Characterizing Harlingen Eccentricities

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The following humorous compilation was being circulated via the internet in October 2005. It is at least the second version, the first having been both added to and revised. Its original author is unknown but obviously someone very knowledgeable about Harlingen and its society. Despite its humor and exaggeration it does reflect a truth, that is, Harlingen for all of its 70,000+ population is in many ways still small-town rural in nature, and somewhat provincial to boot. It is an historic item because it documents some aspects of the social scene prevailing at this point in time in the community. Some Harlingen parents, and this is not necessarily only limited to the extended Latino families, find it difficult to "cut the apron strings" and allow their children to sink or swim on their own. In other instances the grown children, who have moved away, find it too challenging to survive outside the calm environs of Harlingen and their tight-knit loving families of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and readily return.

Subject: Harlingen ~ Love It or Leave It, Then Come Back

1. Some people call it "Arlington."
2. Combes is considered another town.
3. La Feria is considered "out of town."
4. People remember hurricanes fondly.
5. A big concert for us is some dude playing at McKelvey Park. (And everybody goes.)
6. We get excited if a new restaurant opens in town, even if it's an IHOP.
7. You spend 5 years at TSTC.
8. Going for a cruise means driving down Harrison and Tyler.
9. You know what a #1 or a #7 is at Whataburger.
10. You remember fondly when the Cardinals won Regionals and still talk about it.
11. You consider yourself a "Cardinal".... regardless.
12. Olive Garden and Applebee's are considered upscale restaurants.
13. You camp out with your family at Boggus Stadium for high school playoff tickets.
14. There's a difference between the HEBs.
15. You claim you want to leave, but you never do.
16. You have Whataburger and Pizza Hut on speed dial.
17. You grew up watching Larry James and Rogelio.
18. The burning sugarcane doesn't bother you.
19. You secretly love it but won't admit it.
20. "Meeting a celebrity" means standing in line at HEB next to the local weatherman.
21. Your idea of a traffic jam is five cars waiting to pass a Winter Texan on 77 Sunshine Strip.
22. The morning commute is aggravated by "heavy traffic" between 7:55 and 8:05 AM.
23. "Vacation" means driving to South Padre Island.
24. You still wear your letterman jacket --10 years after high school.
25. Your work or classes are canceled because of "dangerous" 30 degree weather.
26. You see people wear tank tops and flip flops at funerals.
27. You think of the major food groups as fajitas, tortillas, and beer.
28. When it rains it's the talk of the town.
29. When it snows it's a national disaster. (Snow?)
30. During the summer, the car trunk doubles as an oven for your groceries.
31. You consider McAllen a metropolis.
32. The *Valley Morning Star* covers national and international headlines on one page but requires 6 pages for high school football.
33. You've had to switch from Heat to A/C in the same day.
34. You only own 3 spices: salt, pepper, and *picante*.
35. You think that opening weekend for white wing and deer are national holidays.
36. You find 98 degrees "a little warm" and 60 degrees downright freezing.
37. You think the only seasons are hot, damn hot, and winter.
38. You know if another person is from out of town the second he or she walks in the door.
39. "Overachievers" go to A&M or UT-Austin; the rest must choose between TSTC, UTB, or UT PanAm.
40. You've had several friends move off and move back within a couple of months.
41. All the streets have President's names, numbers, or letters of the alphabet.
42. RioFest, Jackson Street Jubilee, and Blues on the Hill are the major social events for the year.
43. You're old if you remember Six Shooter Junction.
44. Honeymoon means "San Antonio."
45. You get this e-mail and send it to all of your Harlingen friends. (And a few choice others too that don't know what they are missing.)
46. You're sweating on the back porch at midnight.