



# Bayou Foliage

Volume 16 No. 10 October 1998

A publication of the Armand Bayou Nature Center Volunteers  
"Interested + Informed + Involved"

## October Calendar

- 3 Stewardship Saturday (Trail, forest, facilities)
- 4 Volunteer Board Meeting, 4:00
- 8 Volunteer Meeting
- 8 Bayou Foliage Inputs Due
- 17 Stewardship (Prairie and marsh)
- 23 & 24 Creepy Crawlers

### ABNCV MEETING Thursday, October 8, 1998 ABNC Auditorium

- 6:30 - Snacks and Conversation
- 7:00 - Program
- 8:00 - Volunteer Meeting
- 9:00 - Adjourn

Our program this month is two fold. First, Mike Isermann, Director of Parks and Recreation for Pasadena, and a member of the ABNC Board of Directors, will give a short presentation outlining the plans for the new entryway at the Nature Center. This will be followed by a surprise program. Please join us for what I am sure will be an enjoyable evening.

**PRINTING COMPLIMENTS OF  
GELANESE**

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

**WILDFLOWERS! WILDFLOWERS!**  
10:00 a.m., Saturday October 10<sup>th</sup>

### ABNC Auditorium

Calling all wildflower enthusiasts! Carolyn Collins has rescheduled her program for this date. She will give a slide presentation on Texas wildflowers and may also take us on a short prairie walk to see what flowers can be found right here at ABNC.

**FARM TOOL CLASS!**  
10:00 a.m., Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup>

### ABNC Woodshop

Have you wanted to know more about all those tools in the woodshop at the Nature Center? What they are called? What they are used for? If so, this class is for you. Tom Scarcella, who is one of our own volunteers, will be the instructor.

*The sign-up sheets for these programs can be found in the breakroom.*

*Jean Kruse*

### PRAIRIE PLANT IDENTIFICATION

Join us at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup> for Clean Water for Armand Bayou's first program especially designed to introduce ABNC volunteers to prairie plant identification. Dr. Baron Rector, Texas A&M Range Ecologist, will train volunteers in basic plant identification skills and how to prepare and mount herbarium specimens. It will prove to be a fun and informative day and an opportunity to participate in a scientific study right here at ABNC. Dr. Rector is a walking catalog of prairie history and information. Space is limited to 20 people. Preferences will be given to volunteers who can commit to assisting the Clean Water for Armand Bayou personnel with monitoring work one day a quarter. This will be the first of several quarterly volunteer training classes on prairie monitoring. Come join us! Call Colin Shackelford at (281)291-0551 to reserve a space.

## *Happy Birthday!*

Ramon McKinney	10/3	Susan Williams	10/6
Joan Henderson	10/6	Becky Brignac	10/7
Travis Lovelace	10/14	Bill Howe	10/15
Jim Wilson	10/18	Joyce Roberts	10/20
Jonathan Perez	10/22	Jennifer Bingel	10/25
Carolyn Sue Manley	10/27	Bob Hendrix	10/30
Dewanna Norris	10/30	Bill Stephens	10/31

## Calling All Landscapers, Weekend Gardeners, and Prairie Enthusiasts!

### Clean Water for Armand Bayou Needs You!

In case you aren't familiar with us, Clean Water for Armand Bayou is a water quality project of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Texas Sea Grant Program. We are located right here at Armand Bayou Nature Center with our offices in the Hanson Farm House. We are doing several things in cooperation with ABNC to help promote and educate people about runoff or non-point source water pollution. If any of these projects look interesting to you and you want to help, please give us a call. Contact information is at the end of the article.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP ON THE PRAIRIE!** Part of our demonstration rangeland management project will involve monitoring how burning, mowing, and Tallow control change the prairie vegetation and effect water quality. Come participate in our prairie monitoring projects. You can learn the particulars of plant identification, vegetation analysis, herbarium specimen preparation, photo monitoring and be an active participant in a scientific project (no lab coats needed, just boots!).

