



# Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

## President's Letter

by Wilt Shaw and Tom Anderson

## Board of Directors

### Friends Participated in the First Annual New Braunfels Earth Day

On April 22, 2007, the Roots and Shoots Organization in New Braunfels conducted their first Earth Day celebration at the Comal County Fair Grounds from 1-5 pm. Roots and Shoots is a program of the Jane Goodall Institute. There were many booths from organizations in and around Comal County. The event hosts were selling plants. Leinheimer Master Naturalists were there as well as cub scouts, boy scouts, Keep Texas Beautiful, and companies showing off their Green Products using solar energy and hybrid vehicles. There was an art poster contest for children.



One of the most visited booths was the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area (see photo). Tom Anderson brought our "Skins, and Skulls" collection of mammals of the park which is always a bid hit with the children. We also used our new Friends sign promoting the park and our organization. We gave out brochures from the park and newsletters from the Friends and explained what the park had to offer visitors, highlighting the Saturday morning walks to Honey Creek, specialty hikes and programs and the Saturday evening presentations at the park amphitheater. We also talked about our annual Halloween at the Park event and the opening of the north side of the park for primitive and large group camping.

The event was very well attended so there were plenty of people to impress with our wonderful Friends of GR/HC accomplishments!

Regular monthly meetings of the Friends group are held at the park on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00pm. All members are welcomed to attend. At our last meeting Mark, the park manager, informed us that the park north of Guadalupe River is soon to be

opened for large group and primitive camping. On May 5th Boy scout Troop 285 from Coker Methodist Church was the first group to camp in the area. This was after a very hard day of cleaning fallen trees and trimming brush along the trails and camp areas. Our thanks goes out to those hard working young men.

Several Eagle Scout candidates have successfully completed tasks here at the park that have helped them achieve their Eagle Scout rank. There are multiple opportunities for scout groups and other service organizations at Honey Creek and in Guadalupe River State Park. Call the park or a Friends member for information on activities you or your group can help with. There is always more to accomplish than we can do ourselves; we love volunteers!

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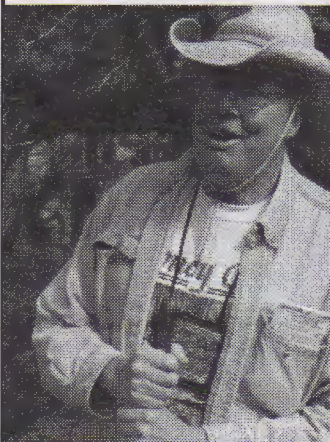
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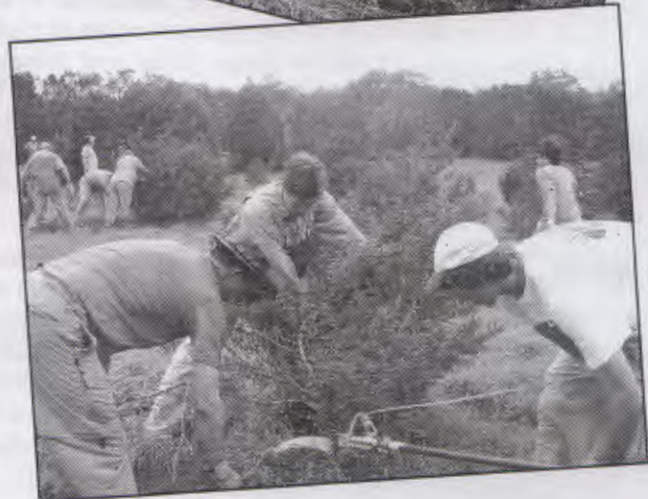
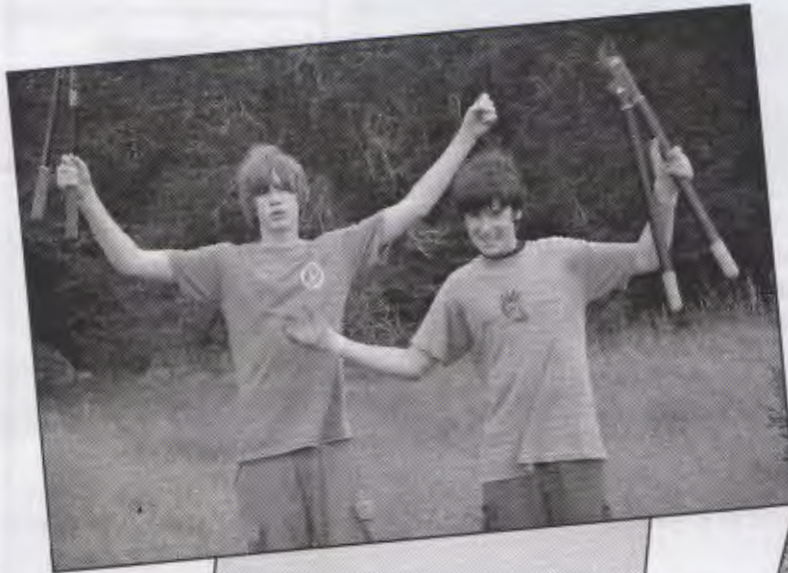
**Boy Scout Service Project**

