



AMERICAN LEGION POST 305 "THE WOODLANDS POST" THE BUGLE



NOVEMBER 2016

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 11

THINK NOT OF THE PRICE OF YOUR DUES; THINK OF THE PRICE YOU PAID TO BE ELIGIBLE

POST COMMANDER VICTORIA GLOVER



COMMANDER'S CORNER

Happy November --- the month we all look forward to! One, because of the elections and two, the holidays start up. Reminders of what our founding fathers have fought for and things to be thankful for are here. We have Veterans Day, and the Thanksgiving Day celebrations.

We had a busy month with the rummage sale, District 7 Convention and the annual Post picnic. **Pete Koch** and I attended the Convention, along with **Kimberly Biggerstaff**. The speakers talked about various items and reminded us of the various things the Legion has done over the years. They also had brought up an idea that, while we are out and about our daily business and errands, we can wear our Legion hats. One, in part because our hats are recognizable and two, it brings up conversation and possibly adds to membership. Plus, when we are approached,

we can talk about how the American Legion worked to create the GI Bill and the VA.

The rummage sale as always was successful. We had a somewhat disappointing turnout for the picnic, fewer folks this year than in past years. We did have a few new members there, but it just seemed our numbers were down.

Election time is here, and I know we each look forward to it being over. Over the years it seems to have become a mud-slinging contest. It is not how our founding fathers planned it to be. Politicking is necessary but the antics they pull make it unappealing to many. I for one am tired of all the ads and debates because of all the slander and untruths. We as veterans and the older generation were taught about the history of our country and the principles it stands for. If we can teach the truth about our country it might help. But, we have to become active in the community to get folks to listen.

November brings remembrance through Veterans Day with many activities and invitations. We have the Auxiliary doing the Poppy distribution on November 9th and 10th. On Friday, November 11 at 8:00 AM at St. Edward's Catholic School there will be a Flag Blessing and Raising with Mass. Then, there is the Conroe ISD Veterans Day Parade at 10:00 AM at

Moorehead Stadium, followed by the Veterans Appreciation program at 4:30 PM at Town Green Park. Then, bike over to Veterans Bike Night at Harley Davidson of the Woodlands at 6:00 PM. Plus scores of restaurant discounts if you ask or are in uniform. On Saturday November 12th, there is a Veterans Appreciation Breakfast at 7:00 AM at Mercedes of The Woodlands, where I will be participating. On Tuesday, November 15th at 10:00 AM there will be a D.A.R. Luncheon honoring veterans, with our own Color Guard in attendance and participating. First, but not least, on November 3rd, we have the Boys and Girls State Recognition Ceremony at 7:00 PM at The Woodlands High School cafeteria.

Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful for all we have been blessed with and given. It is a time to reflect on the past and present and enjoy our family and friends. I know I am thankful for all that I have and for family, friends, health and my fellow veterans and comrades.

Until next time, let us ever be reminded to never forget our fallen, our POW/MIA's, our veterans, our active duty GI's and their families. Keep them and our first responders in our prayers!

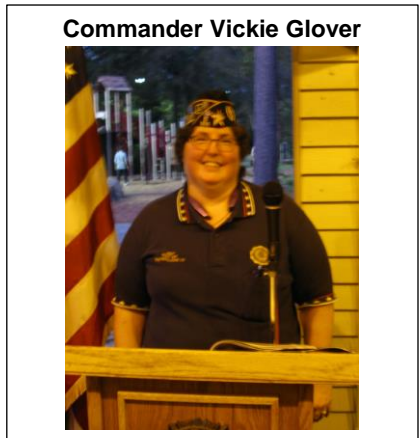
**Victoria Glover,
Commander**

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
(October 20, 2016)

[This October meeting was the joint Post/Auxiliary annual picnic or Oktoberfest at Shadowbend Park in The Woodlands.]