**COME BE AN ARMAND BAYOU TALLOW WHACKER!** We will be holding periodic Tallow Whacking days on the ABNC prairie. We will announce Tallow Whacking dates in the newsletter. Sharpen your machete!

**WE NEED YOUR HELP IN THE GARDEN!** We are transforming the Hanson Farm House into a teaching landscape! Working with ABNC staff and volunteers, we will design and install a resource efficient landscape. This will be a beautiful and environmentally friendly addition to ABNC as well as an educational tool.

Some of the worst pollution on Armand Bayou comes from nutrients running off of suburban lawns and into the bayou. The landscape we are installing at the Hanson House will require little nutrient input and will help absorb water. Once installed, the Hanson House Conservationscape will be the focus of a major education effort focused on conservation landscaping. If you want to learn basic landscaping principles and how you can incorporate conservation landscaping into your own home, then join us this fall and get some dirt under your nails. We will need help with the installation and maintenance of the Hanson House Conservationscape!

**WE NEED YOU IN THE WETLANDS!** As part of a research project in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture we will install several peizometers (a fancy name for a very simple tool which is a well used to monitor water levels) to monitor water table levels in our wetlands. This will help us understand how our wetlands function so we can better protect them. We will need volunteers to help monitor and maintain these monitoring devices.

**HOW CAN WE BE REACHED?** If you want to help out in any of these projects or just want more information, you can call Colin Shackelford at (281) 291-0551 or John Jacob at (281)291-9252. Give us a call; we'd love for all ABNC volunteers to participate.



### **THE LANDSCAPING REVOLUTION AUTHOR ANDY WASOWSKI TO SPEAK**

Native plant expert and author Andy Wasowski will speak at the University of Houston Clear Lake on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Andy's talk, *The Landscaping Revolution*, will focus on the evolving trend of conservation landscaping. Andy will discuss the environmental costs of traditional landscaping practices and how landscaping with native plants benefit the environment while providing beautiful, functional and low maintenance landscapes. Andy and his wife Sally are the authors of the premier guides to native landscaping in Texas. Andy's talk is sponsored by Clean Water for Armand Bayou, The Environmental Institute of Houston, and Armand Bayou Nature Center. Admission will be \$3.00. For more information, please call Colin Shackelford at (281) 291-0551.

## FALL FESTIVAL NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> AND 15<sup>TH</sup>

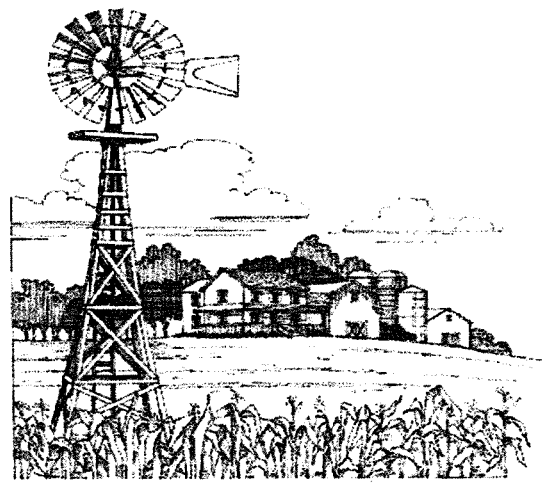
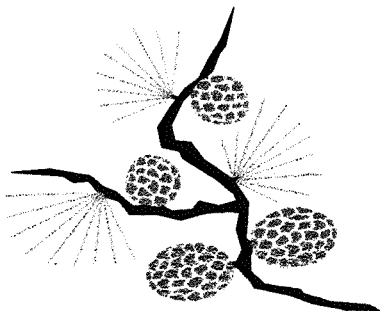
YES - IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR AGAIN. PLANNING FOR OUR ANNUAL NOVEMBER EVENT IS WELL UNDER WAY, AND WE ARE AGAIN ASKING FOR YOUR HELP. WE NEED ASSISTANCE IN A WIDE VARIETY OF CRAFTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES. THE SIGN-UP SHEETS CAN BE FOUND IN THE BREAKROOM, AND ATTACHED TO THEM IS A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT YOU WOULD BE ASKED TO DO FOR A PARTICULAR ACTIVITY. NO SURPRISES HERE! FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WOULD LIKE TO TRY SOMETHING NEW, TRAINING WILL BE PROVIDED BEFORE HAND IF YOU WISH. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND JOIN US AT WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING EVENTS AT ABNC.

