

LA VOZ DE BRAZORIA

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The Most Interesting
Newspaper in the County

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The Mystery Continues

In 1523, just two years after the Aztec capital of **Tenochitlan** fell to **Hernán Cortés** and his Conquistadors, the first Roman Catholic missionaries arrived to begin the religious conquest of **Mexico**.

Among their first converts was a man baptized with the Christian name **Juan Diego**. On the chilly morning of December 9, 1531, **Juan Diego** crossed the barren hill called **Tepeyac** to attend Mass. He was brought to a sudden halt by a blinding light and the sound of heavenly music.

Before him appeared an astounding vision—a beautiful dark-skinned woman who, calling the Indian “my son”, declared herself to be the **Virgin Mary**, the mother of **Jesus Christ**. She told **Juan Diego** it was her desire to have a church built on **Tepeyac** hill, and asked him to relay that message to **Bishop Juan de Zumarraga**.

It was no easy task for the humble Indian to be granted an audience with the top prelate, but the persistent **Juan Diego** was finally admitted. The incredulous Bishop demanded that he be provided with some proof of the unlikely encounter. Confused and fearful, **Juan Diego** avoided



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People in the News



Salinas Working to Educate People on Environmental Racism

Iris Salinas, an undergraduate at The University of Texas at Austin is mother, works two jobs and still makes time to be involved in the community. Her speciality is education and environmental racism. Salinas believes it is no coincidence that the health problems of some groups of people are tied to the economic decisions of business who choose to look the other way when it comes to industrial production.

She is passionate about the need to educate people about the growing number of cancer related cases that are showing up

around the state of Texas. Salinas recently spoke at the Social Justice Saturday School in Austin about her work and invited students to think seriously about the health of their own families.



New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson Says He is Running for President

The reports are starting to come in that New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson is running for President of the United States. He recently told FOX News, "I'm running" as he described the professional and personal experiences he believes

have prepared him for the nation's top job. "I've dealt with issues that are very important to the nation's national security, immigration and energy." Richardson was secretary of energy and later U.N. ambassador during the Clinton administration. In addition to his diplomatic experience, Richardson believes that his Hispanic heritage will be an advantage in his campaign for the presidency.

"I am Hispanic, which I believe is an asset," Richardson said. "But I'm not running as an Hispanic, I am running as an American who is proud to be Hispanic."

Bill Richardson was born in 1947 and is a graduate of Tufts University and the Flechter School of Law and Diplomacy. He was elected Governor of New Mexico in 2002.

Richardson told FOX News that he does not intend to form a presidential exploratory committee until January. He has, however, begun hiring national campaign staff, and plans a visit to early primary state New Hampshire in mid-January.

Richardson also told reporters that he wants the incoming Democratic Congress to reverse legislation authorizing a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.



Dead Candidate Wins Re-Election

State Representative Glenda Dawson was re-elected on November 7th, 2006 as the State Representative from District 29 just outside of Houston. She defeated Democrat Anthony A. Dinovo by a vote of 21,284 to 13,984. Not bad for a dead candidate.

Dawson who died in September, 2006 at the age of 65, campaigned as though she was very much alive and well. She even appeared in campaign literature with Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and reminded voters of her many accomplishments in the areas of education and employment.

According to State Representative Dennis Bonnen (District 25) who was overseeing her campaign, there was no need to mention that she had passed away because everyone already knew it.



Luis Orozco Wins 2006 Pat Dobbs Leadership Award

(Austin) Lanier High School student Luis Orozco was honored at a dinner and reception at the Hilton Hotel in Ausitn, Texas as the winner of the 2006 Pat Dobbs Student Leadership Award. Together with a certificate he was given a scholarship check for \$1,000.00 dollars.

Orozco, who is originally from Michoacan, Mexico, was one of the student leaders who organized the walkout at his high school in March of this year to protest the pending legislation in Congress that he believed would adversely affect his family and others. He continues to remain active and is currently participating in the Social Justice Saturday School at the University of Texas at Austin.