Per tradition, the joint meeting was called to order by **Commander Glover** and opened in the usual ritual, on a cool and fair evening. **Adjutant Jones** declared there was a quorum present, six officers of the Committee's twelve. Although copies of the minutes of the two most recent Post meetings were distributed, **Judge Advocate Everett Ison** moved that all business be suspended and deferred until the November meeting. The motion was seconded and during discussion **Ison** informed those present that the Post had agreed to renew the non-profit postal mailing license. This was a decision caused by need to make mailings to all Post members, starting with informing the membership of the pending changes to the Constitution and By-Laws. We will attempt to include a change which will allow any such notifications in the future be by electronic means (e-mail) where such contact exists. The motion to suspend business was approved unanimously. **Commander Glover** then proceeded to close the joint meeting, with **Unit Chaplain Geri Mulvihill** offering the closing prayer. Interest turned to socializing and to enjoying the picnic fare. The meat cooks were **Everett Ison** and **Charlie Siragusa**. The ladies of the Unit provided the rolls and an assortment of side dishes and accompani-

ments. Note the photos which follow.



(More picnic photos next page.)



THE BUGLE

The Bugle is the monthly newsletter of American Legion Post 305; "The Woodlands Post"; Department of Texas. All Post and Auxiliary Unit members in good standing are entitled to a copy of The Bugle.

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Monthly Meetings: The Post and Auxiliary meet at the South County Community Center in The Woodlands at 7:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month, except in October*. The Center is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Lake Robbins Drive and Grogan's Mill Road, next to the library. Meetings are followed by a pot-luck supper provided by the Auxiliary.
 *In October, a combined, short meeting precedes the Annual Picnic in Shadowbend Park.

Art Eipper & Jim Bolin



Art Eipper, Carl Smith, Nancy Woloszyn, with Frank in Foreground



Pickens Jones & Jim Bolin



President Jenny Hamann & Debra Wright



VETERANS ADVOCATE

LAST MINUTE POSTPONEMENT OF APPROPRIATIONS RESOLVE

It was like fourth down with two yards to go (before government shutdown) when Congress punted the appropriations football until December 9th. Two days before the September 30th deadline, Congress and the Administration extended the negotiation of a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government operating and let legislators race home to campaign for re-election. Getting to this 70-day extension deal wasn't easy. Senate leaders wrangled the past two weeks over inclusion of funding for disaster aid and combating the Zika virus. For most federal departments - including the Defense Department - the CR caps spending at current levels for the next two months. That's frustrating, because it prevents any new program starts. It also means Congress must return for a "lame duck" session after the election to work out a new agreement to fund the government for the rest of FY 2017.

The VA got a better deal, as the CR included full VA funding for 2017 and advance funding for 2018. This will allow planned improvements in benefit claims processing and medical research. It also will let the VA cover in vitro fertilization for veterans with injuries causing

infertility. "MOAA (Military Officers Association of America) is grateful this legislation will provide a \$2 billion increase over the current year, with additional funding to address treatment of hepatitis C, long-term care for veterans, caregiver support, and reduction of the claims backlog," said MOAA President Lt Gen Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret). [Source: MOAA Legislative Update | September 30, 2016 ++]

VA WHISTLEBLOWERS GET NEW PROTECTIONS UNDER LAST MINUTE BUDGET DEAL

Tucked into the last-minute budget deal passed by Congress last month are new protections for whistleblowers in the Department of Veterans Affairs in response to a series of high-profile retaliation cases that lawmakers insist show a cultural problem in that bureaucracy. The provisions -- based on legislation co-authored by Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) -- require a 12-day minimum suspension for the first time supervisors retaliate against a whistleblower and immediate dismissal if the same offense happens again. It also includes in supervisors' performance ratings how they respond to employee complaints and concerns, and expands other existing whistleblower protections to VA doctors and nurses, a group previously left out of some of the federal regulations.

Senator Kirk praised the move as a critical step forward in fixing the department's problems. "This bill is a positive step in ending the VA's culture of corruption and making sure our veterans are never again

mistreated or neglected,” he said. “Too often we have seen incidents of whistleblowers being intimidated or fired when they bring abuse and failure to light. These systemic problems need to be addressed so that whistleblowers are not afraid to come forward.” Earlier this month, House lawmakers grilled VA officials over their use of employee settlement policies after allegations surfaced that the program is often used to dismiss problem staffers instead of punishing them and to get rid of whistleblowers rather than address their allegations. Lawmakers have pointed to the case of a Puerto Rico VA hospital employee offered \$300,000 to quit after she filed complaints about a supervisor’s criminal record. Committee officials said nearly \$5 million in employee settlements have been negotiated since July 2014, but VA officials insist the program is being used properly.