by Dave Kibler

On May 5th of 2007, a team of Boy Scouts and adult leaders from Boy Scout Troop 285 cleared a half-mile long field in the northeastern part of the Northside portion of the park. This 670 acre area, located opposite the better known portion of the park on the south bank of the river, is undergoing the early stages of development into a primitive camping and hiking area for foot, cycle and equestrian use. The area cleared of new-growth Ash Juniper trees will be part of the trail network currently being developed.

The clearance project required two hours of intense effort for the 45 Scout volunteers involved, who worked in very warm and humid conditions. Cedar trees were cut and dragged to the fence line on the perimeter of the open field. This project was a last-minute substitute for the semi-annual Guadalupe River Cleanup associated with the "Keep Texas Beautiful" program of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Unfortunately, recent heavy rainfall in the watershed of the Guadalupe increased flow rates to the point that work on the river had to be canceled for May 5.

Troop 285 is a large troop located in the north-central part of San Antonio. It is sponsored by Coker Methodist Church. The Scoutmaster is Bill McCalister, who has served in that capacity for the past 30 years.

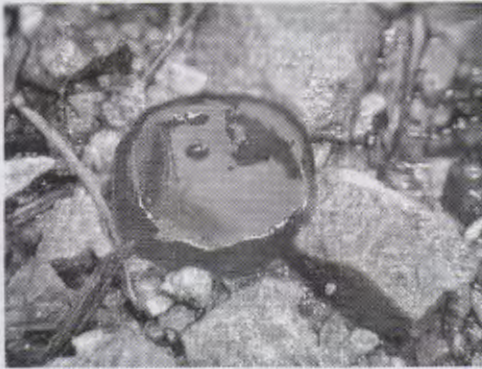


**What's on the Trail**

by Tom Anderson

If you haven't taken the Saturday morning interpretative walk at 9 to Honey Creek, one of the really beautiful places in Texas, consider doing so. We have a well trained staff of guides. If you have taken the walk it just might be time for you to join us again.

In this space each issue I will explain a little more about some of the things you will be seeing.



For this issue I have chosen **Nostoc**. It is a blue-green algae with cells arranged in beadlike chains that are grouped together in a gelatinous mass. Ranging from microscopic to walnut-sized, masses of *Nostoc* may be found on soil and floating in quiet water. Reproduction is by fragmentation. A special thick-walled cell (akinete) has the ability to withstand desiccation (drying up) for long periods of time. After 70 years of dry storage, the akinete of one species germinated into a filament when moistened. Like most blue-green algae; *Nostoc* contains two pigments, blue phycocyanin and red phycoerythrin, and has the ability to fix nitrogen (converting one non-beneficial form of

nitrogen into a form that can be used by plants). The *Nostoc* on the trail looks completely different depending on when you take the walk. After a rain it will look like a green gelatinous mass (see photo), but during long dry spells like we are better known for it will appear black and crunchy (see photo). In order to find this Cyanobacterium you need to be looking down to the ground which is not always a good idea. By that I mean you could miss something above or at eye level such as a spider web. We are reaching the time of year when our Orb spiders are making webs across the trail between two trees so be careful not to disturb their food catching scheme. More about the Orbs in another issue.

