



Bayou Foliage

Volume 28, Number 1

January 2009

Look Ahead

JANUARY

- 3 Stewardship Saturday
- 8 Volunteer Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Classroom 3
- 8 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, 6:30 pm, Auditorium
- 10 Owl Prowl
- 10 Houston Audubon Bird Survey, 7 am
- 17 Stewardship Saturday
- 18 ABNC Annual Membership Meeting, 10 am
- 24 Syrup-making Day

FEBRUARY

- 7 Volunteer Training
- 7 Stewardship Saturday
- 12 Volunteer Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Classroom 3
- 12 Volunteer Meeting, 6:30 pm, Auditorium
- 14 Volunteer Training
- 14 Houston Audubon Bird Survey, 7 am
- 21 Volunteer Training
- 21 Stewardship Saturday

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Thanks!

Volunteer Spotlight

Jim Frantz grew up in McAllen, Texas playing in orange groves, and working with his father and grandfather in vegetable gardens, grape arbors, and fruit trees. So it's not surprising that when he decided to get out of the Navy and go to college, he chose horticulture as his major. In 1959, back home after two and a half years stationed in Hawaii, he enrolled in Pan American College in nearby Edinburg and spent two and a half years there. Then he had to transfer to a school with a degree program in horticulture, either Texas A&M or Texas Tech. A&M was still all male then and Jim says he had already spent four years in an all-male institution, so he set off for Lubbock.

During registration at Tech, Jim learned of a new program called park administration, which sounded more promising than horticulture but he could still use his horticulture background. So he got back in line and signed up for it.

After graduating from Texas Tech in January, 1964, Jim headed for Colorado to work in a growing suburban park district just outside Denver. The skiing was great but you can't

grow okra in Colorado, so in September, 1967, he returned to Texas and took the superintendent's position at Inks Lake State Park near Burnet. Lonely and missing his friends in Denver, Jim complained to two local pastors about the dearth of sin-



Jim Frantz

gle women in Burnet. These guys decided their ministry to him should take the form of fixing him up with somebody. That was February; in October, he married Jane Reavis. Amazing what living three miles from the nearest neighbor will do to a sociable young fellow.

By spring, Jim was sick of coddling campers and the boss wouldn't let him plant vegetables in his back yard on the park. When a friend in Texas Parks and Wildlife mentioned a vacancy at San Jacinto Battleground State Park near Houston, he applied for the position. In June, 1969, Jim, Jane, and a striped kitten moved to the

Battleground, assuming they would stay maybe three years and then Jim would move up the hierarchy and eventually land a job in Austin. Instead, he operated the Battleground for 24 years. He and Jane reared two children in the park. The kids' Scout troops camped out in the back yard. They explored the banks of the Houston Ship Channel, scrambled over the Battleship Texas, and hosted Halloween sleepovers with midnight excursions to one of the cemeteries in the park.

But being on call virtually 24/7 took a toll on Jim. There were water leaks, overflowing toilets, lost children, abandoned dogs, squabbling elevator operators, nervous night watchmen, budget crises, floods, fire ants, cranky advisory members, wrecks on Highway 134, and two aging structures, shrines to Texas history, one of which was sitting in mud and murky water. And never, never enough operating funds. Jim would go to bed at night saying, "It's been a good day so far."

Oh, there were highlights, setting up for Willie Nelson during the Texas Sesquicentennial, meeting visiting royalty like Prince Charles,

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Gaye Batiz
Volunteer Chair
2008

BAYOU BITS

by Gaye Batiz

Well folks, another year is almost over. I hope you are all ready for the holiday period and are keeping warm during these cold snaps. December was an interesting month at the Nature Center with quite a lot going on. Although I was unfortunate to be sick, I was heartened to hear the events were well supported and enjoyed by those who turned out. Winter Camp will be held Dec 27, 28 and 29 and I am sure Heather Millar would be glad to hear from anyone wanting to help.

January looks like being equally exciting. Upcoming events are listed in the foliage and some are still in the planning stage. You need to really consider turning up for the Syrup Making Day suggested by Lew that has been scheduled for January 24. This training will provide an opportunity to learn how to make

syrup from sugar cane. It is important to the nature center to get volunteers trained up so we can continue to pass on the knowledge of how this process provided a living on the farms that existed in the area.