JEAN KRUSE

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### **VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH** **HANNA DRAGO**

Hanna became a volunteer in September 1995, although she had contributed to the center before that time by photographing much of the flora of the area. She was first attracted to the nature center years ago by the uniqueness of having a wilderness in an urban setting. Not often seen without her camera, she has taken hundreds of pictures of events, classes, summer camp, new structures, and volunteer training, just to mention a few. Her outstanding photographs are seen in *Along the Bayou* each month, and she reports that photographing people and events is her favorite activity here. Hanna also volunteers as a greeter and receptionist in the admissions building and has helped during numerous special events. In addition, she currently serves on the volunteer board as Admissions Coordinator. Hanna says she has enjoyed seeing all the positive changes that have taken place at the center in the past few years and hopes we can keep the preserve as pristine as possible. One of Hanna's greatest pleasures at ABNC is the people she works with and all the friends she has made. Thank you Hanna for all you do for us!



### **BREAKFAST ON THE WOODSTOVE**

Bright and early Uncle Jim was up and in the kitchen. He shaved the pine knot for kindling which he would use to build the fire for breakfast. Everything needed had been set out the night before: fresh eggs from the hen house, the slab of bacon taken from the pie safe, neatly sliced and ready, and the coffee pot cleaned and filled with fresh water. Two nice sweet potatoes lay next to the eggs, ready to be sliced and fried after the bacon.

In almost no time, the stove was hot and ready. The coffeepot was placed on one of the back eyes, and the bacon was neatly placed in the iron skillet on a front burner. The biscuits were quickly mixed, cut and placed on the greased, shallow bake sheet. These were placed in the waiting oven. The coffee water was almost boiling and ready for the coffee to be added.

He sat the coffeepot over to one side to cut down on the heat and let the pot boil slowly. The bacon was turned to brown the other side. Uncle Jim peeled and sliced the sweet potatoes. These he put in the skillet after the bacon was done. The coffee was moved from the heat. A little cold water from the water dipper quickly settled the coffee grounds.

The delicious odors filled the kitchen. The fried bacon was put in the bowl and the fried sweet potatoes were stacked on a dinner plate. The eggs were broken into the hot skillet. By then the biscuits were a golden brown, and he placed them on a trivet and covered them with a kitchen towel. The eggs were ready, as was everything for breakfast. After our plates were served with the morning delights, and our coffee cups filled, we sat down to one of the best homecooked meals ever.

*(This article was written by Jean West, niece of Jimmy Martyn, and originally appeared in the Bayou Foliage on March 17, 1989.)*

# ENVIRONMENTAL NOTEBOOK

## Ecological Literacy, Part 1

By Lou Wheatcraft

In this second in this series of articles, I am focusing on the value and importance of environmental education, ecological literacy, and sustainable development. In upcoming articles I will explore the topics of sustainable development, eco-efficiency, industrial ecology, and bio-mimicry.

Why is it so important that we teach ecological concepts in all our programs at ABNC? To me the reason is that we have a lot to learn from the ecosystems around us. In a very thought provoking book, "The Web of Life", Fritjof Capra brings together recent scientific concepts such as the theory of complexity, Gaia theory, chaos theory, and other explanations of the properties of organisms, social systems, and ecosystems. Capra's findings provide a new foundation for ecological policies that could allow us to build and sustain communities without impacting the opportunities for future generations. At the end of the book he includes an epilog on ecological literacy. This is a very powerful chapter tying together ecological and human systems - amplifying the importance of environmental education and the importance of everyone becoming ecologically literate. The following is a detailed summary of Capra's chapter on Ecological Literacy.