There are other names that have been given to this organism with two different appearances. They are **witches butter**, **fallen star**, and **star jelly**. *Nostoc* received the names fallen star and star jelly because it was noticed only after rains so the people thought it came from the sky. You can make up your own reason for calling it witches butter. There have been connections made between Star Jelly and unidentified flying objects— some UFO watchers believe that UFOs are not alien constructs, but living beings, called atmospheric beasts and that the Star Jelly is their remains or feces once they fall to earth. O boy now I can add to my presentation on scat!

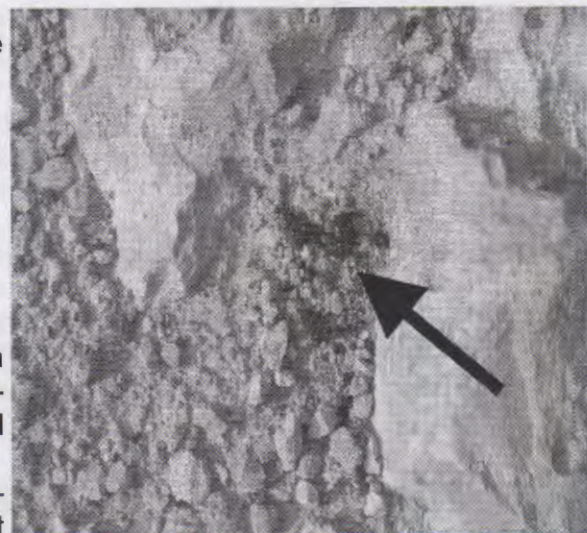
Sir, John Suckling in, 1641 wrote a poem which contained the following lines:

*As he whose quicker eye doth trace  
A false star shot to a mark'd place  
Do's run apace,  
And, thinking it to catch,  
A jelly up do snatch.*

Culinary use of *Nostoc* shows it contains protein and vitamin C; *Nostoc* species are cultivated and consumed as a food-stuff, primarily in Asia (China, Japan, and Java and Central Asia).

Most biology I textbooks mention *Nostoc* and show a magnified picture of some cells in a filament but do not explain that you can see it without magnification. This is just one of the many wonders on the Honey Creek Trail.