January 8 is our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in the auditorium. Staff will be serving something up for us that, judged on previous years, will taste pretty good.

Plans are being made for February Volunteer orientation and, as already announced, we will be returning to a more in-depth process that will be spread over the four Saturdays in February. The schedules will be developed and publicized in January and the training will be open to current volunteers as well as new. It is also hoped that

Armand Bayou Nature Center Volunteer Board 2008

Chair	OPEN		
Vice-chair	Gaye Batiz	281-538-0592	gayebatiz@aol.com
Secretary	Jill Macomber	281-957-9934	jillmacomber@comcast.net
Treasurer	Ken Russell	281-488-0390	pacloon@aol.com
Admissions	Dewanna Norris	281-488-2276	dwn8@juno.com
Weekend demos	Ed Adams	713-946-2754	no email
Weekend trails	Liz VanOrstrand	281-480-8296	lizvanorstrand@hotmail.com
Greeters/Interpreters	Eleanor Stanley	713-455-1502	no email
Weekday farm/OD ed.	Rebekah Gano	610-937-9751	bekah@gano.name
Outreach	Jane Bingel	281-554-5069	no email
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Stewardship	Cathy Koenig		cascoenig@comcast.net
Webmaster	Shawn Gano		
Bayou Foliage editor	Mary Alice Trumble	281-435-5788	matrubble@verizon.net

Staff Roster

Barbara Baxter	Ext 10	Kelli Haskett	Ext 17
Eloise Harper		Christine Mattox	Ext 20
Lew Hornung	Ext 16	Heather Millar	Ext 14
Tom Kartrude	Ext 11	Dick Phelps	Ext 10
Mark Kramer	Ext 15	George Regmund	Ext 31

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

ABNC Volunteer Meeting Minutes December 11, 2008

Following the holiday potluck dinner the meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM by Eleanor Stanley, outgoing treasurer, in the absence of Gaye Batiz, who is ill.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved. Eleanor Stanley gave the treasurer's report, which was approved.

The slate of officers was presented, minus a chair. Membership accepted the slate. Of the appointed positions, webmaster is the only unfilled position.

Rick Browning, vice chair, asks volunteers to read the newsletter for announcement of the February speaker.

Tom Kartrude said that 2009 will be our 35th anniversary. Jan. 17 will be the annual membership meeting which will kick off the anniversary year. Volunteer training will be available in over four Saturdays in February in order to draw in new volunteers. April 25 will be our Earth Day celebration.

There were no reports from other Board members. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Jill Macomber,
Secretary

(Jim Frantz continued from page 1)

sailing aboard the Texas to Todd Shipyard in Galveston, going to lunch with George Brown, being named a "Colonel" in the Texas Army, but by 1993, he wanted out. Jim was eligible for retirement, but he still had kids in college, the down side of marrying late. So he decided to stick it out a while longer.

A few months later, he was forced out by TPWD's efforts to make each park self-supporting—yes, the state parks budget crunch didn't begin just lately. Not only did that not happen, but also park visitors began to wonder why the place didn't look as well-groomed as before. Meanwhile Jim and Jane, kids and cats, moved to La Porte and Jim took a temporary job while he searched for something permanent.

Fortunately, he remembered meeting somebody who worked for Harris County Parks. Years earlier, Jim and another TPWD guy had gone looking for a source for cheap but durable barbecue grills and visited the metal fabrication shop located at the Washburn Tunnel. The manager was a short, stocky Italian guy named Virgadamo. Jim had re-

marked that County Parks looked like a good place to work. Maybe he'd retire from TPWD and go to work for the County. The manager had encouraged him and they both had put the incident out of mind. Fast forward to May, 1994 when Jim was indeed hired by Harris County Precinct Two Parks.

That first year, Jim did whatever he was told, including mowing, pruning, cleaning restrooms, and setting up for events. At day's end, he was always the sweatiest, dirtiest guy in the crew—and the oldest. Soon he took on more specialized duties. He earned a pesticide applicator's license and began a never-ending battle with fire ants, mosquitoes, and weeds. He slicked up the trees in the parks. He was tapped out to become Precinct Two's liaison with the Master's Gardener's Association, establishing a community garden at the Genoa-Red Bluff camp.