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PRODUCTION

Editor

Alfredo R. Santos c/s

Managing Editor

Molly R. Santos

Marketing

Dolores Diaz Miller

Distribution

Louie Maldonado

La Voz email:

d.santos@sbcglobal.net

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Editorial

En cuanto se va cerrando el año 2006, es apropiado que reflejamos en todo lo que ha pasado.

La guerra en **Irak** todavía esta con nosotros. Invadimos a ese país porque pensabamos que ellos tenían armas de destrucción masiva. Ahora sabemos que esto no fue el caso.

Cerca de 3,000 soldados Americanos han perdido la vida en **Irak** y miles más han regresado a su casa heridos gravemente. Porque somos un país grande y tenemos un ego muy grande no podemos admitir que cometimos un gran error invadiendo a ese país.

Para justificar nuestra presencia estamos diciendo al mundo que la razón por la cual nos hemos quedado en Irak es porque queremos ayudarlos construir una democracia. Por supuesto esto es muy interesante porque aquí en nuestro propio país, encontramos dificultad en que la gente salga a votar.

Ahora que el **Grupo de Estudio sobre Irak** ha salido con su reporte, vamos haber si los nuevos miembros de la legislatura va tomar acción sobre este problema.

Hablando de acción, es apropiado que nos vamos a lo personal. Debemos preguntar que es lo que vamos hacer diferente el año que entra? ¿Vamos a dejar de fumar? ¿Vamos a peder peso? ¿Vamos a hacer unas decisiones sobre nuestras finanzas? ¿O vamos a llamar alguien con que no hemos platicado en meses? Otra vez, el comienzo de un año es un buen oportunidad para hacer cambios en nuestras vidas personales.

En otra nota, aquí en *La Voz de Brazoria County*, queremos tomar esta oportunidad para decir muchas gracias a todos por el apoyo que nos han dado en el año 2006. Publicando un periódico se requiere mucho trabajo y sacrificio. Sabemos que a veces hay individuos que no estan de acuerdo con lo que estamos diciendo. Y también sabemos que hay individuos que de deberas se benefician con las historias y articulos en el periódico.

Estamos dispuestos a publicar *La Voz de Brazoria County* mientras que hay individuos que lo quieren. Empezamos *La Voz de Brazoria County* en el año 1990. Y con la excepción de unos años hemos sido parte de la comunidad del condado de Brazoria. Estamos orgullosos de poder servir a la buena gente de este condado.

As the year 2006 comes to a close it is appropriate that we pause to reflect on all that has transpired.

The war in **Irak** is still with us. We invaded the country because we thought they had weapons of mass destruction. We now know this was not the case.

Close to 3000 American soldiers have died in **Irak** and thousands more have come home with serious injuries. Because we are a big country and have a big ego, we cannot find it within ourselves to admit we made a very serious mistake.

We now say we are there to help them build a democracy. This of course is a very interesting proposition because right here in our own country we still have a big problem getting people to turnout for our own elections. Now that the **Irak Study Group** has finished its report and we have a new set of congressmen coming to **Washington, D.C.** next month, we will find out if they are truly going to make a difference.

Speaking of making a difference, it is also appropriate that we think about what we are going to do different next year. Are we going to stop smoking? Are we going to loose weight? Are we make some serious financial decisions? Are we going to call or write someone we have not had contact with in a long time? Again, the beginning of a new year is always a good time to make change.

On a different note, here at *La Voz de Brazoria County* we want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of our readers and advertisers. Putting out a community newspaper is a lot of work and sacrifice. We know that sometimes people do not always agree with everything we have to say. And we know that there are others who do indeed benefit from the kind of stories we include in *La Voz*.