**Please join us for a walk soon!**



**Dehydrated Nostoc**

## Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

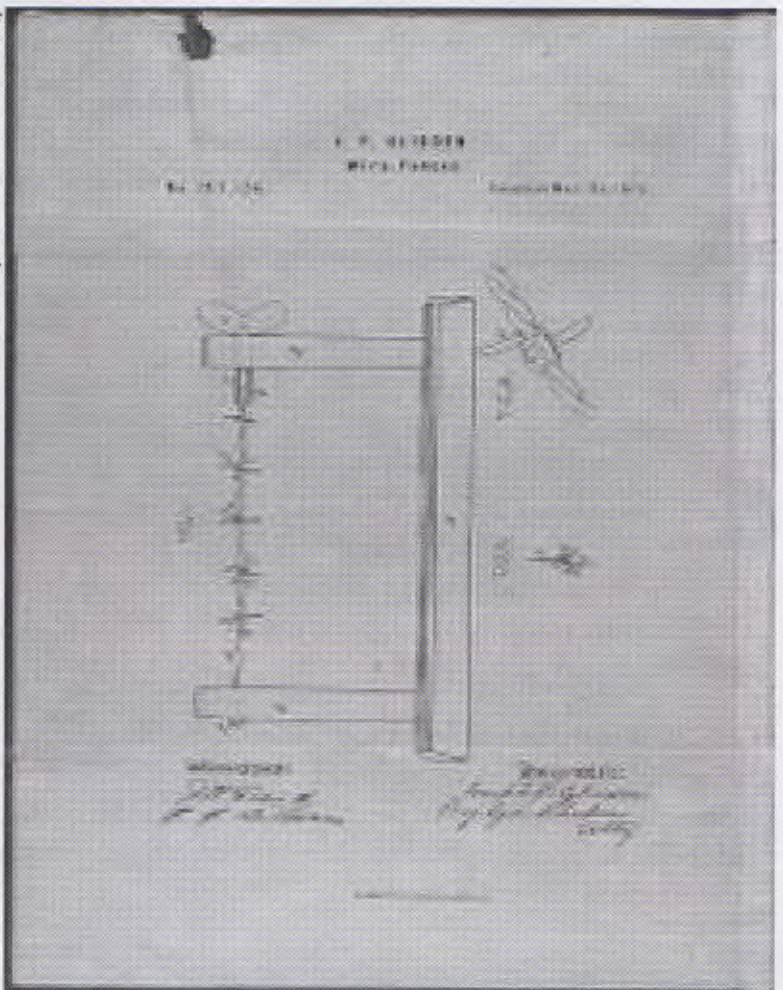
## Fences: From Rock to Stock to Barbs

During a recent trek across our park lands with Park Rangers and "Friends" members, we encountered stretches of old barbed-wire fencing, raising the question: "When did barbed wire make its entrance into Texas?" Before I answer that question I would like to hark back in our Spring 2006 Newsletter. Terry Urbanczyk's "Honey Creek Homesteaders Homecoming" column carried the comments from descendents of our local pioneers. Within her piece, Mr. Adolph Scheel observed that: "*The rock walls that cross our countryside were not built to keep animals in, but to keep them out!*" He continued: "*At that time there were no fences and all the livestock roamed free. If you had a crop you wanted to protect you had to put up a fence around it!*" So here goes - Fences: From Rock to Stock to Barbs

Mr. C. F. Bergmann was an early area pioneer, settling in just a few miles upriver on the Guadalupe. On December 1, 1856, he wrote to his family back in Saxony, Germany, and with his words, he reinforces Mr. Scheel's thoughts on the need for animal-proofing the fields: "*I have done plenty of fencing but not yet much clearing, only 15 acres, of which I have planted.....Three of them (cows) I will butcher and also one of my older yoke-oxen because he always jumps over the fence and causes me a lot of damage; not enough that he alone goes through, but also some of the other cattle follow and are getting used to the idea.*"

As the invention of barbed wire was over a decade away, Mr. Bergmann's fencing choices were limited to rock or wood, and he discusses this in January 16, 1859: "*I have 320 acres of land, of which some 20 to 21 acres are fenced: I have built a stone fence that is about 700 feet in length, the remainder of wood.*" (Mathematically then, less than 20% of his fencing was of rock, and the remainder, probably, cedar posts.) A little further in this letter, Mr. Bergmann reiterates Mr. Scheel's insight regarding free-ranging livestock and shares his solution for keeping unfenced cattle on his homestead: "*The cattle are growing and as soon as I can buy more cows - it does not matter whether I have 10 cows or 30, I have to check on them twice a week. However, I have to admit my cattle (sic) does not cause much work, because when it comes to the farm, my wife offers it salt-lick and as long as she keeps this up, they do not stray far from the farm. By the way, thank God, I have not lost any cattle yet.*"