VA Secretary Bob McDonald, over the last two years, has repeatedly stated that supervisors found retaliating against whistleblowers will be punished, but leaders in both the House and Senate have said they routinely field complaints from employees who are punished for pointing out waste, fraud and abuse in their offices. In recent months, Senator Kirk has highlighted reports from several whistleblowers working at Edward Hines Jr. Veterans Administration Hospital in his state, including allegations of cockroaches in food there. “We need to protect the protectors of our veterans,” he said. The budget bill, which extended federal spending at fiscal 2016 levels until December 9th and set nearly \$177 billion in VA funding for all of fiscal 2017, was signed into law by the

president on September 29. [Source: *Military Times* | Leo Shane | September 30, 2016 ++]

CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS BEING FORCED TO REPAY REUP BONUSES

A decade ago, the California National Guard was failing to fill its quota for troops to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. Faced with this shortfall of Army personnel, the Pentagon began offering the most generous incentives in its history to retain soldiers. It began paying \$15,000 or more in bonuses up front to all ranks and MOS’s, when they were supposed to be limited to soldiers in high demand specialties, such as intelligence and civic affairs or to NCO’s badly needed in units deploying to those two war zones. The Pentagon acknowledges that bonus overpayments occurred in every state at the height of those wars, but the money was handed out far more liberally in the CA Guard, which numbers about 17,000 troops, one of the largest of state organizations. In 2010, after reports came to light of improper payments, a federal investigation found that thousands of bonuses and student loan payments were given to CA Guard soldiers who did not qualify for them, or were approved despite application errors. In interviews, current and former CA Guard members described being ordered to attend mass meetings in 2006 and 2007 where officials signed up soldiers in assembly-line fashion after outlining the generous terms available for six-year re-enlistments. An Army master sergeant, who managed the CA Guard incentive program, plead guilty in 2011 for filing false claims of

\$15.2 million and was sentenced to 30 months in federal prison. Three officers also plead guilty to fraud and were put on probation after paying restitution.

The CA Guard assigned 42 auditors to comb through paperwork for bonuses and other incentive payments given to 14,000 soldiers, a process that was completed last month. About 9,700 current and retired soldiers have been told by the CA Guard to repay some or all of the bonuses and this recoupment effort has recovered \$22 million so far. But, because of protests, appeals and refusals by some to comply, the recovery effort is likely to continue for years. Although they cannot waive the “debts”, CA Guard officials say they are helping soldiers and veterans file appeals with the National Guard Bureau and the Army’s Board for Correction of Military Records, which can wipe out these obligations.

It need not be said that these recovery efforts are causing considerable distress among former CA Guard officers and enlisted men. These Guard troops saw service in Iraq and Afghanistan; were wounded; some killed; and have long spent the bonuses they received. A pending class-action lawsuit filed in court in Sacramento asks the court to order the recovered money be returned to the soldiers or spouses and to issue an injunction against the government barring further collection. Because the sergeant-first-class who organized the suit has had \$15,000 of \$20,000 waived for repayment by the Pentagon’s Defense Legal Services Agency, the US Attorney’s Office has petitioned the court to dismiss the class-

action suit on the strength of the sergeant's debts have been largely waived. A federal judge has yet to rule on the matter. [Source: *The Los Angeles Times* | David S. Cloud | Oct. 22, 2016 ++]

Important Contact Numbers

Houston Regional VA Office:
1-713-383-7842
County Veterans Service Offices:
Montgomery 1-936-539-7842
(Ms. Kay L. Lee)
Harris 1-281-876-6600
Texas Veterans Commission:
1-800-252-8387
www.tvc.state.tx.us
State Legislators:
Dist. 4 – Tommy Williams
281-364-9426
Dist. 15 – Steve Toth
832-562-2883
Dist. 16 – Brandon Creighton
936-539-0028
Dist. 126 – Patricia Harless
281-376-4114

WHO “RIGGED” THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?