We will continue to produce *La Voz de Brazoria County* for as long as we can. We started this newspaper in 1990 and with the exception of a few years, we are very proud that it has continued to be a part of the lives of the good people of **Brazoria County**.



**Alfredo R. Santos c/s
Editor**

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Jovita's Year Around Tamales



ABOVE: Jovita Gonzales is spreading the masa in the corn husks as part of the preparation for tamales. She learned the art of tamale making many years in the Rio Grande Valley and has brought this talent with her to **Angleton**. For tamales you can contact her at 997-2621 or 848-8461.



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Se Habla Español

¿Sabía Usted? Did You Know? Christmas Facts

The use of a Christmas wreath as a decoration on your front door, mantel or bay window symbolizes a sign of welcome and long life to all who enter.

Today poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant and are the number one flowering potted plant in the United States.

Real Christmas trees are an all-American product, grown in all 50 states, including Alaska and Hawaii.

Most artificial trees are manufactured in Korea, Taiwan, or Hong Kong.

For every real Christmas tree harvested, 2 to 3 seedlings are planted in its place.

In 1836, Alabama is the first state in the USA to declare Christmas a legal holiday.

The biggest selling Christmas single of all time is Bing Crosby's White Christmas.

Due to the time zones, Santa has 31 hours to deliver gifts? This means that he would have to visit 832 homes each second!

In 1937, the first postage stamp to commemorate Christmas was issued in Austria.

For every real Christmas tree harvested, 2 to 3 seedlings are planted in its place. Each hectare provides the daily oxygen requirements of 45 people.

Epiphany, 6th January, is the traditional end of the Christmas holiday and is the date on which we take down the tree and decorations. To do so earlier is thought to bring bad luck for the rest of the year. From the middle ages until the mid-nineteenth century, Twelfth Night was more popular than Christmas day, and even today some countries celebrate Epiphany as the most important day of the Christmas season.

Three years after Thomas Edison invented the electric light bulb in 1879, Edward H. Johnson, who worked for Edison's company, had Christmas tree bulbs especially made for him. He proudly displayed his electric tree lights at his home on Fifth Avenue, New York City. They caused a sensation although some years were to pass before mass-manufactured Christmas tree lights were widely available.

In America in 1822, the postmaster of Washington, DC, complained that he had to add 16 mailmen at Christmas to deal with cards alone. He wanted the number of cards a person could send limited by law. "I don't know what we'll do if this keeps on," he wrote.

Saint Nicholas, Santa Claus, presents, and trees

Saint Nicholas Day (December 6) was the traditional day for giving gifts to children. It is still the day on which children receive gifts from St. Nicholas in the Netherlands. Epiphany (January 6) is, in the western Church, the commemoration of day on which the three kings presented the baby Jesus with gifts.

Saint Nicholas was the bishop of Myra in Lycia, which is in modern Turkey, sometime before AD 350. Nothing is known of his life except for the legends that have built up around him, but he was associated with kindness to children. He was a widely admired saint throughout the eastern and western churches. The Dutch custom of giving presents to children on St. Nicholas Day was brought to America by early Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam, which was renamed New York when the British took over the colony. Santa Claus is the American pronunciation of Sinter Klaas, which was colloquial Dutch for Saint Nicholas.

In the US, gifts are now exchanged on Christmas Day in a sort of compromise of Dutch, German, and British gift-giving customs. The Christmas tree is a Christianized pagan custom that originated in Germany. German settlers introduced it in America. It became popular during the nineteenth century, and then later spread to Britain and Japan from the US.

The origin of the retail madness

During World War II it was necessary for Americans to mail Christmas gifts early for the troops in Europe to receive them in time. Merchants joined in the effort to remind the public to shop and mail early and the protracted shopping season was born. Since those days, retail merchants have been hard at work to escalate our retail observances this time of year. Accordingly, we shop longer and buy more than ever before. Retailers have taken the gift motif from Saint Nicholas' Day and Epiphany and have used the combination to supplant the meaning of Christmas. They have instituted a secular sacrament of shopping, which pays no attention at all to the arrival of the Giver who gave His all. They call it a season for giving, and with that laudable slogan have lured us into a time of great expectations, huge let-downs, and lascivious acquisitiveness. They could not have done this without our full cooperation—for instead of celebrating the arrival of our salvation, we jump with glee and clap our hands at the arrival of the UPS truck!

