



Bayou Foliage

Volume 27, Number 12

December 2008

Look Ahead

DECEMBER

- 6 Burn Training, Auditorium, 10am–3 pm
- 7 Yuletide at the Farmhouse, 1–4 pm
- 10 Bluestem Rendezvous, 4–9 pm
- 11 Volunteer Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Classroom 3
- 11 Volunteer Potluck Holiday Party, 6:30 pm, Auditorium
- 13 Monthly Audubon Bird Survey
- 13 Owl Prowl
- 20 Stewardship Saturday
- 27 National Audubon Christmas Bird Count, 6:30 am–5 pm

JANUARY

- 3 Stewardship Saturday
- 8 Volunteer Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Classroom 3
- 8 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, 6:30 pm, Auditorium
- 17 Stewardship Saturday

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

Volunteer Spotlight

In the spotlight this month is Kristen Knoedler, a graduate of the February 1995 class.

Kristen is a native to the area, growing up in Timber Cove and now residing across the lake in El Lago. Her parents still live in Timber Cove and her dad, Jim is a member of the Center's Board of Trustees. All the Knoedlers are life members of ABNC.

After graduating from Trinity University in San Antonio with a BS in Biology, Kristen began working towards an MS in biology at UHCL. Lucky for us, she decided to volunteer at the center thinking it would be a good experience to be outside applying what she was learning in the classroom. Of the past 14 plus years at ABNC, Kristen says, "I have learned so much from participating in the activities and from the staff and other volunteers."

Early in her volunteer career, she helped with vis-

iting school groups and stewardship. When she started teaching at Deer Park High School, she only had time for stewardship. Of all the stewardship activities at the nature cen-



Kristen Knoedler

ter she loves being in the water during the summer months—marsh restoration, fence removal/repair, etc. However, she says the prairie burns run a close second.

As a very dedicated teacher at Deer Park High School, she has continually involved her students in activities at ABNC. She has had students volunteer for Creepy Crawlers, Fall Festival, Trash Bash, Marsh Mania, and Prairie Pandemonium. She has

even had students return the following year to ask when these events were going to be held to see if they could help out again. She has invited them to Stewardship Saturdays, but Saturday mornings seem to be a challenge. She had several classes from chemistry, biology, and environmental science help rescue spider lilies, and the next year another group of students came out to plant them. The students seem to appreciate being outside.

In addition to teaching at the high school, Kristen teaches an anatomy class at night at San Jacinto College Central.

Somehow she finds the time to participate in a ladies tap dancing class. She says they always have a good time and actually perform.

Thanks Kristen for choosing to be a part of this volunteer organization, bringing with you many talents and interests. We appreciate all the contributions you make!



Gaye Batiz
Volunteer Chair
2008

**Armand Bayou
Nature Center
Volunteer Board
2008**

**Staff
Roster**

BAYOU BITS

by Gaye Batiz

One morning this week I was in that wonderful twilight stage between sleep and wakefulness, the radio alarm had just switched on and the presenter was taking about Thanksgiving. In England we don't celebrate Thanksgiving. We do have harvest festivals that fall into the category of being thankful that all has been safely gathered, but the concept of giving thanks is not so apparent. The presenter was asking, "**What do you give thanks for?**" After some deep pondering, I realized that I have LOTS to be thankful for. Armand Bayou Nature Center is high on my list and whilst I live close and am able, I will be there giving back as much as I can.

This leads me on to say that if the volunteer organization is to continue and be successful, changes need to happen. I looked up the meaning of the word "volunteer": Vol-un-teer (noun) "**a person who voluntarily offers themselves for a service or undertaking**".

NOTE: Polly spent hours of her own time calling

all volunteers on our list to get help for Fall Festival.