(THE FOUNDING FATHERS)

Perhaps “rigged” is not the best term; try “contrived”, for that part of the US Constitution, as originally adopted, was a compromise, and the entire document was thought of as a grand experiment; a work in progress. The Constitution was intended to unite the states under a single national government, but not entirely. Small states like New Jersey then feared that if they formed a union with the other 12 states, they would be swallowed up under the influence of more populous states like Virginia and New York. Virginia and New York, of course, thought that they should have the most influence. That led to the compromise demonstrated by states' representation in Congress: All states are equally

represented in the Senate, while size by population determines representation in the House of Representatives.

When it came to voting for president, the framers of the Constitution decided that the states should do the voting – not the people. The new republic was a union of separate states, so voting for president was to take place by state. But, the framers felt that the citizenry could not be trusted to elect the president directly. Distances between cities were large; communication was slow; level of schooling/reading ability was low especially in rural areas (and there was much of “rural”); and polling places referred to shallow streams and ponds. So, our founders, elected to impose the “College of Electors” and State Electors, expecting these gentlemen would be better educated; better read; better informed; among the landed gentry and better judges than the common man. Thus, electors convened to consider available candidates and pick the best man for the job.

The compromise between big and small states was extended to the electoral college, where the number of electors was determined by the sum of Senators and Congressmen who represented each state. Big states have the most influence, but small states are not completely lost in the national vote. It was left to each state as to how its electors were selected, and, to some extent, that is so today.

The nationwide national popular vote does not determine the outcome of a presidential election; the largest number of electoral votes does. Four times in our history, the man elected

as president was not the contender with the largest popular vote!

~ In 1824, John Quincy Adams was elected president despite not winning either the popular vote nor the electoral vote. Andrew Jackson won both but failed to reach the majority 131 votes in the electoral college to be declared president. The decision went to the House of Representatives to be resolved, and it voted Adams into the White House.

~ In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes won the election by the electoral vote, but he lost the popular vote to Samuel J. Tilden by 250,000 ballots.

~ In 1888, Benjamin Harrison received 233 electoral votes to Grover Cleveland's 168, winning the presidency. But, Harrison lost the popular vote by 90,000 votes.

~ In 2000, George W. Bush was declared the winner, having garnered 271 electoral votes to Albert A. Gore, Jr.'s 266 votes. But, Gore received 540,000 more popular votes.

Electoral College Process

~ In November, each state holds an election for president where all eligible citizens may vote.

~ The outcome of the vote in each state determines a slate of *electors* who then in turn make the actual choice of president and vice president. A state has as many electors as the number of Senators (2) plus Congressmen representing it. The total is now 538, with the District of Columbia given three electors.

~ In December, the electors meet in their respective state capitals and cast their ballots for the two positions. The rules

under which the state electors allocate their votes varies by state. They may or may not be required to conform to the popular vote of that state. They may or may not give all votes to the winner of the statewide popular vote. However, in current practice, electors are pledged to cast their votes in accordance with the state popular vote. But, on occasion a maverick elector has upset the apple cart.

~ These ballots are opened, counted and certified by a joint session of Congress in January.

~ The candidate with the most electoral votes is declared president. If however no candidate wins a majority of the electoral votes or if the two top candidates are tied, the House of Representatives selects the president from among the five candidates with the most votes. Each state's delegation has one single vote. The Senate then selects a vice president by the same process. (This has not happened since 1876, but it almost happened in 2000.)

There have been proposals to revise this election process and to recognize that the conditions and circumstances which led to the Electoral College do not exist in the US today. Some may question that progress and say we have slid backwards. Folks ask: "Does my vote count?" Yes and no, or maybe! But, if it ain't broke, why fix it?

So, among the causes of charges of a "rigged" presidential election, look no further than to the Constitution and to those who are unfamiliar with its provisions.

PATTON'S D-DAY ROLE

By mid-1943, the Axis powers still controlled mainland Europe. Although Soviet victory at the Battle of Stalingrad had begun to turn the tide on the German advance, Stalin was desperate for a second European front to divert German troops from the East.