This column was put together by Ken Collins.

Tepeyac for several days, but on December 12, while rushing to find a priest to attend a seriously ill uncle, he took a short cut across the hill. The Virgin once again appeared and **Juan Diego** told her of the Bishop's request. The Virgin instructed him to pick roses from the usually barren and desolate hill and deliver them to Zumarraga as the sign.

Juan Diego gathered up the miraculous blossoms in his mantle and hurried off to complete his mission. Once again before the Bishop, he let the roses spill out before him. To the wonder of all assembled, a perfect image of **La Virgen of Guadalupe** was revealed emblazoned on **Juan Diego's** cloak.

Most wonderous of all, after 465 years, the image of the Virgen de Guadalupe

Juan Diego's mantle, carefully preserved in the new Basilica, has been subjected to extensive analysis over the years. Experts have authenticated the fabric as dating to the 16th century, but have been unable to determine the type of pigment from which the image was rendered. It seems doubtful that in the Colonial era in Mexico human hands were capable of creating a portrait of its exquisite nature. It is even doubtful it can be done in Mexico today. Most wonderous of all, after 465 years, the image of the Virgen de Guadalupe remains clearly imprinted on the miraculous cloak **without visible signs of deterioration.**

By order of the Bishop, a small church was soon constructed on the site designated by the Virgin. Skeptics are quick to point out the unlikely coincidence of the Virgin's appearance on Tepeyac, the very site of an Aztec temple dedicated to Tonatzin (earth goddess, mother of the gods and protectress of humanity) which had been devastated by order of Bishop Zumarraga.

The original church was replaced by a larger structure built in 1709. The Miracle of Guadalupe was officially recognized by the Vatican in 1745. The second sanctuary was declared a Basilica in 1904. A new Basilica, of modern design and enormous capacity, was dedicated in October of 1976. This is found in the northern section of present-day Mexico City.

In this and other churches dedicated to **La Virgen de Guadalupe** throughout the nation, millions of the faithful will gather December 12 for processions, prayers, songs, dances, and fireworks to honor "La Reina de México" (the Queen of Mexico).

Why should the **Virgin Mary** appearing to an Indian in recently conquered Mexico and speaking to him in **Nahuatl** call herself "of Guadalupe", a Spanish name? Did she want to be called *de Guadalupe* because of the statue of **Our Lady of Guadalupe** in **Extremadura, Spain?**

In all apparitions of the **Blessed Virgin Mary** she identified herself as the **Virgin Mary** and phrases like Mother of God or another of her titles, and was later usually known by the name of the place or region where she appeared (Lourdes, Fatima).

The origin of the name **Guadalupe** has always been a matter of controversy. It is nevertheless believed that the name came about because of the translation from **Nahuatl** to Spanish of the words used by the Virgin during the apparition to the ailing uncle of **Juan Diego**. It is believed that Our Lady used the

Aztec Nahuatl word of *coatlaxopeuh* which is pronounced "*quatlasupe*" and sounds remarkably like the Spanish word **Guadalupe**. **Coa** meaning serpent, **tla** being the noun ending which can be interpreted as "the", while **xopeuh** means to crush or stamp out. So Our Lady must have called herself the one "who crushes the serpent". Serpent-god Quetzalcoatl. Certainly, in this case She crushed the serpent, and few years later millions of



the natives were converted to Christianity. And the human sacrifices ended. It is interesting to note that in Genesis 3:15 (in the Old Testament) it is indicated a woman would step on the serpent's head.