After serving under Gilbert Smith for several years, Jim got a new boss. It was that crazy Italian guy from the metal fabricating shop—Anthony Virgadamo. Jim and Anthony became such good friends that Jim felt free giving Anthony advice from his years of experience. By this time nobody bothered to post a duty assignment for Jim,

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Treasurer's Report November 2008

Beginning Balance		\$3183.47
Expenditures:		
Eco Camp	500.00	
Total Expenditures	500.00	
Income:		
FF cookies, plants & bird houses	629.90	
Crafts	299.00	
Recycle: Sept.—Oct.	27.59	
Total Income	956.49	
Current Balance		\$3639.96

A word about Volunteer Spotlight...

Each month a volunteer is randomly selected to be in the volunteer spotlight. It is meant to be a chance to get to know all our volunteers whether they have been here a long time or not. I hope if selected, you will readily share your experiences as Jim Frantz did this month.

Editor

VOLUNTEER MEETING:

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at 6:30 in the auditorium.

Don't forget to log your hours by the end of the year!

we can get some experts in to share their knowledge and give us additional material to make our interpretations just that bit better.

Tom Kartrude has given us a theme for 2009, the 35th Anniversary of Armand Bayou and this will be worked into our events for 2009. We hope to schedule talks for our meetings that will give us an insight into just what that group of dedicated people went through to bring Armand Bayou Nature Center into being.

Earth day will be held April 25 and this year we will be putting more focus on reaching out to the community surrounding ABNC to raise awareness of what a special place they live close to. Again there will be ample volunteer opportunities that will prove to be rewarding as well as enjoyable. We do have a great message to put across of how important the nature center is in preserving and providing a source of education on eco-systems.

This is just a sample of the events in the pipeline for the New Year and we will be needing lots of support from volunteers to help promote and strengthen the values of ABNC. Your help will be much appreciated. Watch out for more information in January.

I wish you all peace for the holiday period and a prosperous New Year (hard to say in the current times but never give up hope). Looking forward to working with you all in 2009.

Gaye

Do you receive mail with US or foreign stamps?



The Royal Society for Protection of Birds (the UK equivalent of Audubon Society) retrieve and sell foreign stamps to UK stamp collectors to raise funds for various conservation projects, not just in the UK but world wide - visit www.rspb.org.uk/.

For many years I have collected stamps for this cause and regularly send batches over to the UK. Could you start collecting stamps from your mail for me? Just cut around the stamp leaving a 1/4 inch border and when you have a batch, leave them for me in the volunteer office.

Your help will be greatly appreciated not just by me but for the millions of birdwatchers world wide.

Gaye



Winter camp wish list:

- Cardboard egg boxes
- Shoe boxes
- Glass jars
- Toilet paper/Kitchen roll tubes
- Scraps cloth

- Yarn
- Old Clean white socks
- Soup/Veg/Fruit cans
- Dewberry Jelly
- Prickly Pear jelly

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle!

Armand Bayou Nature Center
is collecting your
**empty inkjet cartridges and used
cell phones**



We have partnered with Planet Green in a fundraising effort to collect empty cartridges and used cell phones. It's a great way to raise money while helping our environment too!

How you can help

Just bring your empty inkjet cartridges and used cell phones to our drop-off location. You can also support us by bringing items from work.

To start a collection effort at your work or local business, please contact us using the information listed below.

It's that easy. Start collecting today!

Thank you for supporting our cause and the environment!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Barbara Baxter, Visitors Services Coordinator
8500 Bay Area Blvd.
Pasadena, TX 77507
abnc@abnc.org
281-474-2551

***We will not accept Canon BCI brand cartridges.**



Barn Gets a Face Lift



"Before" picture of the barn

Thanks to a generous grant from ConocoPhillips, several improvement project have been completed at Armand Bayou. One project was the installation of new ceiling fans and lighting in the auditorium. Another was the replacement of doors and siding on the barn at the Martyn farm.

Over time, the wood in the barn had become rotten, and needed to be fixed. On November 13, the Gem Crew, along with Ian Kress, his wife Barbara and Tom Barnes from ConocoPhillips began work on the barn, tearing out the old siding, and replacing it with

wood purchased from the ConocoPhillips grant. The tear out took most of the morning, and by the afternoon, most of the new siding was in place, along with two new sliding doors.

