

ISSUE

04

APRIL  
2015

# The Personnel File

Galveston County Human Resources

Heads up...  
A look at  
things to come

## April 1

Employee Engagement  
Survey Launch

## April 3

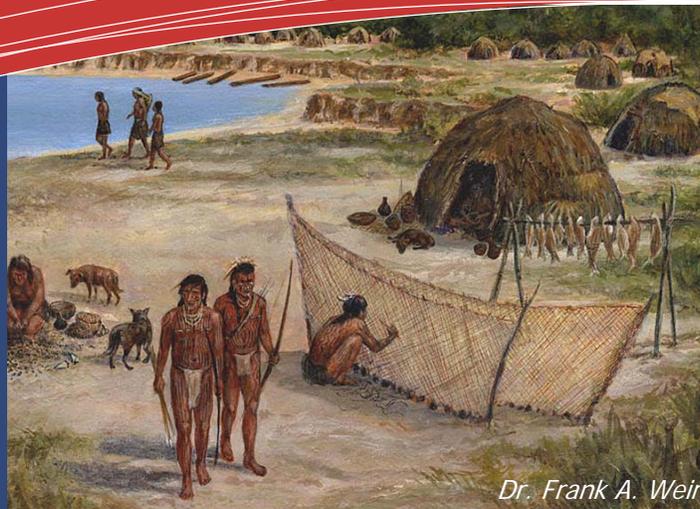
Good Friday / County Holiday

## April 6

Jail House Walk  
Painting Begins

## April 15

Tax Day



*Dr. Frank A. Weir*

## The Karankawa; Galveston's First Inhabitants

There were cannibalistic Indians that used to live in Texas! According to information used in a Texas Shores magazine article by Pamela Casteel (published by UTMB) and research by Barbara Berger of Rice University, the Karankawa were actually about 5 different groups of Indians who wandered along the Central Texas Gulf Coast for about 4,000 years. Exact documentation is difficult since these were nomadic Indians with small camp sites rather than permanent villages. They moved around following the food source as it changed from season to season. The Karankawa (sometimes spelled Carancua) included the Copanes, Coapites, Cujanes, Carancaguases, and Cocos bands of Indians.

Europeans who encountered the Karankawas were impressed with their size. The males, and according to some sources even females, were said to stand 6 feet or more. Men carried bows that reached from the ground to their chins. Their arrows were very long and the Indians were said to be excellent shots. The bows and arrows were so large and stout that most explorers could not draw the bow and shoot one of their arrows.

The Karankawa hunted deer and small animals, fished using bone hooks, gathered wild plants and picked berries and nuts. Their houses were small and dome-shaped made from small trees and covered with mats of moss or animal skins.

Cabeza de Vaca and his men landed on Galveston in November of 1528. De Vaca documented his experience with the Indians in great detail. He described a vast wilderness of people and animals Europeans could not imagine at that time. When de Vaca and his men landed many unfortunate things happened to them and the Karankawa Indians saved their lives by feeding and clothing them. The explorers had so many bad things happen to them that they named the island they landed on Malhado Island of Misfortune. *Story continued on next page.*

Stories about the Karankawa vary from fierce, cannibalistic warriors to merry, religious and sympathetic people, according to Cabeza de Vaca. The Karankawa area tribes were primitive and their lives were based on their families and finding food, which was often scarce. Being cannibalistic was something they learned from explorers they encountered. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was part of an elaborate ritual, usually before a battle.

One of the things Cabeza de Vaca wrote about was the tenderness of the Karankawa toward their children "They love their offspring the most of any people in the world, and treat them with the greatest mildness." When a child died, the whole village would weep daily for an entire year. However, passing of a more elderly person was viewed as natural and no cause for mourning as their "season had passed".

A French explorer, Alexandre de Batz, traveled the Gulf Coast, especially Louisiana, in the mid 1700's and painted the natives he saw. His paintings are especially interesting because they showed the daily life of the tribes he met and the tattoos many of the natives had. As de Vaca had, de Batz found them to be friendly.

The Karankawa fought Jean Lafitte's men and Stephen F. Austin's colonists but supported the Texans during the Texas Revolution. The last Karankawa were seen around the mid-1800s. Many were killed but some reportedly fled to Mexico.

## Meet, Greet & Share

Thank you to all of the personnel who have participated in the Meet and Greet meetings with the County Judge, Mark Henry. These meetings came about as a direct result of the feedback that came from your Engagement Survey results and the results of the Focus Groups we held.

In addition to getting to ask the Judge questions and share thoughts about the County, several people had fantastic ideas. Here are just a few on which the Commissioners' Court is already working.

- Put a Capital Improvement Plan in place to handle all of the renovations that need to occur.
- Clarify the amount that comes out of paychecks for the retirement packages during the job offer process.
- Revamp who is exempt from paying the toll at the toll bridge so we can include veterans and active military.
- Give all County employees an email address and a terminal to use in their department.

