

Look Ahead

MARCH

- 3 Stewardship Saturday
8:30 a.m.
- 8 Volunteer Board
Meeting, 5:30pm CR3
- 8 Volunteer Meeting,
6:30pm
- 10 HAS Bird Survey,
7 a.m.
- 11 Daylight Savings Time
begins @ 2 a.m.
- 17 *Bayou Foliage*
Deadline
- 17 Stewardship Saturday
8:30 a.m.
- 31 Trash Bash, 8:30am
@ Bay Area Park

APRIL

- 5 Volunteer Board
Meeting, 5:30pm CR3
- 7 Stewardship Saturday,
8:30 a.m.
- 14 HAS Bird Survey,
7 a.m.
- 12 Volunteer Meeting,
6:30pm
- 21 Earth Day 10-4

When you are finished with this publication please recycle it.

Thanks!

Volunteer Spotlight

Tom Solomon started volunteering at ABNC in February 2006, as a result of participating in the Master Naturalist classes here, and already logged 116 hours in his first year! He volunteers as part of our wonderful Gem crew of master carpenters and maintenance guys and is active as a Prairie Friday enthusiast and prairie pyromaniac.

He was a Master Gardner before becoming a Master Naturalist, and his skill and interest in propagation make him a very valuable member of our prairie restoration team. Over the last several years, thousands of native prairie plants have been rein-

troduced into our prairies, thanks to the efforts of volunteers like Tom. He



Tom with prairie transplants

said he saw what Dick Benoit was doing in the prairie, and he was inspired by it.

Tom was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, and didn't make it to this area

till 1992. He was certified as a master electrician, which is how he put himself through college, and he also uses those skills here at the nature center. In college, he got a degree in chemical engineering, then a masters in chemistry, then an MBA!

He maintains about 400 African violets at home, collects baseball cards and silhouettes, and back when he was a licensed pilot, he owned his own plane. A true renaissance man!

The staff here enjoy his energy and enthusiasm and are very glad he's part of our ABNC team.

Staff Spotlight

In this new column one of ABNC's staff members will be introduced each month. It seems only fair to begin with the person who has been at the nature center the longest. George Regmund has been a member of the

ABNC staff for 31 years having served as naturalist, education coordinator, assistant director, executive director and biologist. After being at the helm as executive director for six years he realized this was not his niche and re-

quested to step down from the position. He returned to what he does best...being an educator and biologist. Through the years George has taught thousands of students, both adult and children.

(Continued on page 7)



**Polly Swerdlin
Chair 2007**

**Armand Bayou
Nature Center
Volunteer Board
2007**

**Staff
Roster**

From the Rocking Chair

The Brainstorm Meeting in January has given us a lot to think about. Folks attending and emailing gave us tons of fresh ideas, several old ones to re-visit, and even some questionable ones that might eventually work out after all. I'm even more excited about this year than I was of last.

Perhaps this newsletter is out before Volunteer Orientation on Feb 24 when we are hoping to see several new faces. Once they

get acquainted with us, please help with their training by offering to be their "buddy." Remember how you felt as a newbie?

Trash Bash is on March 31. I hope to see you there, mucking in the bayou and cleaning up our small but important corner.

As I will cover at the general meeting, April 21 is our Earth Day celebration. Staff has done a fine job so far of getting a number of outside exhibitors. I hope

several volunteers can help out as Trail Guides, Demonstrators, and such. We want to have lots of cookies and such to sell, so get out your favorite recipes. I am going to give out awards for the three best ones. Someone will have to judge...tough job, right?

"Our village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it."

Henry David Thoreau

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Christine Mattox	Ext 32	Shauna Trevino	Ext 13

ABNC Volunteer Meeting Minutes February 8, 2007

Program: Diana Foss from Texas Parks and Wildlife gave an interesting talk on bats.