Those of you who attended the meeting last month heard Polly read out a statement. There is a copy in this issue of the foliage. Please read it – in that statement she said that as from Jan 1st, 2009 she would be "just a volunteer." Polly has been one of the mainstays of the volunteer organization for several years, spending many hours of her time organizing events, activities and data to keep the organization afloat. We will miss her greatly and to continue we need to make some changes to our structure especially in terms of getting a lot more support. Tom Kartrude is working on the staff aspect. I have told the nomination committee (Polly) that I would like to take on the Vice Chair role and provide support to a new Chair if someone out there is prepared to take on the role; however if we cannot find a chair I will continue – I believe that we can make great im-

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Treasurer	Eleanor Stanley	713-455-1502	no email
Admissions	Dewanna Norris	281-488-2276	dwn8@juno.com
Weekend demos	Jane Bingel	281-554-5069	no email
Weekend trail	Liz VanOrstrand	281-480-8296	lizvanorstrand@hotmail.com
Greeters/Interpreters	Ken Russell	281-488-0390	pacloon@aol.com
Weekday farm/OD ed.	Rebekah Gano	610-937-9751	bekah@gano.name
Outreach	Susan Kalafatich	281-461-9420	kalafatich@sbcglobal.net
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Lew Hornung	Ext 16	Dick Phelps	Ext 10
Tom Kartrude	Ext 11	George Regmund	Ext 31
Mark Kramer	Ext 15		
Kelli Haskett	Ext 17		

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

ABNC Volunteer Meeting Minutes November 13, 2008

Gaye Batiz, Volunteer Chair, called the meeting to order at 7 PM. Gaye reminded all volunteers to update hours since the end of the year is near. Yuletide at the Farmhouse and the volunteer potluck dinner both will be occurring in December. We will be collecting toys for Toys for Tots on December 11 at the dinner.

The annual Christmas Bird Count will be on Dec. 27.

Polly Swerdlin, Volunteer Advisor, read a statement for the record in which she declared her intention to scale back her involvement at ABNC so that she can travel and pursue other interests. Polly also expressed her disappointment in the lack of volunteer participation recently. Volunteers present thanked Polly for her years of devoted service to ABNC.

Chris LaChance, Program Coordinator for Texas Agrilife Extension Service/Texas Sea Grant, was the speaker. The title of her presentation was "WaterSmart Landscaping and the Gardens of Armand Bayou Nature Center." More information can be obtained at www.watersmart.cc.

After a 10-minute break, the business meeting began. It was moved, seconded, and approved that the minutes from last meeting be approved. Eleanor Stanley reported on income from the Fall

Festival from plant, birdhouse, cookie, and craft sales: \$928.90.

Polly Swerdlin, Volunteer Advisor, reported on the recent porch collapse in front of the auditorium; no-one was hurt. The Fall Festival brought in \$7492, and all volunteers who participated were commended by having their names listed in a display. Volunteer training will take place four Saturdays in December. There may be a sugar cane processing day on January 24 which would bring in volunteers who would then be able to demonstrate.

Liz VanOrstrand, Weekend Trails Coordinator, reported that Owl Prowls are still going on, with one scheduled for December.

Jane Bingel, Weekend Demonstrations Coordinator, said more people are needed for demonstrations. Anyone with a talent that he or she would like to share would be welcome. In December, volunteers will be voting on the proposed budget.

Polly Swerdlin said that there are three open positions which are not filled for the 2009 Volunteer Board. Any volunteer who would be willing to serve would be welcome.

Sue Sutterby said that the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner will be January 8.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20..