This repair work will keep the barn in good shape for years to come, and ABNC thanks ConocoPhillips for their contribution.



A motley crew



Cutting to size



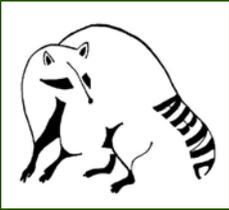
Preparing the equipment



Working up top



New door and siding

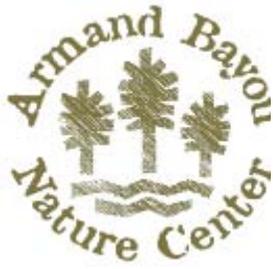


ABNC Volunteer Duty Roster—January

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	Eleanor Stanley 713-455-1502	Eleanor Stanley 713-455-1502	Ed Adams 713-946-2754	Ed Adams 713-946-2754
1/3	OPEN	Ann Tincher	Martha Hood	Paula Thorson	Jane Bingel Cheese	Polly Swerdlin Adaptations
1/4		OPEN	Ken Russell	Polly Swerdlin	Helen Harger Cheese	Zel Arbuckle Snakes
1/10	Liz VanOrstrand	OPEN	OPEN	Jane Bingel	Mary Garrett Butter	Jack Chandler Reptiles
1/11		Joe Bryan	Jessalyn Ballard	Jill Macomber	Polly Swerdlin Stereoscope	Charlotte Gogola Birds
1/17	OPEN	OPEN	Paul Brunkow	Joan Brunkow	Ray Parker Rope	Jane Bingel Birds
1/18		OPEN	Karen Sutera	OPEN	OPEN	Eleanor Stanley Reptiles
1/24	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Ed Adams Biscuits on the stove	OPEN
1/25		Karen Sutera	OPEN	Eleanor Stanley	Jane Bingel Cheese	Marie & Odie Asscherick Butterflies & Bats
1/31	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	Tom Scarsella Blacksmith	Hilary Gibbs

*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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Web: www.abnc.org

Reconnecting People With Nature

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

(Jim Frantz continued from page 3)

knowing he would go out and do what needed to be done, and return at the end of the day, sweatier and dirtier than anybody else in the crew.

Jim got along so well with Precinct Two that he didn't even think of retiring at age 65—maybe at 67. Okay, 70, he would retire then. But then he would think of something else he wanted to add to his car and calculate how much more retirement he would draw if he worked another year. Finally he decided he had had enough. Maybe it was because they threatened to assign him to permanent restroom duty. But at age 72, after 43 years, that was it.

Needless to say, Jim has not gone back to Harris County, largely because he has found a new niche at Armand Bayou Nature Center. One day, shortly after retiring from Harris County Parks, Jim noticed a sign announcing volunteer orientation at ABNC and signed up. He has enjoyed facility maintenance, prairie restoration, and trail maintenance. He has potted and planted prairie grasses and assisted with controlled burns. Official permission to play with fire—doesn't get any more exciting than that.

Someone recommended the Master Naturalist program to him and he joined the class of 2008 and came home from every class with tales of beaches ponds, and marshes, and all the interesting wildlife he had seen that day. He has met people from all parts of the country who, like him, have made the outdoors the focus of their lives.

Jim has also been a Master Gardener since 1999. He enjoys vegetable gardening, salt water fishing, deer hunting, fence building and brush control on ranch in Burnet County and landscape maintenance at Deer Park United Methodist Church. He and Jane have two cats, Bangor and Webster.

Jim's wife Jane recently retired from teaching and their children are ensconced in challenging careers in Houston. Daughter Holly does software integration for Lyondell Bassell and son Eric, having completed his PhD. At Texas A&M last spring, is a research chemist for Halliburton. Jim goes to exercise class and works out at a gym to stay healthy enough to do what he loves, reading, gardening, fishing and getting out into nature.

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

A huge thanks goes to Jim's wife, Jane for this wonderful biography she provided of all Jim's accomplishments and interesting career. It certainly made my job easier.

...Mary Alice Trumble