

Bayou Foliage

Volume 26, Number

October 2007

Look Ahead

OCTOBER

- 6 Stewardship Saturday
8:30 a.m.

- 6 Continuing Education,
9–11:30 am

- 11 Volunteer Board
meeting, 5:30

- 11 Volunteer meeting,
6:30

- 13 HASBird Survey,
7 a.m.

- 20 Stewardship Saturday
8:30 a.m.

- 20 Prairie Pandemonium!, 8–12

- 26-27 CREEPY CRAWLERS

When you are
finished with
this publication
please recycle it.
Thanks!

From the Rocking Chair

Polly Swerdlin Volunteer Chair



Here's to cooler days, dryer days, and shorter days. Fall is upon us, and though we might not have the glorious colors of the North Country, change is inevitable. Rockin' on the farm house porch will be so nice! Y'all come out and "set a spell".

We have a brave new bunch of volunteers ready to help at ABNC. I am impressed with the skills they bring and the eagerness they have to learn from us. If you see a new face, step up and introduce yourself. Find out what she likes to do and maybe you can be the influence she

needs. Or perhaps he asks if he can buddy on your trail hike.

At the September meeting, I opened the positions for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee. We will vote in October to approve 5 of those who wish to serve. Then they will have only one month to find candidates for each of the board positions that will be vacated at the end of the year. In November we will announce their selections so everyone can vote in December. If you would like to help in this very short, very important job, please call or email me.



Just around the corner are a couple special events; Creepy Crawl-ers, October 26 and 27, and Fall Festival, November 10 and 11. Signup sheets are in the Volunteer Office for both of them. These activities are really so much fun to "work". Our success at both affairs depends on every-*one*.

Polly

Kahlil Gibran: "Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair."

Sign Up Now For a Busy Fall Season

October 20—Prairie Pandemonium! 8 am—noon

October 26-27—Creepy Crawlers, 6-9 pm

November 10-11—Fall Festival, 10 am—4 pm

December 1—Burn Class

December 2—Yuletide, 1-4 pm



Continuing Education

Continuing Education is free for ABNC volunteers



Blacksmithing on the Farm with Larry Newbern

October 6

9:00—11:30 am



**Armand Bayou
Nature Center
Volunteer Board
2007**

Chair	Polly Swerdlin	281-814-4606	pfollyred@yahoo.com
Vice-Chair	Bob Paxton	281-990-7968	thepaxtons@sbcglocal.net
Treasurer	Eleanor Stanley	713-455-1502	
Secretary	Laura Bradley	281-992-2604	Brad9@flash.net
Stewardship	Ian Kress	281-333-9066	ian.kress@conocophillips.com
Greeters/Interpreters	Jarita Sepulvado	281-479-8795	vanillarita@gmail.com
Admissions	Dottie Evans	281-532-1273	docentmom@aol.com
Weekend Demos	Jane Bingel	281-554-5069	
Weekend Trail	Martha Hood	281-286-6746	mhood85@yahoo.com
Weekday Farm			
Weekday Outdoor Ed	Gaye Batiz	281-538-0592	gayebatiz@aol.com
Outreach			
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Staff Roster

Barbara Baxter	Ext 10	Megan McInnis	Ext 17
Susan Brown	Ext 21	Heather Millar	Ext 14
Jimmy Hill	Ext 16	Dick Phelps	Ext 10
Lew Hornung	Ext 16	George Regmund	Ext 31
Mark Kramer	Ext 15	Sue Sutterby	Ext 11
Christine Mattox	Ext 20	Sauna Trevino	Ext 13

Email addresses are 'firstname'@abnc.org. Example: george@abnc.org

ABNC Volunteer Meeting Minutes September 20, 2007

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as was the Treasurer's report.

The Chair was reminded that the speaker was waiting to be introduced. Dennis Jones gave a very enlightening talk on his Brazos Bend State Park alligators and even the knowledgeable amongst us learned something.

Old Business – Village Creek Canoe Trip on September 29 and 30 has enough folks signed up for it, so the adventure is on.

Polly Swerdlin and Gaye Batiz will start working on the returns for our roster audit at the beginning of October; this will make the required hours audit go smoother in February.