With the invasion of Italy well underway, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin met to discuss military strategy in November 1943 in Tehran. They agreed to mount a major invasion of France (code-named "Operation Overlord") in the hope of regaining access to Europe. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was given command of the top-secret offensive, whose date was referred to as "D-Day".

In the Spring of 1944, Ike gave General George S. Patton command of a mighty army to spearhead the invasion of France. The First US Army Group consisted of 11 divisions assembled near the White Cliffs of Dover, readying to cross over the English Channel at its narrowest point and invade France at Pas-de-Calais.

But, it wasn't a real army; it was a giant con job!

The Allies wanted to convince Hitler that the planned invasion was just a diversion; that the real invasion was going to come more than one hundred miles away, near Cherbourg. So began "Operation Quick-silver".

Set designers from London's famous Shepperton Studios were brought in to create the illusion of a massive army where there was none. They created battalions of rubber tanks and regiments of wooden soldiers. Canvas airplanes were

parked on fake runways and harbors were filled with dummy landing craft. Radio operators sent huge amounts of bogus traffic, orders to and from units that did not exist.

A professor of architecture from Britain's Royal Academy used broken sewer pipes and rusty old oil tanks to create a fake refinery. Movie studio wind machines blew clouds of dust over the site, making it look as if construction was proceeding at a furious rate.

Numerous other ruses were also employed to mislead the Germans. For example, actor M. E. Clifton-James, impersonating British General Bernard Montgomery, traveled to Gibraltar and Algiers shortly before D-Day to convince Germans that something was cooking there.

These deceptions fooled Hitler and his generals completely. Even after the Allies stormed the beaches of Normandy on June 6, the Germans held their Panzer divisions in reserve, waiting for a phantom invasion by a ghost army that was purely the product of Allied imagination. That gave the Allies the time they needed to secure the beachhead and make possible the triumph of D-Day.

At first, General Patton was discouraged not to be leading the real invasion, but he warmed to his role as commander of a non-existent army, racing around the south of England making fighting speeches and maintaining a high profile. "I am a natural born ham" he said.

THE POPPY PROGRAM

The Poppy Program is the oldest, most widely recognized, Auxiliary program – the

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distribution of bright red, crepe-paper poppies in exchange for contributions to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans. The poppy became a nationally known and recognized symbol of sacrifice and is worn by our members and the public to honor the men and women who served and died for us in all US wars. But, why was the poppy selected as such a symbol? A Canadian army doctor, Lt. Colonel John McCrae, attached to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, had just spent 17 days treating wounded and gassed men, following the terrible Second Battle of Ypres (Belgium), in May 1915. He was sitting in a parked ambulance near his dressing station the next day, anguished by the loss of life he had witnessed. In the nearby cemetery, McCrae could see the wild poppies that sprang up in the ditches. He took out his notebook and scribbled 15 lines of verse. Dissatisfied with what he had written, he tossed the poem away, but a fellow officer retrieved it, read it and kept it until he could send it to two British newspapers. **Punch** published it on December 3, 1915. The poem. "**In Flanders Fields**". was so very moving, it became known worldwide. :

Lt. Colonel John McRae



[N.B. ALA President Hamann delegated the writing of this month's column to Vice President Kathy Carroll.]

November is here and for most of us it is the start of the holiday season. But before we get those Thanksgiving decorations out, there are several things happening which make November a very busy month.

First, it is time to renew your membership. If you have already done so, thank you. If you haven't renewed yet, please mail your renewal as soon as possible. You also have the option to renew online by going to: www.ALforVeterans.org.

On Thursday, November 3rd, Post 305 and Unit 305 will host a recognition evening to honor the students that we sent to Boys State and Girls State. It will be a good opportunity to meet these young people and hear about their experiences and their plans for the future. We will meet at The Woodlands High School cafeteria on Research Forest at 7:00 PM. These students represent our country's future, so it will be a great thing if we can show them that we appreciate what they have accomplished.

One of the most important things happening this month is the Presidential Election on Tuesday, November 8th. Although this has been a very contentious campaign season it is not unprecedented. Just check out the race for President between Adams and Jefferson. Even our Founding Fathers were not always friendly and gracious when running for

office! Regardless of who you support, it is important that we exercise our privilege to vote. It is a right that we in this country enjoy and a right that our veterans have fought to preserve.