Old Business:

Staff Report - Signup for training - insects, animal handling, and farm implements. Volunteer Spotlight is on Tom Solomon. Tom is a new volunteer who also is a master gardener. He has been working on restoring plants to our prairie.

Secretary report - The January report was approved.

Treasurer's report - The January treasury report was approved. We have \$2725 in the treasury plus \$1210 in the windmill fund.

New Business:

Budget - The budget was approved. Income from recycle, cookies, donations and demos is about \$1100. Outgo from bank service, administrative cost, speaker gifts is about

\$400. Delta is about \$700. Predicted balance at the end of this year is just over \$2000.

Bylaws - We expect a report of revisions to be presented in March.

Newsletter - The deadline for material to the editors will be the second Saturday following the volunteer meeting. Email Mary Alice or leave hard copies in the Volunteer Office.

Brainstorming Session - The volunteers voted on the top 10 items by a secret ballot of the items. Polly will sort the voting and announce the top 10 items.

Events - April 21 is Earth Day. The volunteers will be participating. Eleanor Stanley will be spearheading the cookie sale. March 31 is Trash Bash. March 3 is Scout work day. Email Anne Brinly if you have an idea of work for them to do.

Vice Chair Report
Meeting topics: March 8 will be

edible plants by Ed Adams. Be prepared to eat the results. Kathy and Gary Clarke will be our April speakers. Andy Sipocz will discuss Armand Bayou hydroecology in May.

Continuing Education - Saturday, February 10 was farm implements with Lou Hornung. March and April will be wildflowers and mushrooms with the date to be determined by the availability of the subject matter. Chris LaChance will do a Water Smart talk sometime this spring, time to be announced. Canoe 101 will be held for volunteers who want to work with canoe activities but do not know how to canoe.

Area Reports:

Admission - People are needed for breaks at the desk on Tuesday and Fridays.

Greeters/Interpreters - No report

Weekend Demos - Need Natural History volunteers on March 11 and March 24. (*Spots are now filled.*)

Weekend Trails - Need trail hike guides. Also need night hike guides.

Outreach - Need volunteers for March 31 at Dickinson ISD from 9 to noon and May 18- 20 at the Strawberry Festival. (Same weekend as Bayou Boil).

Facilities - The windmill has been ordered.

Stewardship - Extreme Chinese Tallow Whacking opportunities abound.

Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance		\$2,637.17
Expenditures:		
Bank Service Charges	\$2.00	
Total Expenditures	\$2.00	
Income:		
Recycling—December	\$12.81	
Recycling—Spring 2006	\$77.19	
Total Income	\$90.00	
Current Balance		\$2725.17
Windmill Fund	\$1210.00	



Upcoming Teacher Workshops

Call Heather or Shauna for reservations at 281-474-2551 x 14 or x 13.

Training Schedule

Friday, March 9 OR Friday, March 16 @ 1 pm for volunteers available to work weekdays noon–1 pm:

Saturday, March 10 @ 1 pm for volunteers available to work weekends noon–1 pm

Training

Pond Life

Tuesday, February 27, 2007 9:30 am-12:30 pm
\$35.00 non members/ FREE ABNC members. **3 SBEC hours**

For individuals who would like to explore the ponds during the cooler months. Compare macroscopic and microscopic specimens, basic identification, collection and recording techniques and classroom activities. Call Heather or Shauna for reservations at 281-474-2551x14 or x13.

Hands on History

Monday, March 26, 2007 or Saturday, April 28, 2007 9:30 am-12:30pm
\$35.00 non members/ FREE ABNC members. **3 SBEC hours**

This class will take you through life in the 1895 era at the Martyn Farm and Hanson House. By comparing and contrasting a day in the life of a family in the 1890's and a family in the 2000's we can ask important questions about the direction of our current society and stewardship of the environment. Some topic areas discussed are: organizing tasks and chores, education, communication among others, entertainment, recreation and holidays, healthcare,

religion, justice and legislation. TEKS correlated 3-5th grades. Call Heather or Shauna for reservations at 281-474-2551x14 or x13.