Capra says that reconnecting with the web of life means building and nurturing sustainable communities in which we can satisfy our needs and aspirations without diminishing the chances of future generations. For this task we can learn valuable lessons from the study of ecosystems, which are sustainable communities of plants, animals, and microorganisms. To understand these lessons, we need to learn the basic principles of ecology. Everyone needs to become ecologically literate or "ecoliterate," meaning understanding the principles of organization of ecological communities (ecosystems) and using those principles for creating sustainable human communities.

The theory of living systems provides a conceptual framework for the link between ecological communities and human communities. Both are living systems that exhibit the same basic principles of organization. They are networks that are organizationally closed, but open to the flows of energy and resources; their structures are determined by their histories of structural changes. What we can learn from them is how to live sustainably. During more than three billion years of evolution the planet's ecosystems have organized themselves in subtle and complex ways so as to maximize sustainability. This wisdom of nature is the essence of ecoliteracy.

We can formulate a set of principles of organization that may be identified as the basic principles of ecology and use them as guidelines to build sustainable human communities. These principles are: Interdependence, recycling, closed systems, partnerships, flexibility, and diversity. In this article I will cover the first three principles, next month I will cover the rest.

1. Interdependence. All members of an ecological community are interconnected in a vast and intricate network of relationships, the web of life. They derive their essential properties and, in fact, their very existence from the relationships to other things. Interdependence - the mutual dependence of all life processes on one another - is the nature of all ecological relationships. The behavior of every living member of the ecosystem depends on the behavior of many others. The success of the whole community depends on the success of its individual members, while the success of each member depends on the success of the community as a whole.

Understanding ecological interdependence means understanding relationships. It requires the shifts of perception that are characteristic of systems thinking - from the parts to the whole, from objects to relationships, from contents to patterns. A sustainable human community is aware of the multiple relationships among its members. Nourishing the community means nourishing those relationships.

2. Recycling. The cyclical nature of ecological processes is an important principle of ecology. The ecosystem's feedback loops are the pathways along which nutrients are continually recycled. Being open systems, all organisms in an ecosystem produce wastes, but what is waste for one species is food for another, so that the ecosystem as a whole remains without waste. Communities of organisms have evolved in this way over billions of years, continually using and recycling the same molecules of minerals, water, and air.

The lesson for human communities here is obvious. A major clash between economics and ecology derives from the fact that nature is cyclical, whereas our industrial systems are linear - a one way flow of energy and materials. Our businesses take resources, transform them into products plus waste, and sell the products to consumers, who discard more waste when they have consumed the products. Sustainable patterns of production and consumption need to be cyclical, imitating the cyclical processes in nature. To achieve such cyclical patterns we need to fundamentally redesign our businesses and our economy.

*[Note: One implementation of this concept is Industrial Ecology, which will be the subject of a future article.]*

3. Closed systems. Ecosystems differ from individual organisms in that they are largely (but not completely) closed systems with respect to the flow of matter, while being open with respect to the flow of energy. The primary source for that flow of energy is the sun. Solar energy, transformed into chemical energy by the photosynthesis of green plants, drives most ecological cycles.

The implications for maintaining sustainable human communities are again obvious. Solar energy in its many forms - sunlight for solar heating and photovoltaic electricity, wind and hydropower, biomass, and so on - is the only kind of energy that is renewable, economically efficient, and environmentally benign.

Next month I will cover Capra's last three principles of ecology: partnerships, flexibility, and diversity.

# Cardinal Quilt Questions

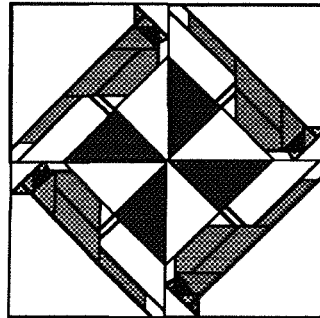
**What is it?** A handmade quilt with a Cardinal design (see illustration). Cardinals are red; pinwheels are blue; background is off-white; border is blue; and underside is small country print in mustard with red berries.

**When is it?** The quilt will be on display at Armand Bayou Nature Center starting October 1. Raffle tickets may be purchased between now and the drawing which will be held on Sunday, November 15, 1998 at approximately 4:00 p.m.