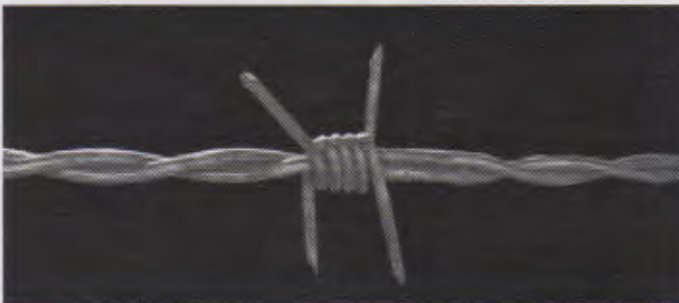
In German Seed on Texas Soil, Terry Jordon dedicates a few pages to Hill Country fences. Here are a few relevant excerpts: "*At first, fences were built of wood, generally cedar or*



Patent Drawing for Joseph F. Glidden's Improvement to Barbed wire; November, 24, 1874

oak, in typically American styles. The zig-zag or worm fence was the most common in the early years...." He continues: "As late as 1859, cedar was the preferred fencing material, but the Germans were beginning to build fences of flat stones, a style that was to become extremely common in the following decades...." "Entire families, including small children, labored for months or even years to construct stone fences.....since the prohibitively high prices, ranging from 300 to 400 dollars per mile in the 1880's prevented most settlers from hiring someone to do the job." These simple rock walls of our local pioneers are visible today in various locations within our park.

So how did we get to barbed wire? Wire fences were used before the invention of the barb, but consisted of only one strand of wire, and were utterly useless in Texas as it was constantly broken by the weight of cattle pressing against it. The Midwest, not Texas, was the hotbed for testing improvements to wire fencing and nine patents were granted by the U.S. Patent Office to American inventors, beginning with Michael Kelly in November 1868 (known as the "thorny fence," Kelly's double-strand design made the fence stronger) and ending with the most successful barbed wire which was patented by Joseph F. Glidden of DeKalb, Illinois 1874.



Glidden is said to have made his early barbs with a modified coffee mill. He spaced the hand-made barbs on one strand of wire which was then twisted together with another strand of wire to hold the barbs in place. Glidden was issued patent #157,124 and his company, Barb Fence Company, was quickly very successful with production rising from 10,000 lbs in 1874 to nearly 3,000,000 lbs in 1876. In 1876 Glidden sold his remaining patent rights to the Washburn and

Moen Manufacturing Company of Worcester, Massachusetts.

So what about Texas? John "Bet a Million" Gates demonstrated barbed wire for Washburn and Moen in Alamo Plaza San Antonio, Texas in 1876. The demonstration was followed immediately by invitations to the Menger Hotel to place orders. This was considered a defining moment in Texas - a few strands of wire holding back longhorn steers.

Well, after the introduction of barbed wire in San Antonio, its use spread far afield. The Texas historian, T.R. Fehrenbach, wrote in Lone Star : "With the explosion of the fence wire in the 1880s, the open range was done." Wire fences were cheaper to erect than their alternatives and it was more affordable to fence much bigger areas than before.

At the beginning we were quoting Mr. Scheel, and I would like to end as he explains how it was many years ago in Honey Creek: "There were no fences between neighbors; you just crossed over the fields and through the woods to go to each others houses." I know we have come a long way, but some days I would like to go back.

**There are more stories to be told! Stay tuned.**

Mr. A.J. Bergmann of Comfort, Texas Provided a portion of the resource documents.

Come join the Friends' History committee for the  
**2nd Annual Honey Creek Homesteaders Homecoming**

July 28 at 6:30 pm at the park Amphitheater



All are welcomed to talk and share or just listen to living history!

We will have a German Chorus group entertain and provide refreshments. Guests are welcomed to bring along desserts for a Pot-Luck treat!



**May 26**
**Hill Country Mammals 8:00 PM**

All about local mammals. A trunk full of hides, tracks, scat, skulls, and other fun stuff to discuss the various mammals of the Texas Hill Country.







Tom Anderson - Past President of the Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek Friends Group




**June 2**
**Priority Plants of the Texas Hill Country 8:00PM**

Priority plant populations are in steady decline. They include some of our most beautiful and popular species. This talk covers 15-20 Texas Hill Country priority trees, shrubs and vines that are in need of special conservation efforts.