After the miracle of **Guadalupe**, **Juan Diego** moved to a room attached to the chapel that housed the sacred image, after having given his business and property to his uncle; and he spent the rest of his life propagating the account of

the apparitions to his countrymen. He died on May 30, 1548, at the age of 74. **Juan Diego** said to the **Blessed Virgin Mary**: "I am a nobody, I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf" as a model of humility for all of us.

In July of 2002 **Juan Diego** was canonized (declared a Saint) in the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City.



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Molly Santos

INFORME DE NCLR SUGIERE REFORMA DEL MERCADO DE \$45 MIL MILLONES DE REMESAS POR LATINOS

Los cambios podrían ahorrarles mil millones de dólares a las familias hispanas en los Estados Unidos y en América Latina

Washington, DC – Un nuevo análisis de las remesas - el dinero enviado por los trabajadores inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos a los miembros de su familia en el extranjero – realizado por el Consejo Nacional de La Raza (NCLR, por sus siglas en inglés), la organización latina de derechos civiles y abogacía más importante de la nación, afirma que reformar el mercado de \$45 mil millones de transferencia de remesas por los latinos podría ayudar a poner a los hispanos en una trayectoria hacia mayor prosperidad y riqueza.



Janet Murguía

Reforming the Remittance Transfer Market precisa que una razón importante de los altos honorarios es una carencia de competencia por los bancos y las uniones de crédito. Siete de cada diez hispanos en los Estados Unidos (el 70%) que envían remesas utilizan una compañía de transferencia electrónica. Solamente el 11% envían fondos a través de un

banco y el 2% a través de una unión de crédito, a pesar del hecho de que estas instituciones financieras proporcionan más opciones de servicios a un costo más bajo.

“Casi la mitad de los remitentes de remesas no tienen cuentas bancarias, a pesar de ello, los estudios demuestran que envían un promedio de \$100 hasta \$300 por mes a los miembros de su familia. No sólo es lo correcto, sino también inteligente, que más instituciones financieras ofrezcan servicios de envío de remesas de bajo o sin ningún costo como parte de las cuentas corrientes o las cuentas de ahorros, que ayudarían a estos trabajadores a incorporarse a la corriente financiera convencional,” notó Murguía.

“Para ser completamente parte de la sociedad de ‘adquisición’ de América, los latinos deben conservar el dinero que ganan para que puedan ahorrar, acrecentar su haber capital, y participar en el sueño americano de compra de vivienda, una educación universitaria para sus niños, y una jubilación cómoda,” dijo Murguía. “Reformas en la industria de la transferencia de las remesas puede servir como la entrada para que los trabajadores hispanos abran cuentas bancarias y utilicen otros servicios financieros que pueden ayudarlos a acrecentar riqueza.”

El informe de NCLR, *Reforming the Remittance Transfer Market*, sigue estudios anteriores realizados por el Multilateral Investment Fund y Pew Hispanic Center que descubrió que reducir los honorarios de las compañías de transferencia electrónicas por apenas cinco puntos porcentuales podría generar ahorros anuales de mil millones de dólares para las familias latinas aquí y en el exterior.

“Los trabajadores y sus familias están perdiendo dinero innecesariamente . . .

“Los trabajadores y sus familias están perdiendo dinero innecesariamente porque las compañías de transferencias electrónicas cobran honorarios exageradamente altos por la transacción - a menudo excediendo el 20% de cada transacción - que no son explicados claramente. Estas prácticas se aprovechan de la gente que trabaja arduamente y que están ayudando a apoyar a sus familias,” explicó Janet Murguía, presidente y gerente general de NCLR. *“Instamos al Congreso para que actúe ahora para proteger a estos trabajadores y a sus dólares.”*

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LA CASA DE MI ABUELITA

By Marisa Cano

"Oh, Mija, I am impressed," exclaimed my mother as I pulled my pants over my oversized pampers for the first time, all by myself. It was Easter of 1988, I was just a month shy of turning two and we were having Easter supper at my Grandmother's house. And yes, I was the baby of the hour. How do I remember this? Well, I don't actually. It is on an old family videotape.