Hazardous Beasties and Plants of the Northeast Texas Coast

Wednesday, April 25, 2007 6:00 pm-7:30 pm
\$10.00 non members/FREE ABNC members **2 SBEC hours**

Everyone is concerned about what they will find in the wild and this helps you to identify some of the most common animals and plants in our area that might be hazardous. A compliment to any outdoor activities. Call Heather or Shauna for reservations at 281-474-2551x14 or x13.

Beginning Insect Investigations

Saturday, April 28, 2007 1-3 pm
\$35.00 non members/ FREE ABNC members. **3 SBEC hours**

Learn the basics of what makes an insect an insect and take a peek into the largest group of animals on Earth. Play games, construct your own insects, do field collection and identification and view specimens. Call Heather or Shauna for reservations at 281-474-2551x14 or x13.

Needed: Friendly Faces

For the past several years volunteers at ABNC have served as lunch hour relief for the front desk reception area. We have been very fortunate to have several dedicated people who have committed to one day a week, two days a month or four days a month to this job (only an hour each day).

Because of personal reasons we have lost two of our

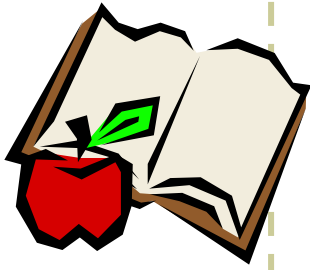
“regulars” and the time has come for new friendly faces to come forward and fill these open time slots. If you like meeting the public, like being inside in a climate controlled setting, want a quiet place to volunteer and find it interesting to keep up with happenings at the nature center, this is the place for you to be.

We'll be offering training to

get you prepared to jump right in and answer the phones and questions. There will also be an opportunity at the new volunteer training meeting for people to sign up for the training.

See the schedule at left for dates and times of training. Sign up sheets are in the volunteer office. If you have questions, give Jessalyn a call at 281-474-2551 x 10.

Continuing Education



Continuing Education is free for ABNC volunteers

Mushroom Identification and Tasting

March TBA

Come along on a morning hike led by mushroom expert Jim Crabb as we search for, identify and then possibly taste local mushrooms you can find right here at the nature center. Sign up and provide us with an email or phone number and we will let you know when in March the class will be held. This CE is highly dependent on the right conditions, i.e. no rain, no mushrooms.

WaterSmart Gardening

March 24, 9–11 a.m.

Chris LaChance teaches you to become a WaterSmart gardener and learn how to create beautiful, low maintenance landscapes that protect your back, wallet AND the environment. An hour of class is followed by a tour of the WaterSmart gardens at ABNC where you'll see these concepts in action. Included is a discussion of site and soil preparation along with choosing the right plant for the right place. WaterSmart

is a program is funded by Houston Endowment and administered through Texas A&M Cooperative Extension and Texas Sea Grant.

Spring Wildflower Tour

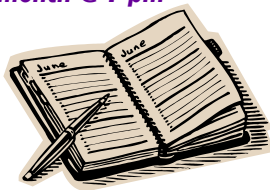
April TBA

Join Kathleen Crabb on a vibrant tour through North Houston, as she searches for and identifies our beautiful gulf coast wildflowers.

Canoe 101

TBA

Volunteer Meetings 2nd Thursday of each month @ 7 pm



Upcoming Programs

March 8

Edible Wild Plants, Preparation and Tasting by Ed Adams, ABNC volunteer

April 12

Texas Gulf Coast Impressions by Kathy and Gary Clark

May 10

Eco-hydrology of the Armand Bayou Watershed by Andy Sipocz, Texas Parks and Wildlife

Stewardship Stars



Liatris in bloom on the ABNC prairie

If you've heard of Prairie Friday or Stewardship Saturday and wondered what they are...here's the scoop.