These ideas are in addition to all of the great ideas that were presented in the Employee Engagement Survey Results! (You can request copies of the results from your supervisor.)

## WHERE THERE'S SMOKE

In just one year, the county's smoking cessation program has reduced the number of county employees who smoke by 10 percent.



Info graphic from The Daily News. "County's program credited with helping employees quit smoking." March 19, 2015

### Congratulations to the "Quitters."

For more information about the county's tobacco cessation program please contact Corey Jannett

#### *Power to Wow Customer Service Class Testimonial*

"What a powerful class it was! I felt like standing in front of a life size mirror that I could see everything about me and learned so much to improve myself."

- Sue Richardson



# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

## To Retire or Not to Retire?

Is this a question that you have asked yourself?  
If so this is the seminar for YOU!

**“How to Successfully Make the Lifestyle Change from Working to Retirement”**

Presented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

April 21, 2015

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Location: County of Galveston Extension Service Office  
4102 - B Main Street (FM 519), La Marque, Texas 77568

Register by calling Irene Berry 281-309-5059

**Seating is limited**

## Scenes from the 2015 Benefits & Wellness Fair



# Sneak a Peek in the File of...

**Name:** Kimberly Hall  
**Department:** Tax Office

**How long have you been with the County?** I have been employed with Galveston County for 16 years.

**What is your favorite pastime or hobby and why?** I enjoy traveling, karaoke, and kickboxing because these things invoke good times, laughter, and keep the stresses of life down for me. I am also adventurous, skydiving is the next item to get crossed off of my bucket list.

**What is something that everyone may not know about your department?** One thing that everyone should know about the Tax Office is that we collect a large amount of revenue for the County and that this is a responsibility that we take seriously. One day out of every month we dress in our favorite sports team shirt or jersey and let our hair down with friendly competitive dialogue. The customers really love it!

**What is your personal motto or what would you like it to be?** My personal motto is that God is in control of it all and he is my provider. No matter what lesson he is extending to me, I will come out of it okay because he is my glory. Knowing this, it strengthens me to be the best me that I can be through the good and the not so pleasant situations that I am faced with.

**Best memory working for the county?** My best memory working for the County came in the wake of tragedy. It was after we were cleared to return to work after Hurricane Ike. Several County departments were working in temporary work spaces. The mainland departments opened up their conference rooms, empty offices, whatever space that they could offer for the displaced employees. The comradery that I witnessed during that time was truly amazing. The County really pulled together as a whole, and we got through it. Not only as co-workers but as a family.



**Name:** Nickisha Williams  
**Department:** Adult Community Supervision and Corrections Department

**How long have you been with the County?** Working for county 2 years and 8 months

**What is your favorite pastime or hobby and why?** Reading, because it takes me to another place in time.

**Yes I confess my nickname is/was:** Coco. There was a dancer on a TV show called Fame named Coco. My mom stated that I used to dance around the house all the time so my Uncle started calling me Coco/

**What is something that everyone may not know about your department?** That we invest a lot of time into finding available resources and job opportunities for the probationers.

**What is your personal motto or what would you like it to be?** Live each day as if it was your last

**Best memory working for the county?** When we had our annual appreciation day celebration I won the "Going the Extra Mile" Award.



## EXCITING BENEFIT CHANGE!!!

On March 17, Commissioners Court voted to make a change in the frequency requirement of the County's gym membership reimbursement program.

Effective April 1, 2015 the requirement has been simplified to just 9 days per calendar month. You may contact Human Resources for more details or claim questions.

# April 2015 Employee Birthdays

1	Aguilar, Ryan M	9	Jones, Christopher I	19	Elmore, Geraldine I
1	Brown, Clint W	9	Lyons, Matthew E	19	Green-Pickney, Alytha M
1	Kinard, John	9	Marvin, Timothy C	19	Wilson, Ashley M
1	Roady, Jack D	9	Reaves, Lebert A	20	Devine, Russell R
2	Patina, Anna M	9	Sitton, Jeremiah D	21	Kilburn, William W
2	Runge, Jessica L	9	Tunncliff, Justin R	21	Masswi, Ahmad
2	Smith, Maurice	10	Dickey, Rochell	22	Birdow, Josette D
3	Avila, Raymond T	10	Hernandez, Susan A	22	Castro, Zoa C
3	Thompson, Andrea C	10	Klaren, Virginia R	23	Clark Jr, Oatis L
3	Walker, Kevin L	11	Frank Jr, Norman	24	Betancourt, Daniel
4	Brown, Robert T	11	Hansen, Troy W	24	Lafoy, August H
4	Carrizalez, Rose Mary	11	Ortiz, Mindi S	24	Neal, Jo Ann
4	Washington, Vivian L	11	Rodriguez Jr, Jake L	24	Schlageter, Cody V
5	Dixit, Shailja	12	Smith, Lucy E	25	Mcafee, Jeremy P
5	Jannett, Heather L	12	Wilson, Lori A	26	Guss, Jordan A
5	Terrell, David L	13	Lopez Jr, Gerardo	26	Kay, Josie V
6	Fortenberry, Holly D	13	Mclaren, Gwendolyn A	26	Mata, Patricia A
7	Johnson, Mary E	14	Nguyen, Graciela I	26	Watson, Dink T
7	Pleasant, Shakisha C	14	Williams, Margaret S	27	Blunt, Jade M
8	Bell, Dylan S	15	Golliday, Malcolm L	27	Shirey, Amanda K
8	Cortez, Orlando R	15	Hall, Gary W	28	Shafer, Kristi A
8	Sendejas Jr, Daniel	15	Petroff, Kevin E	28	Tovar, Alvaro
8	Sheppard, Dwayne J	16	Furleigh, Francis W	29	Cagnon, Jennifer E
8	Wilson, Chris D	16	Vargas, Dianora L	29	Robinson, Lynda R
9	Benavides, Michael D	17	Kitchens Jr, Danny E	30	Henry, Jordan N
9	Castro, Jaime D	17	Stinson, Krystal N	30	Jackson, Jeff D
9	Click Jr, Andy R	19	Cato, Cynthia L	30	Williams, Letitia F