But I don't need any videotapes to remember life at my grandma's house. Even though I didn't grow up there, I did grow up there. You see, I was born and raised in **Austin, Texas**, thousands of miles away from my grandmother's house two-story house on 12th street in **Saginaw, Michigan**.

For months at a time, I was separated from the house, but for a few times of the year the house on 12th was my home. It was the place of good food, laughter and family. For those few weeks out of the year I truly knew what it was to have and be surrounded by family.

And I don't need any videotapes to remember her, my grandmother, either.

I have so many memories at that house, too many. But like I said, I don't need any videotapes to remember. And I don't need any videotapes to remember her, my grandmother, either. How can I forget her?

How many other grandmothers will tell you about your aunt's conception! She was silly sometimes, but she was the family's rock and center. She cooked good, she smelled good, she was good. She took care of everyone and somehow had a way of making everyone feel special. Sometimes this was by cooking for them, by talking with them or by giving them a precious gift. As for me, I was one of the

ones who got to hear her stories. She told me about a lot of things; — her life, her pains, her disappointments and her dreams — and through these stories I felt I had a better idea of where she came from, where I came from. I loved her for that. I love her for that. I always said that one day I was going to go to **Michigan** by myself and that I was going to stay and visit her for two weeks. Then she



could tell me more stories and teach me how to cook. But I never did get to take that trip.

On Aug. 20, 2004, my world came crashing down when the morning before I was to move into my dorm my freshman year, my mother called and informed me that my grandma wasn't doing so well. By the time I got home that afternoon, she was already gone. Two days later, when I should have been meeting my floormates and celebrating my new college life, I was on a plane to **Michigan** and saying goodbye to one of the people I most adored.

That weekend was a blur. I don't think I'd ever cried as much as I did that weekend.

That weekend was a blur. I don't think I'd ever cried as much as I did that weekend. But once the funeral was over, I returned to Austin and tried to continue with my life. I knew that's what she would have wanted. As time went on, I hurt less and the wound of emptiness I felt, though

never to be whole again, began to heal. Until last month.

My mother returned home from one of another trips back to **Michigan**. She'd been going back every few months to work with her brothers and sisters on all the legal matters, so this was not out of the ordinary and like always, she brought more things home with her from the old 12th Street house. But this time was different. This time, she informed me that that the house would be put up for sale this coming spring.

My heart dropped. All of the memories came flooding back. That house is everything to me. It is family reunions, weddings, graduations, birthdays, holidays. It is late night talks on the front porch, family picnics in the back yard, mariachi serenades. It is **Selena** look-alike contests; hide and go seek; all-night conversation with my cousins; goofing off with my aunts in the kitchen; yelling at someone to get out of the bathroom; seeing my mother smile. It is laughter, my childhood, life, death and everything in between.

The house is my grandmother.

How can I say goodbye to everything it stands for? How can I not be upset that the house my mother grew up in, that I grew up in, will no longer be ours? How can I not mourn the fact that my unborn children will never know what it means to be at the center of our family? How can I not be upset that this is one other part of me, of my family that my children will never know and never understand; — that once the house is gone, they will never know *her*.

The chances of my going back to

Michigan before the house is sold are slim to none. Upon the news, I realized I will never step foot inside that house again. I will never see the *Virgin* statue in the living room, the *recuerdos* and knick-knacks in the kitchen, the pictures on the wall, hot food on the table. None of it. I felt angry.

Maybe it's better to remember the house just the way it was, before she passed away,

But then I got to thinking that, maybe, it's better this way. Maybe it's better to remember the house just the way it was, before she passed away, before it was cleaned out, when it was full of life and everything hers. When it was her.