**Where is it?** The 'Cardinals' quilt will be on display after October 1 in the entry pavilion at Armand Bayou Nature Center.

**Why is it?** The quilt has been a volunteer project tradition for the past ten years. It is made prior to the Martyn Farm Fall Festival and illustrates the type of handiwork done by turn-of-the-century women on a typical Gulf Coast farm.

**Who is it?** Many volunteers have worked on this project over the years. This year's quilt was created by the loving hands of: Mary Ann Tucker, Pat Grimes, Colleen Ecord, Carol MacGregor, Jody McKinney, Marjorie Borey, and Barbara Hill. Volunteers put in over 300 hours to create this special piece of nature art.



Raffle tickets for this quilt are \$1.00 each, or six for \$5.00. Tickets may be purchased at the nature center or by completing and returning this form with payment (cash or check) by Saturday, November 7, 1998. Tickets stubs will be sent by return mail.

I would like to purchase:

Quantity	Description		Unit Price		Total
	Set(s) of six quilt raffle tickets	x	\$5.00	=	\$
	Individual quilt raffle tickets	x	\$1.00	=	\$

**Grand Total = \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

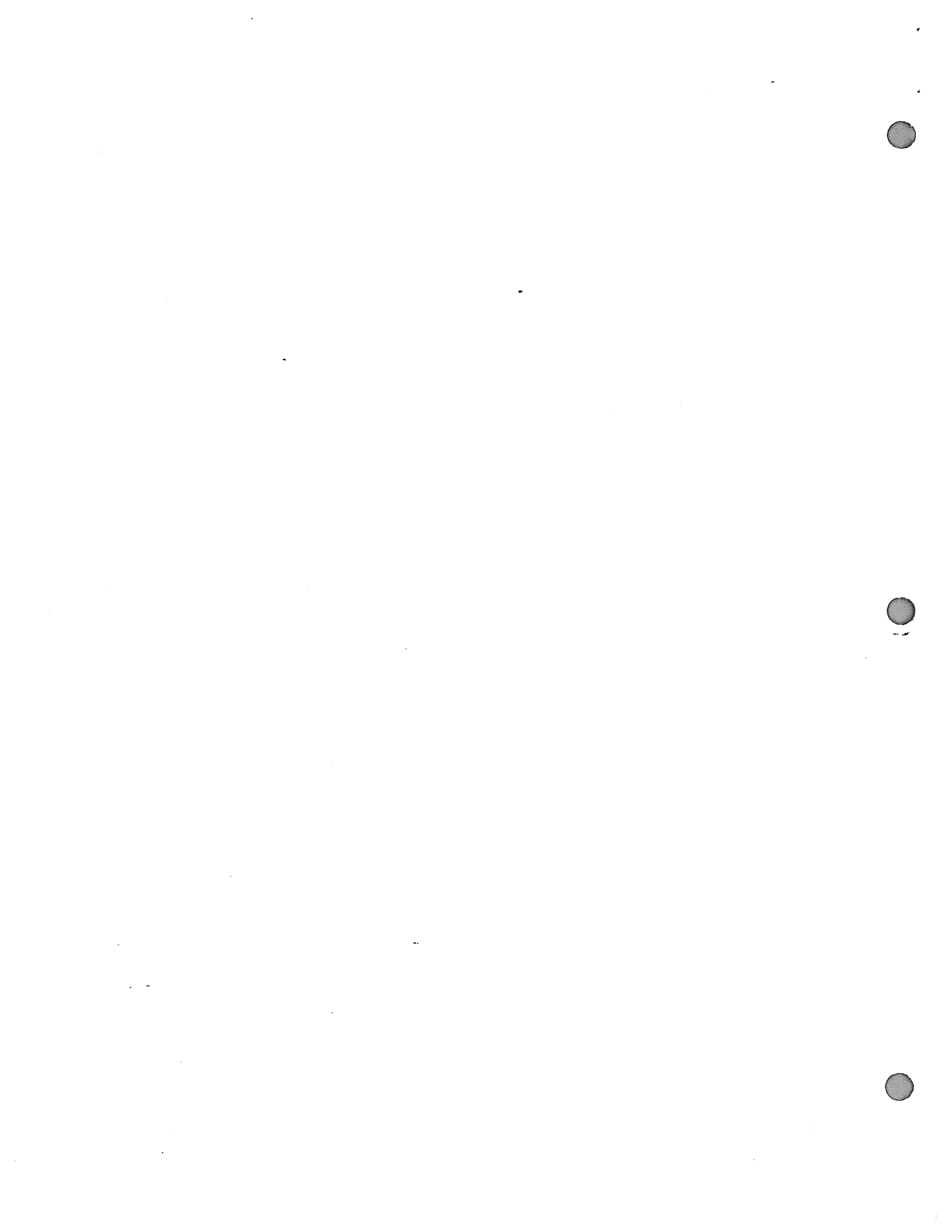
Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: **Quilt Raffle  
ABNC  
P.O. Box 58828  
Houston, TX 77258**