Friday, November 11th, we will celebrate Veteran's Day. This day originally was observed as Armistice Day – a time to commemorate the end of World War I: "The war to end all wars". In 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming November 11th as Veteran's Day – a day to honor all veterans. As usual, we will be distributing poppies to remind people to honor our veterans. We will be at both post offices on November 9th and 10th, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. If you can help on either or both days, please contact **Rosalie Fryer** at 936-520-8895 so she can put you on her schedule.

Our next meeting will be on November 17th at the Community Center at 7:00 PM. We will be celebrating Thanksgiving with our annual turkey dinner. Mark your calendar for a good evening with good friends and good food.

Remember to thank our veterans any day when you note one, but especially on November 11th.

Kathy Carroll,
VP Auxiliary Unit 305



CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCALE</u>
Thur.	Nov. 3	Boys State & Girls State Honor Ceremony	The Woodlands High School Cafeteria @ 7:00 PM
Tues.	Nov. 8	Election Day	Trick or Treat!
Thur.	Nov. 10	Marine Corps Founded (1775)	Semper Fidelis
Fri.	Nov. 11	Veterans Day	WWI's Armistice Agreed (1918)
Fri.	Nov. 11	Flag Blessing Mass	St. Edwards Catholic School @ 8:00 AM
Fri.	Nov. 11	Conroe ISD Veterans Day Parade	Moorehead Stadium @ 10:00 AM
Fri.	Nov. 11	Veterans Appreciation Program	Woodlands Town Green Park @ 4:30 PM
Fri.	Nov. 11	Veterans Bike Night	Harley-Davidson Showroom @ 6:00 PM
Sat.	Nov. 12	Veterans Appreciation Breakfast	Mercedes of The Woodlands @7:00 AM
Mon.	Nov. 14	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Nov. 17	Membership Meetings (TURKEY!)	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Day	Gobble! Gobble!
Wed.	Dec. 7	Pearl Harbor Day (1941)	"A day which will live in infamy!"
Mon.	Dec. 12	Executive Committee Meeting	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Thur.	Dec. 15	Membership Meetings	South County Community Ctr. @ 7:00 PM
Sat./Sun.	Dec. 24/25	Christmas Weekend	"Deck The Halls With Boughs of Holly"

POST & AUXILIARY UNIT CONTACT INFORMATION (2016-2017)

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>TEL. NO.</u>	<u>E-MAIL ADDRESS</u>
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FINANCE OFFICER	Emery Heuermann	(281) 362-8431	emeryheuermann@charter.net
SERVICE OFFICER	Toby Carroll	(281) 323-4985	toby.carroll@sbcglobal.net
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	Bruce Carter	(281) 844-0836	bruce4482@att.net
ASS'T SGT-AT-ARMS	Carl Smith	(281) 367-4714	carl12024@yahoo.com
CHAPLAIN	Larry Reynolds	(254) 482-0003	lbr725@gmail.com
ASS'T CHAPLAIN	(Open)		
JUDGE ADVOCATE	Everett Ison	(281) 298-9524	everett.ison@sprint.com
HISTORIAN	Lacey Homan	(832) 704-2732	lkhoman44@gmail.com
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:			
POSITION ONE	Dayton Denton	(832) 928-6054	whselfstorage1@yahoo.com
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PRESIDENT	Jenny Hamann	(281) 907-3430	ala305pres@gmail.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Kathy Carroll	(281) 323-4985	kcarroll47@sbcglobal.net
SECRETARY (Act'g)	Thars Higginson	(713) 851-9337	tharshigginson@comcast.net
TREASURER	Dayna Salter	(281) 229-1365	dayna.salter@ymail.com
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CHAPLAIN	Geri Mulvihill	(832) 620-6265	gerimulvihill@outlook.com
PARLIAMENTARIAN	Rosalie Fryer	(936) 520-8895	rcfryer@consolidated.net
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POSITION THREE	Mary Bolin	(281) 251-2352	jpb20006@sbcglobal.net