Jill Macomber, Secretary

This is the proposed volunteer budget for 2009 approved by the Volunteer Board at its November board meeting. It is being submitted for approval at the December Volunteer meeting. The gift to ABNC is unspecified at this time

PROPOSED VOLUNTEER BUDGET 2009

ABNC Gift	1500
ABNC Eco-camp Scholarship	500
Mailing(Updated Roster)	40
Speakers Gifts(6 Meetings)	200
Cards	25
Volunteer Recognition	150
TOTAL	2415
2008 End-of-year Balance (Estimate)	3578
2009 Income (Estimate based on 2008)	1302
Total	4880
Less 2009 Proposed Budget	2415
2009 End-of-year Balance (Estimate)	2465

Treasurer's Report October 2008

Beginning Balance		3183.47
Expenditures:		
Total Expenditures	-0-	
Income:		
Total Income	-0-	
Current Balance		\$3183.47

VOLUNTEER MEETING:

Holiday Pot Luck Dinner and Quiz. A short business meeting will be accompanied by a fun quiz based on ABNC and nature. We will be collecting for those less fortunate and request that you bring along a toy that can be contributed to Toys for Tots and/or an item of non perishable food that can be donated to the Food Pantry. Please help to make this event a success.

provements to the volunteer organization and welcome any ideas, suggestions or comments you may have. WE CANNOT DO IT WITHOUT YOU ALL BEHIND US!

Moving on, we are organizing our usual Holiday pot luck dinner for December 11th. No speaker at this meeting, instead we will hold a short business meeting for the nominating committee to introduce new board members and to vote on the 2009 budget. Make sure you check out the information in the foliage.

Before, during and after the meeting we will present a fun Quiz for you as individuals or teams (limited to 4 per team). Questions will be based on good ole Momma Nature and ABNC and the board will have a prize for the winning person/team.

Please support this event, turn up to the auditorium by 6.30 pm with a contribution to the dinner, preferably something to compliment cold cuts or a dessert. Sodas will be provided ,but you are welcome to bring your own. Remember to bring a pen and be prepared to have fun.

Happy Thanksgiving - Gaye

Notices from Gaye:

Appeal from Ed Adams Ed has asked if we could bring any type of material that can be used to create decorations for the farmhouse and tree. There are all sorts of things that can be used, left-over sewing material, wool, bottle tops, etc. Have a look around and see what you can find. Leave any donations with Ed's name on in the volunteer office.

Process for reporting repairs to Facilities Department.

If you see anything at ABNC that needs repair, go to the front desk and ask for the new form that has been introduced. This form is in triplicate, fill it out and give it to Barbara or whoever is on the front desk. When the repair has been made you should receive a copy of the form back to say what action has been taken.

Thanks to Chris LaChance for a very interesting talk on WaterSmart gardening at our November meeting.

If any of you can provide information speakers for 2009, pass information to Rick Browning or Gaye Batiz.

Letter From Polly Swerdlin, Volunteer Advisor

As some of you might know, I have been expressing the desire to be "just a volunteer" next year, not even "Advisor" or Chair for Fall Festival again. Let me explain just a bit.

Besides being the wishes of my better half, it has become imperative that I scale back the level of my involvement here. One of reasons we retired when we did was to travel whenever and however long we wished. Sure, the recent economic troubles might have delayed our dream of mobile home journeys, but we still want to pursue lengthy absences from the Clear Lake area.

We will also be leading our final push for a fenced off-leash dog park here; I want to be a "real" wife, get back to my art work, and exercising, re-learn the flute, study a second language and just have time to read a good book.

The past several Fall Festivals have brought to my attention that I do not have the communication or organizational skills necessary for the success of such an endeavor. There were too many mistakes on my part, forgotten steps, and just plain faux pas, and I apologize for that.

However, I am also deeply disappointed in the lack of participation by volunteers, not only at Fall Festival but throughout the year. For this event, there was a small group who bore the huge burden with me of making it the limited success that it was and I humbly thank them for their most valuable service, not to me, but to the Nature Center. I can understand the needs of our greater community and that every Fall or Spring is a highly competitive time for volunteers and the general public's attendance. There were a number of our volunteers who had lke related issues to be sure. I can also understand a few folks having to bow out after signing up

27th Annual Martyn Farm Fall Festival

November 8 & 9

More pictures of Fall Festival plus all the albums of ABNC can be viewed at <http://picasaweb.google.com/armandbayou>



Zel Arbuckle and Hilary Gibbs whip up some biscuits in the farmhouse.