New Business – The Chair announced 5 openings for the Nominating Committee, to be announced and voted on in October. They will have one month to work, announcing their selections for our 2008 board in November so the

election can take place at the December meeting. The By-Laws state the 5 members of this committee must not be present board members. Contact Polly if you wish to be a part of this very important committee job.

We have an outreach opportunity at the Katy Prairie Conservancy for their **Family Day on the Farm** this October 20, 2007 from 9:00 AM to Noon. They have requested Hands-On-History type demos, and will give our representatives a BBQ lunch. Please call Polly if you want to help out at this event.

Events Committee's next meeting is planned for Sept 30 at 3pm – classroom 3 for all those who sign up to be Fall Festival Chairs, plus Creepy Crawlers and Yule Tide.

Vice Chair Report – Bob reports next month's speaker is Jane Bock, November Charlotte Webb, December is Christmas Party, January the Appreciation Dinner, February Woody Woodrow, and March our own George Regmund.

Staff Report – Sue reports the negotiations for Executive Director has not been successful. Sandy Peck has resigned as Interim ED and Sue moved up to that position. There has been great progress made at the McGovern Garden. A grant for \$300,000 that must be matched 50% will be presented to ABNC by State Representative John Davis on Oct 4. A Volunteer of the Month has not been selected.

Admissions assistance for front desk relief is in good shape this month, as is Weekend Demos. Gaye is beginning to receive quite a few requests for Weekday Education and will be calling for teachers. Facilities Gem crew has worked to make the McGovern area armadillo proof and is restoring the birthing shed. (Chair's observation: nice job!) Odie and a few others will be helping Barbara with the renewal notices for ABNC Members.



Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance		1686.71
Expenditures:		
	0	
Total Expenditures	0	
Income:		
	0	
Total Income	0	
Current Balance		\$1686.71

Speakers for Volunteer Meetings:

October 11, 7 pm—Birds Do It Too with Jane Bock

November 8, 7 pm—Alternatives to Pesticides with Charlotte Wells

December 13, 7 pm—Christmas Party

January 10—Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

February 14—Woody Woodrow

March 13—George Regmund

Volunteer Job Descriptions

ANIMAL KEEPER ASSISTANT

PURPOSE: Assist in the proper care and husbandry of all captive animals at ABNC.

CONTACT: Staff – Curator of Animal Collections; Volunteer – Chair

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Arrive at ABNC on time for specific job.
2. Be knowledgeable of where lab equipment and supplies are kept.
3. Assist in daily feeding and care of all live specimens.
4. Assist in cleaning and organizing the lab and equipment.
5. Assist teachers and staff setting up classes and locating equipment and animals.
6. Assist in miscellaneous jobs assigned by Curator of Animal Collections.
7. Abide by safety guidelines determined by staff.
8. Know location of First Aid Kit and Fire Extinguisher and venomous snakebite kit and protocol.
9. Promptly report accident or injury to a staff member and fill out accident form.

10. Log hours in volunteer logbook in a prompt, up-to-date fashion.
11. Notify appropriate staff ASAP if you are unable to do your assigned job.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES:

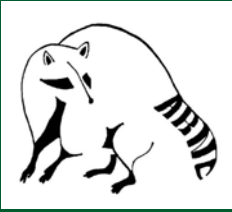
1. ABNC staff and volunteers
2. Volunteer training
3. Volunteer manual

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Have a desire to work closely with live animals.
2. Have experience in handling a variety of animals, or be trained.
3. Practice proper asepsis techniques.
4. Be knowledgeable of ABNC regulations.

TRAINING:

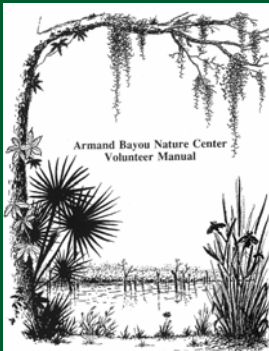
1. Attend orientation.
2. Complete appropriate volunteer training.
3. Be trained in emergency snakebite procedures.
4. Attend any special training required by Curator of Animal Collections to ABNC per month (average).



This job's for you!