Every Friday morning around 9 a.m. dedicated volunteers with a love of the prairie meet for all manner of fun activities. Some days it's planting seeds or transplants; sometimes it's chain sawing and lopping those nasty Chinese Tallow

trees and other times it's recording plant transect data. No matter what the chore or weather, these great folks make a huge contribution to land stewardship at ABNC. Come join them next Friday!

The first and third Saturday of each month at 8:30 a.m. brings out more hard-working volunteers...the Stewardship Saturday bunch. They clear

trails, cut down more nasty Chinese Tallow trees and perform whatever stewardship duties are needed. In warmer months, they go into the bayou and plant marsh grass, or install wave barriers around freshly planted marsh grass. It's rumored they even have kolaches! Come join the fun.

Rules of Engagement

I am discouraged that I need to write this memo of etiquette, but it seems once in a while we all require some reminders. I was witness to some rude behavior the other day. I don't know who started it, nor do I care at this time. Let's suffice it to say the tempers heated up and I don't like to see that.

1. If you are in charge of a demo (weekend, birthday, field trip, whatever) please check ahead of time, if you can, to be sure the space or animals have not been double booked. The staff is trying harder now, but once in a while that might get overlooked. Reminder to the staff: PLEASE use **The Book** at the front desk to ensure this does not happen at all. One source for logging our bookings is the ONLY way we can keep track of what's going on.
2. If you are in charge of a demo, please come in early enough to check that your materials or animals are available and in good condition before the event is due to start.
3. If you find items missing or in sad shape, please don't gripe to whoever is standing nearby. Try to make do if possible, then make a list and put it in my mail slot or send it to me via email. I will see to it that the situation is addressed and remedied as soon as possible, and will get an answer back to the originator. You may request to not be identified if you wish.
4. If you are in charge of a demo, and a staff member reminds you to wash your hands, or put de-chlorinated water in the bucket, please don't remind them how long you have been doing this. They are just making the safety of the animal and you a priority. We have all slipped from time to time, forgetting a step or two.
5. If you are helping, don't be putting things away while the audience is paying attention to the demonstrator. Especially if you open a door to another room to do so, it is distracting because they want to see what's in there.
6. If another demo is going on in another part of the interpretive building, do not post yourself at the edge to eavesdrop, moving in and out at your leisure; that also distracts the attention of the audience.
7. If someone else is in charge of a demo, even if you know more than they do about that subject, do not interject your superior knowledge without the leader's express request. Most folks who lead these demos will be aware if they want some help and will use your input when it best suits their lesson.

Thank you for your valuable time spent in educating our visitors. I hope you will understand and take to heart my "suggestions" so we can show our visitors how precious and special this place is.

Polly

The Early Bird Catches the...

On the second Saturday of each month birders from around the Houston Metropolitan area come to ABNC for one of Houston Audubon Society's monthly bird surveys. Participants meet an HAS representative in the parking lot at 7 a.m. and form teams of four to five before branching out for the morning count. At 10 a.m. the birders reconvene for the "countdown" when the species seen are listed and tallied. The year-long survey will give HAS and ABNC a better picture of local bird populations.

The count is open to all skill levels and beginning birders will be placed with more experienced ones so that, in addition to having a great time, they will also learn more about bird identification and avian natural history.



Red-bellied Woodpecker

ABNC Volunteer Duty Roster

If you have to cancel, please do your best to find your own replacement. If you can cover for any open slots, please call the coordinator for that event. When you arrive at ABNC for your duty, please check in at the front desk.

*** Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 a.m. March 11**



	9:30 Trails	2:00 Trails	Greeters	Farm Interpretation	Farm Demos	Natural History
DATE	Martha Hood 281-286-6746	Martha Hood 281-286-6746	Jarita Sepulvado 281-532-1273	Jarita Sepulvado 281-532-1273	Jane Bingel 281-554-5069	Jane Bingel 281-554-5069
3/3	Susan Hesley	OPEN	OPEN	Paula Thorson	Jack Chandler Rope	Mary Barton Birds
3/4		Marie Asscherick	Ken Russell	Polly Swerdlin	Ray Parker Rope	Zel Arbuckle Snakes
3/10	Glenda Hemperley	Ray Parker	Joan Henderson	Joyce Sens	Anne Tincher Rope	Ruby Dilgren Creepy Crawlers
* 3/11		OPEN	Pat Bates	Eleanor Stanley	Jane Bingel Cheese	Chris Battan Birds
3/17	Pat Doerr	Stan Krauhs	Paul Brunkow	Joan Brunkow	Polly Swerdlin Butter	Joanna Wood Mammals
3/18		OPEN	Judy Schaefer	OPEN	Helen Harger Cheese	Eleanor Stanley
3/24	Melanie Weisman	Anne Tincher	Mary Garrett	Jane Bingel	Ed Adams Rope	Jane Bingel Adaptations
3/25		Liz VanOrstrand	Joe Bryan	OPEN	Tom Scarsella Blacksmith	Hilary Gibbs Pond
3/31	OPEN	Stan Krauhs	OPEN	Stephania Rogers	OPEN	OPEN

George leading bird walk at ABNC



Staff ...*(Continued from page 1)*

One of the most frequently heard remarks about his classes is "George is one of the best teachers I've ever seen." Needless to say there are a lot of

people today who owe their love of nature to the lessons they learned with George.

Now days most of his time is spent working on prairie and marsh restoration at ABNC and teaching classes and leading bird-ing field trips as co-owner of Skimmer Nature Tours.

In his spare time he enjoys singing, playing the guitar, banjo and accordion and working in his shop, fondly known as the Garage-Majal. His latest endeavor is wood-turning on his new lathe.

Thanks, George for years of dedicated service to ABNC.



Armand Bayou Nature Center Volunteers

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Fax: 281-474-2552
www.abnc.org

Reconnecting People With Nature

We're on the Web!
www.abncvols.org

ABNC Volunteers Brainstorming Top Ten

Following are the top ten ideas selected from a pool of 64 generated by the Brainstorm meeting held in January.

- 10 Make sure all equipment /materials are kept together and available
- 9 Demonstrations - Variety rather than primarily reptiles
- 8 Volunteers take on a Mini Trash Bash upstream of ABNC near Fairmont
- 7 Sunset hike and supper at the farmhouse
- 6 Take pictures of new volunteers in training with names and post on the board
- 5 Windmill - continue to get it repaired
- 4 Foster relationships between Harris County Precinct 2 and ABNC
- 3 Make canoe trailer safer
- 2 Continue with night hikes - they have been positive
And the Number One Idea...
- 1 **More information signs on trails for self-guiding visitors**

Honorable Mention

- Pump for the bird blind fountain near the Interpretive Building
- Finish the Discovery Loop
- Canoe training - more focus on canoe skills and rescue procedures - liability!
- Volunteer training - know more about the history of the Nature Center and the importance of the farm
- Analyze volunteer retention and ways to improve
- In depth volunteer training
- Inventory of supplies needed and available and location
- Set up box for night hikes
- Exam the recycling program and educate the public and volunteers
- Encourage all volunteers to attend all kinds of training and workshops about ABNC
- VIT "Volunteer In Training" badge until - get certified # of hours to earn real badge
- Trash cans on trail ends
- A couple Longhorn cattle
- Solicit local animal shelters etc to obtain horses, chickens etc that need a home
- Have a few hard copies of Foliage available in volunteer room for reference purposes
- Adequate budget for operating funds of maintenance concerns
- Native Texan exhibits - Teepee by the Bison field
- Feedback from folks after taking trails or field trips
- Night hikes specifically geared for families with children
- Adequate supply and ease of training materials
- Inventory of items for training with locations
- Formal training then buddy training - more overall picture of ABNC and all offered here
- Set higher goals for volunteer treasury and make a plan to meet it