to patrol and during that time co-authored a proposal to implement a Deputy II program within the Sheriff’s Office. In 1985, after going through a promotional process, I was promoted to Sergeant and tasked with the implementation of a new program called Victims’ Assistance. I returned to patrol as a sergeant in 1987 and that Spring wrote a proposal for a Mounted Patrol unit which, after a pilot program during the summer, received funding from Commissioner’s Court. As I recall, Sheriff Greg Hamilton spent some time on horseback with that program. As lieutenant, I was assigned to Patrol, Criminal Investigations, and along with Senior Deputy Mike Spurlock, tasked with the training and implementation of the Sheriff’s Office SWAT team. I also wrote and obtained a grant for the creation of an Intelligence Unit and conducted a patrol manpower analysis resulting in funding of additional patrol officers. I promoted to Captain in Fall 1992 and oversaw the patrol division, which consisted of 103 personnel. I was promoted to Assistant Chief Deputy for a short time in 1996 when the title was changed to Major in 1997. As the Law Enforcement Bureau Major, we tackled many challenges and made many significant changes. I say “we” because I had a lot of help from numerous people who shared the same vision for the future.

I will be leaving the Sheriff’s Office soon to tackle some new challenges and install a new vision within the Bastrop County Sheriff’s Office as the newly elected Sheriff. It is with mixed emotions that I embark on this new endeavor. I have spent the majority of my adult life with Travis County and consider everyone as my extended family. To everyone who has been there and supported, encouraged, counseled and guided me, I extend a heartfelt THANK YOU! To Sergeant Bryan Whoolery and all my SWAT guys and gals, you have made my last years with Travis County extremely enjoyable.

The size of the Bastrop County Sheriff’s Office reminds me very much of Travis County when I first came to work. I am very excited and at times somewhat overwhelmed with the potential the future holds in store. I am comforted in knowing that my many friends in Travis County are just right next door when I need help. It is my intention to stay in touch with everyone and I want to extend an invitation to everyone to please stop by for a visit when you are in Bastrop.
I just want to say “Thank You” all from the bottom of my heart for the West Command’s generosity and support for my family who were forced to relocate to Austin during Hurricane Ike. My soul was overwhelmed.

My family never guessed we would be in the position we are in now, dishing out money hand over foot (in this economy), feeding all these people, housing them long-term and taking care of babies.

It has been overwhelming. But God, in His infinite wisdom, knows just what He is doing. I thank Him everyday for allowing us to get through another day in good health and strength, and most of all, love of family and friends like all of you!

We really do appreciate your gifts of kindness and kind words. There are time when we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory, frustrated, exhausted, and hanging on by a strand, when you need to be helped along by your friends. You came through in a big way, you will never know just how much we appreciate you! Your donation fed and contributed to 24 evacuees!