Each month a description of a volunteer position will be highlighted. The following information is from the Volunteer Manual.

From the ABNC Volunteer Manual



ANIMAL HANDLING GUIDELINES

Turtles/Tortoises:

Hold on sides, feet pointed and let the public touch their shells from the rear. Do not turn upside down (the lungs are located in the top of the shell).

Aquatic Turtles:

Small water turtles should be gently held between the thumb and forefinger with the legs pointed

downward, as many of them have long necks, sharp mouths and claws. Medium size turtles, those too heavy to be held like a coin, should be held by their sides (feet pointed at the floor) for short periods only. The larger snapping turtles should be picked up by their tails, firmly gripping it close to the shell for quick placement into

other containers only. These turtles are best viewed by the public inside a container or held briefly to display some features by the handler.

Snakes:

Small snakes can be held on one hand and arm while holding the head with the other hand, guiding it gently away from the public.

(Continued on page 7)

PRAIRIE PANDEMONIUM!

Help Save The Last Stand
of Coastal Tallgrass Prairie!

Reconnecting People With
Nature

Armand Bayou Nature Center

Are you looking for a fun way to lend a hand and make a difference in your environment? Here it is: Prairie Pandemonium! Help Armand Bayou Nature Center restore the tall grass prairies, a critical native habitat. This important effort will bring the ABNC prairies closer to a climax state of native wildflowers and grasses.

DATE: 10/20/07
TIME: 8AM TO NOON

Volunteers will become part of a team planting effort. Sign-in will begin at 8AM and the activities will last from 9AM to noon. **Lunch is included, and door prizes are too.** Volunteers should be 12 years of age or older, and if under 18 to be accompanied by an adult. Participants will need sturdy shoes and clothes that can get muddy. The nature center will provide tools and work gloves.

Pre-registration is required to participate.

To register, contact Chris Mattox at 281-474-2551 ext. 20, or email chris@abnc.org.

Come out, learn about and help restore the Texas Tall Grass Prairie!

Armand Bayou Nature Center

8500 Bay Area Boulevard
Houston, TX 77058

Phone: 281-474-2551
Web: www.abnc.org



BAYOU BITS

Lew's Mews News



When I delivered my truck load of cans for recycling last week, I was told that this was the last time they would pay us for cans that included cat food cans. It seems that they have to sort through all the cans to discard these cans that cannot be melted down for the recycle process.

Lew Hornung

McGovern Classes Educate the Very Young



Photo by Gaye Batiz

Newest McGovern teacher, Rebekah Gano reads a story.

The McGovern classes are made possible by a \$30,000 grant from the John P. McGovern Foundation to build the Children's Discovery area at the rear of the Interpretive

Building. The area has samples of common plants, trees and mosses so that children can get acquainted with them. Classes are normally held in this area and cover topics such as Mothers and Babies; Metamorphosis; Scat, Tracks and Animal Life; Bats; and Bird Adaptations. In fact, we can tailor what we teach to suit the needs of the group. The classes are aimed at Pre-K children, but classes for younger children can be provided.

If you are interested in helping or teaching any of these classes, please contact Heather Millar or Gaye Batiz.

If you are interested in helping maintain the ABNC gardens, including the McGovern area, please contact Sue Sutterby.

New Screech Owl Box on Grounds

A screech owl nesting box constructed of recycled cedar fencing was placed in the Sycamore tree between the marsh grass nursery beds and the parking lot on September 8. The location should be a good one and should have a high probability of attracting nesting screech owls: It is not a high traffic area, and is far enough from the woods to be less frequented by larger predators such as Great Horned Owls. The Sycamore, being deciduous, will drop it's leaves in the fall and make the box more visible to owls in search of a suitable nest cavity. The trees around the box are denser and will provide good concealment for the male owl which generally perches close by where he has a view of the entrance hole.

The box is visible with binoculars from the path between the Kaneka Building and the Heiman House and when occupied will make a nice feature for one of our Owl Prowls.

I'd like to thank Martha Hood, a veteran of many Owl Prowls, for her practical help in narrowing down the list of possible locations. The box had been ready for several weeks and tree selection wasn't easy.