**Happy Birthday!!!**

## Manager Tip of the Month

Supervisors, would you like assistance in developing your employee action plans?

The first round of annual Performance Reviews is now behind us! The next step is to develop action plans for your employees that need extra help and encouragement in order to meet your expectations. These plans are designed to ensure that employees are on the same page you are and to help them be successful. I will help you put your action plans together. In our 1-on-1 session we will discuss tools in the HR toolbox such as items to improve workplace relationships, additional training and coaching techniques. Our goal is to give our employees every opportunity to improve.

Be one of the first to take advantage of our new program! - *Kathy Branch*

# The Last Word...

Hello All!

Last month I graduated from the Galveston Leadership Class. This class is put on by **Galveston College** in conjunction with the **Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce**. This class gives people a chance to really get to know the city and to meet with leaders in the community. So my class, consisting of 12 people and an instructor, has spent the last seven months touring various locations in on the Island.

We went through the Daily News with the editor, met the President of Galveston College, went back stage at the Grand 1894 Opera House, ate at several iconic local restaurants, learned the secrets of Moody Gardens and we even got to “steer” a huge tanker ship into Galveston Harbor in a simulation room at Texas A & M/Texas Maritime Academy. (You would swear the room was moving like the sea!) There was so much more, but you get the idea!

Walking through peoples' work environments unannounced, can give one a good insight into the atmosphere and environment of their workplace. Did they have fun trinkets on their desks, were they smiling while on the phone, was there laughter or boredom in their eyes? More often than not I saw bored faces who barely smiled when they saw us during our tour in their organization. There were some exceptions, but most of the people we walked by were hardly welcoming.

What would happen if we had an unannounced tour here? What if you saw me parading people into your department and introducing them to you? What if I stood in the middle of your department and quietly explained what your department does to the group? What would that group see? Would they see happy, busy, friendly people? Or would they walk out saying, “I would HATE to work there!” If we are being honest with ourselves, we might be less than sure that they would see us at our best.

One stop on the Leadership tour was Galveston County. The class spent time in HR and then had a Q & A session with the County Judge. I received a note from the Class Facilitator afterward. Here is a small section. ***Thank you for your help in arranging the Leadership Galveston program with Judge Mark Henry. Your special effort to supply coffee and gifts to start the day was delightful.*** Everyone said that the HR staff, Dianna from the Judge's office and the Judge Henry were so nice. They thought it was a “***special effort***” to provide coffee and some trinkets. WOW! I know that Dianna and the HR team were acting as if it were business as usual; making visitors feel welcome is an everyday part of the job. It isn't a special effort to welcome people in the nicest way possible!

Recently, I took a vendor of ours through the Engineering Department. I didn't even think about warning them or worrying about what these strangers might see. The folks in the department looked up, smiled, waved and shook hands with them. Afterward, the vendors were very impressed. Only afterward did I think, “*Maybe I should have warned them that people were coming and to be on their best behavior?*” But it never occurred to me. I see those ladies smiling every morning and I just took it for granted they would come through. And they did! Kudos to them!

Think about your behavior at work. If you suddenly looked up from your desk and saw a stranger or a group of strangers observing you, what message do you want to send to the onlookers? In this Leadership Class I saw several places that made me think, “*This place has their act together! What a great place to work!*” But, far more times I thought, “*Jees, I am so glad I don't work here with these unhappy, unmotivated faces.*”

I'll end this note with the phrase I HOPE I am sending when people observe me; ***BE the change you want to see in others,***

*Peri Bluemer :-)*

CHRO

Please know that we are very open to suggestions and article ideas, so send them to me at [peri.bluemmer@co.galveston.tx.us](mailto:peri.bluemmer@co.galveston.tx.us)!