



The Circuit Rider

Life in the Big Bend Episcopal Mission – December 2003

Ordination of Elaine Ponton

Despite the last minute change of date, the scurrying around to change all the arrangements, and the rush to notify everyone, Elaine Ponton's ordination to the priesthood on November 2, 2003 was a glorious occasion. Elaine is sorry that the change prevented some very special people from attending. She thanks everyone who participated whether in person or in spirit.



Battered flower, let faith laugh still, for laughter mocks the winds of doubt, and those with empty hearts to fill will hear the joy and seek you out.

If today brings forth what you fear most, God is in the eye of the storm; in His strong presence you can boast and trace with faith sweet laughter's form. - Lt. Col. Howard Burr in the Salvation Army's *War Cry*. (from the *Joyful Noiseletter*)

Shhh... It's a Secret! Surprise Christmas Gift for E.S.L. Students

Libi Rhodes and Aurie West got the idea of starting a knitting/crocheting ministry to make shawls for the sick, needy, etc. from a book called "Knitting into the Mystery."



Libi wanted to do something for the English as a second language class for Christmas. One thing lead to another, and now Libi, Aurie, Kate McKenna, Pat

Wells, Greta Murray, Don Viator, Shere Whitley, Carol Livingston, Evelyn Luciani, and Mary Williams are all knitting scarves as Christmas gifts for the English as a second language class. What's on your knitting needles?



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Beth Garcia: Secret to Youth Club Success

When Beth Garcia quit her job at the Big Bend Motor Inn to start the Big Bend Youth Club, she showed all of us how to take a step out in faith.

Beth was born in Gainesville, Florida and raised as an Episcopalian. Beth first attended church in the Big Bend in the early 80's. "For a long time I considered myself 'spiritual' but not religious. I was wrong. I am both." The Big Bend Youth Club has been on Beth's heart for a long time. When Judy responded so positively to the idea, "I realized God was indeed calling me to do this."



Beth's 19-year-old daughter, Margarita, has been an "invaluable help" at the Youth Club while waiting to start at Sul Ross in January. In addition to being a mother, Beth's background includes time as an insurance agent, a desk clerk, a bartender, a cashier, and as owner of a rafting company for 15 years. She is well prepared for tackling the Youth Club. Beth likes to read, write, garden, hike, and raft. From her back porch in Terlingua, she looks at Santa Elena Canyon and thinks how the "Glory of God" shines in the Big Bend.

“Many Thanks” from Elaine

Many thanks to the community of friends, family and colleagues who helped to make my ordination a very special day not only in my life but in the life of the Big Bend



Mission as well. You all have supported me in so many ways - by your financial help with my schooling, by your words of encouragement, and certainly by your generous gift of the beautiful chasubles and stoles. I've been richly blessed and I thank you. -Elaine Ponton

Christmas Collection to Benefit Youth Club This Year

Each year, the Big Bend Mission collects funds to benefit special needs in the community at Christmas. In past years, the assistance has been given to individual families. The Bishop's Committee has decided that this year the donations will go to the Big Bend Youth Club.



Attendance at the Club has exceeded all expectations. Kids who had nothing to do and no place to go after school now have a place where they can 'hang out' from 3:30 til 8, Wednesday - Saturday. They can finish their homework, get snacks, play games, watch videos, and participate in educational activities.

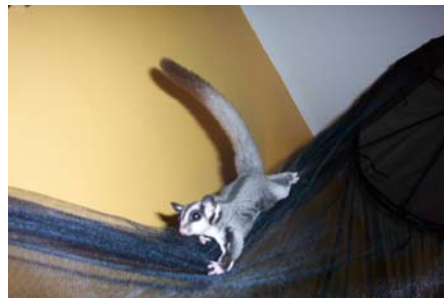
Despite fundraising projects like selling homemade salsa and sponsoring a dance featuring the popular Ojinaga band "Los Palomares," the club is struggling to make ends meet. Beth and the board are pursuing grant money to cover operating expenses and provide additional activities like camping and cultural trips. However, until more permanent financing is in place, the Club depends on your donations. Please be generous. **Mark your donations for the “Youth Club” and make them between now and Christmas.**

Sugar Gliders Appear at Terlingua Thanksgiving Dinner

Thanksgiving dinner came early for the Lajitas congregation. About 18 people gathered at Elaine Ponton's house at 4pm on Sunday the 23rd. Ruth and Roger Gibson brought along two sugar gliders that fell into their care temporarily after unfortunate circumstances.



The Sugar Glider is also known as the Lesser Flying Phalanger and the Short-Headed Flying Phalanger. This possum is an arboreal (tree-dwelling) marsupial that lives in forests and rainforests of mainland Australia, Tasmania, New Guinea, and some nearby islands.



Last Month's Question: Why are infants baptized?

Answer: Infants are baptized so that they can share citizenship in the Covenant, membership in Christ, and redemption by God.

This Month's Question: Why is the Eucharist called a sacrifice?

Bishop Confirms Three at St. Paul's



After the Ordination of Elaine Ponton at St. James', Bishop Kelshaw confirmed Gene West, Carol Livingston, and Evelyn Luciani at a 4pm service at St. Paul's. Due to the change in schedule for the bishop's visit, Ken and Shere Whitley were unable to attend this service and be confirmed as planned. The Whitleys plan to cross paths with the bishop sometime in the near future. Anyone else who is thinking about confirmation should contact the vicar.



"I don't know how you did that, Mrs. Van Astin, but you'll have to send it back."

from *The Joyful Noiseletter*
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More People than Ever for Thanksgiving at St. Paul's

The church felt like it was nearly filled to

capacity for the Thanksgiving service which included the baptism of Sandy and Diane Stephens' son Cole Hart Stephens and Sam and Angela Stephens' daughter Shelby Frances Stephens. Members of the family of Ted and Frances Harper came from outside the area to make the occasion extra special. Thanks to the organizational efforts of Aurie West and the help from lots of other people, Thanksgiving dinner was served to about 125 people in the parish hall after the service. The comment was heard that "the parish hall always seemed big enough to handle most any crowd, but not today." An additional people from the English as a second language class were served Thanksgiving dinner later in the day after many of them finished work at Village Farms. Many thanks to everyone who made the whole day an event to remember for a long time.



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