Tom Scarsella

Editor's Note: The screech owl nesting box was built by Tom Scarsella, with a design he has used many times. Although I haven't seen it, I'm sure it is a beauty, knowing Tom's woodworking expertise. The photo above was taken in the Rio Grande Valley, not at ABNC.



Photo by Mary Alice Trumble

ABNC Volunteer Duty Roster—October

	10:30 Trails	2:00 Trails	Greeters	Farm Interpretation	Farm Demos	Natural History
DATE	Martha Hood 281-286-6746	Martha Hood 281-286-6746	Jarita Sepulvado 281-479-8795	Jarita Sepulvado 281-479-8795	Jane Bingel 281-554-5069	Jane Bingel 281-554-5069
10/6	Polly Swerdlin	Melanie Weisman	OPEN	Jane Bingel	Ed Adams Rope	Jack Chandler Reptiles
10/7		OPEN	Ken Russell	Polly Swerdlin	Jane Bingel Cheese	Zel Arbuckle Reptiles
10/13	Liz VanOrstrand	Anne Tincher	Paul Brunkow	Joan Brunkow	Mary Garrett Butter	Jane Bingel Bird Adaptations
10/14		Karen Sutera	Joe Bryan	OPEN	Helen Harger Cheese	Eleanor Stanley Reptiles
10/20	OPEN	Karen Sutera	OPEN	Joyce Sens	Frank Sens Rope	Polly Swerdlin Tracks
10/21		Stan Krauhs	OPEN	OPEN	Tom Scarsella Blacksmith	Hillary Gibbs Butterflies
10/27	Sebastian & Beatrice Diaz	Ray Parker	Mary Garrett	Paula Thorson	Paula Thorsen Cheese	Joanna Moody Adaptations
10/28		OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Jane Bingel Bird Adaptations

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.

(Continued from page 4) Armand Bayou

Offer the coiled body to the public to touch (remember in the direction the scales grow).

Larger snakes will do better if you sit down with the snake in your lap holding the head away from the public.

Lizards:

Hold the body in one hand slightly angling the head up. Allow the tail to hang down for the public to touch. Your other hand is free to relocate the animal if it moves or shield its back from being touched.

Alligators:

Place your hand underneath the head, holding the neck behind the mouth on each side. Hold firmly, but not tightly as this increases the animal's agitation and it will fidget. Its body should be on your arm with the legs hanging down comfortably on each side of your

arm. The tail should be held between your arm and body (no tail slapping the public).

Frogs/Toads:

These tend to jump suddenly and are best handled by holding the animal in your hand inside a clear holding tank for demonstrating purposes, such as a clean aquarium with light bedding, a hide away, and water available for a rest break. The public may touch the animal's back gently with two-fingers, but often it's best if they are only viewed.

Invertebrates: (spiders, scorpions, millipedes)

It is imperative that these animals be held only a few inches above a table or surface. A fall, even less than a foot, can crack their exoskeletons and kill them. Hold the animal in one palm and if the animal wants to walk about, maintain a hand-over-hand technique (in a treadmill fashion) allowing it to walk on your palms slowly.



**Armand Bayou
Nature Center Volunteer Newsletter**

8500 Bay Area Boulevard
Houston, TX 77058

Phone: 281-474-2551
Web: www.abnc.org

Reconnecting People With Nature

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

September Volunteer Training



Polly with new volunteers at reptile training



Anita Peddicord with new volunteers at insect training

Stewardship Saturday



Staffer George Regmund, ABNC volunteer Kristen Knoedler and volunteers from INEOS Olefins & Polymers USA.



On a special Stewardship Saturday, this group ventured out in canoes to plant bulrush "bombs" in Armand Bayou in an effort to improve the marsh.

New Boardwalk Resident



This new ABNC resident may be seen from the boardwalk. The alligator is about 2 feet 6 inches and is pretty good at camouflage in the duck weed. It looks like it's been getting a few snacks from visitors because if you stand on the Rotary platform a short time it will come out and edge closer.

Staff members report that if the gator becomes too tame and a possible danger to visitors it may have to be removed. The other alternative is that it may leave on its own. In the meantime, enjoy watching one of the most interesting animals on the nature center property.