Please make checks payable to:  
**Armand Bayou Nature Center**



## VOLUNTEER DUTY SCHEDULE

In an attempt to take some of the load off of the Coordinators, and to help cut down on our "no show" rate, a list of the persons who have volunteered for various assignments will be printed in the Bayou Foliage each month. If you are scheduled for a particular duty and you are unable to attend, please use this schedule to try to find your own substitute. You may be able to trade weekends, or swap a Saturday for a Sunday with someone who has the same duty another time during the month. If you do trade, please be sure to call the appropriate coordinator and the ABNC desk to inform them.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>11:00 TRAIL</u>	<u>2:00 TRAIL</u>	<u>INFO. SERVICES</u>	<u>FARM INTER.</u>	<u>FARM DEMO</u>	<u>NAT. HISTORY DEMO</u>
Sat. 10/3	Jim Crabb	Anne Fincher	Danny Yancey	Eleanor Stanley	Jane Bingel (Ropemaking)	Ruby Dilgren (Bats)
Sun. 10/4	--	Patty Gill	Paul Brunkow	Marsha Goss	Ann Brinley (Bobbin Lace)	Zel Arbuckle (Reptiles)
Sat. 10/10	--	Ramon McKinney	Joyce Roberts	Paula Thorson	Irene Ward (Butter Churn)	Pat Grimes (Snakes)
Sun 10/11	--	Carol MacGregor	Ken Russell	Polly Sverdlin	Patrick Worick (Blacksmith)	Eldine Owen (Snakes)
Sat. 10/17	Louise Peck	Ray Parker	Joan Shack	Jane Bingel	Larry Veale (Indian Crafts)	Polly Sverdlin (Bird Adaptations)
Sun 10/18	--	Cris Santiago	Merle Bunde	Eleanor Haskew	Mary Ann Tucker (Basket Weaving)	Christine Ribeiro (Pond Life)
Sat. 10/24	--	--	Joan Henderson	Susan Williams	Patrick Wornick (Blacksmith)	Louise Peck (Owls)
Sun. 10/25	--	Merle Bundy	Doug Barfoot	Christine Ribeiro	Jim Callen (Farm Equipment)	Eleanor Stanley (Reptiles)
10/31	Ron Natole	Joe Bryan	Jean Kruse	Larry Kruse	Tom Scarella (Tin Lanterns)	Pat Doerr (Bird Feathers)

## 1998 VOLUNTEER BOARD

	<u>Home</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Office</u>
Helen Burton	Chair	281-474-7133	Hanna Drago	Admissions
Jean Kruse	Vice Chair	281-486-0787	Polly Sverdlin	Weekend Demos
Patsy Cashion	Secretary	281-485-2681	Cris Santiago	Weekend Trail
Georgia Colyer	Treasurer	281-996-7888	-- Vacant --	Weekday Farm
Chuck Snyder	Stewardship	281-480-1550	Ed Adams	Weekday Trail
Ruby Dilgren	Interpretation	281-488-1727	Susan Williams	Newsletter
Michael Vu	Outreach	281-471-1114		

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