Mary Garrett churns butter for the biscuits



Jana and Jim Callan taking it easy while the canoers are out on the pond



The Crabb Clan



A not-so-shy farmyard visitor



Strolling cowboys George Regmund and Mark Kramer serenading the crowd



Martha Hood slaving over a hot soap-making pot



Dewanna Norris supervising the cookie booth

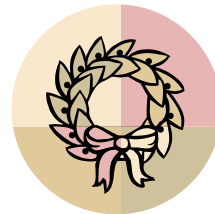
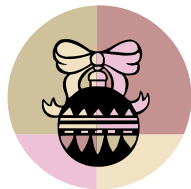


No danger of a hold-up with Martin Bergen standing guard



Hilary Gibbs tending the hoecake fires

Yuletide at ABNC



Sunday, December 7th, 1 to 4 PM
8500 Bay Area Blvd



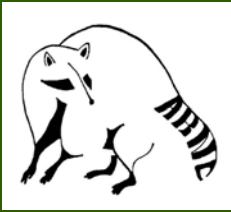
281-474-2551







We invite you to join us at the Hanson House as we enjoy the Holidays in the parlor. We will have wassail in the kitchen and carols playing in the background. There will be a variety of decorations to make and hang on the tree. Stories will be told of celebrations of the past; how early settlers enjoyed this special time with their family.

Free with Admission

ABNC Volunteer Duty Roster—December



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.

	10:00 Trails	2:00 Trails	Greeters	Farm Interpretation	Farm Demos	Natural History
DATE	Liz VanOrstrand 281-480-8296	Liz VanOrstrand 281-480-8296	Ken Russell 281-488-0390	Ken Russell 281-488-0390	Jane Bingel 281-554-5069	Jane Bingel 281-554-5069
12/6	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Jane Bingel	Mary Garrett Butter	Joanna Moody Animal Adaptations
12/7		Gaye Batiz	Ken Russell	Polly Swerdlin	Tom Scarsella Woodworking	Hilary Gibbs Pond Life
12/13	Ray Parker	OPEN	OPEN	Paula Thorson	Ed Adams Biscuits on the woodstove	Jack Chandler Reptiles
12/14		Joe Bryan	OPEN	Jill Macomber	Lana Sims Herbs	Marie & Odie Asscherick Butterflies & Bats
12/20	Polly Swerdlin	OPEN	Martha Hood	Jane Bingel	Ray Parker Rope	Polly Swerdlin White-tailed Deer
12/21		Karen Sutera	Jessalyn Ballard	Dottie Evans	Helen Harger Cheese	OPEN
12/27	Stan Krauhs	Ann Tincher	OPEN	Eleanor Stanley	Susan Hesley Yarn Dolls	Jane Bingel Bird Adaptations
12/28		Liz VanOrstrand	OPEN	OPEN	Jane Bingel Cheese	Eleanor Stanley Reptiles

because they became ill. But there were some signed up we were depending on who did not call or show up.

Our short-comings this time included making staff become the Parking Lot – Admissions – Exit Interview Crew; little or no help for Candle Making, Seed Mosaics, Yarn Dolls, Canoes Rides, and Cookie Booth, all of which were all very busy. I should have had 2 people at the Information Booth, but kept having to send someone to various locations or on errands.

Perhaps most volunteers felt we'd just fill in with outside teenagers or Shell or some such group. Truth was even those sources were very slim.

This place is a treasure that I want to be a part of, involved whenever possible, but as a warrior, not a chief. Thank you for being patient with me, and giving me your critiques, both the negative and the positive. I have learned a lot.

~~Polly

Bayou Foliage deadline is the 3rd Thursday of each month. Thank you for adhering to this date.



**Armand Bayou
Nature Center Volunteer Newsletter**

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Reconnecting People With Nature

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