I've been looking a lot in the mirror lately and slowly I am beginning to see her, and not just in the hips. I see her in my bluntness, my goofiness, my over-shares, my tears, my compassion, my pain, my patience, my honesty, my love for family, my sincerity and in my tireless ambition. And as much as it upsets me that my children will never know her or the house, I came to realize something: *I am her*. And for my children, I will be that house.

For my cousin Sarah

Marisa Cano is a student at The University of Texas at Austin.



Marisa and her grandmother in one of the last photographs.

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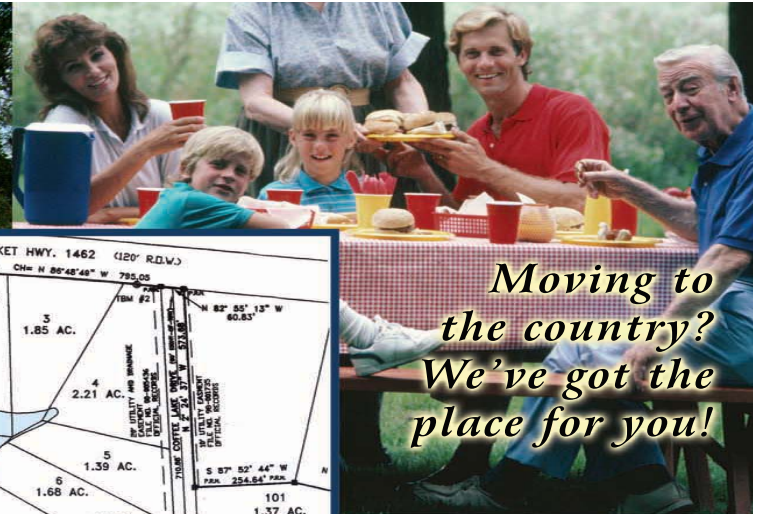
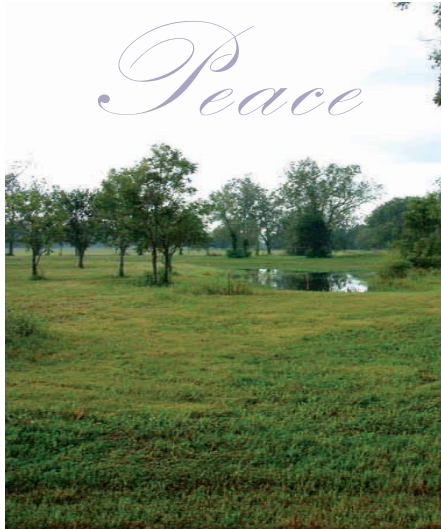
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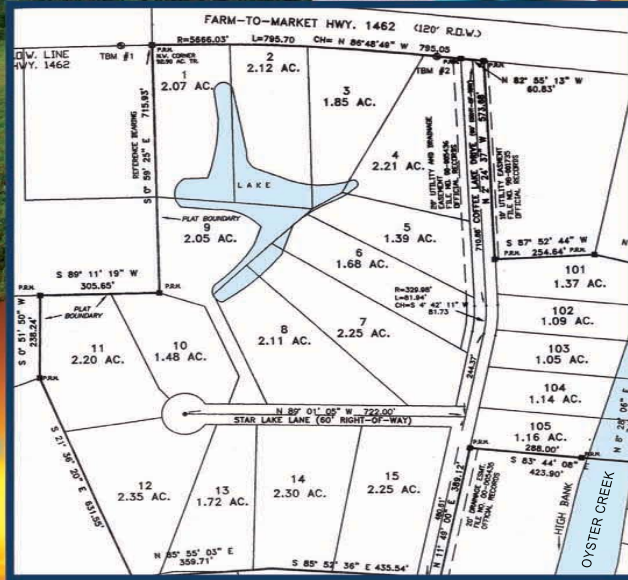
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