Jan Wrede-Director of Education, Cibolo Nature Center, Jan writes weekly nature columns for local newspapers and is involved in leadership of numerous science and outdoor education activities.




**June 9**
**Amphibians 8:00 PM**

Amphibians in the world around us... Indicator species, environmental barometers, contributions to medicine and science, food webs, and the diversity of life








Robert Perez-Texas Parks and Wildlife, Quail Program Leader  
Personal Interest in Herpetology  
Texas State University BS,MS in Wildlife




**June 16**
**Owls 8:00 PM**

Whooo's there? Although very seldom seen and only occasionally heard, Texas is rich in a diverse number of owls. Not only are they found in the 'wilder' areas of our state but many species are quite comfortable sharing their homes with us within most city limits. Come learn about our night time neighbors ...who they are, what they eat, their amazing adaptations, and why they are important in keeping our environment healthy.








Kim Hoskins-Texas Master Naturalist,  
Sought after speaker on many nature subjects




**June 23**
**Aquatic Ecology 8:00PM**

Stream habitat, common- and not so common- fishes and invertebrates that may be found in the Guadalupe River, may collect some critters to look at from the river. Also a little about how rivers form, variations in flow, drought, floods, etc.








Doyle Mosier  
Director of the Freshwater Resources Program for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
Praveen Kakkanti, staff hydrologist




**June 30**
**Wildflower Floral Foray 7:00 PM**

A talk/walk. Focus on simple identification techniques, legends and folklore associated with the plants we find, and answers to your native plant and horticultural questions.








Florence (Glo) M. Oxley  
Director of Conservation and Education  
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center




**July 7**
**Tracking, 7:00 PM**

An interactive session on how tracks are made and how to interpret them. What was it/ Which way did it go? Was it in a hurry? There will be examples of tracks and an area where the participants can make tracks themselves.








Camilla Richey  
Texas Master Naturalist and  
Local Bed and Breakfast owner




**July 14**
**Amazing Plants of the Texas Hill Country 8:00PM**

Discussion of Texas Hill Country plants you should know and why our native animals need these plants








Doug Daglish,  
Past President of the Lindheimer chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists and outdoor educator at John Knox Ranch.




**July 21**
**San Antonio Astronomical Association Star, Night, 8:30 PM**

The San Antonio Astronomical Association invites you to see Saturn and it's spectacular rings through professional grade telescopes. View the Great Orion Nebula, a nursery for infant stars. See the Earth's moon in amazing close-up detail








Don Baker, leading and Members of the San Antonio Astronomical Society,




**July 28**
**2nd Annual Honey Creek Homesteaders Homecoming 6:30PM**

Descendants of Honey Creek area settlers are welcomed to come share stories, photos and memories. Enjoy live entertainment and refreshment. Feel free to bring Pot-Luck desserts!

Hosted by Friends Of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek Inc. History Committee



Guadalupe River State Park is helping the Seguin Outdoor Learning Center by providing a nature experience for Girls Exploring Texas Great Outdoors ("GETGO"). The girls start their 2-day experience by going on the Honey Creek Walk. The Friends Interpretative Guides have been providing this experience. There have been 3 walks so far (see photos) and the girls have been great.



They have many questions and seem to really be enjoying this outdoor experience. They are taking notes as we go and will use those to write in their journals.



This program is financed by a Texas Parks and Wildlife Grant.

**Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. Membership**

**(Membership Renewal date is January 1st)**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type:**     New Member     Renewal     Change of Address

**Level of Membership:**     \$5 Education or Youth Organization     \$50 Sustaining Member  
     \$5 Student (under 18)     \$100 Contributing Member  
     \$10 Individual (over 18)     \$500 Corporate Partner  
     \$15 Family     \$1000 Life Membership

**I would like to help the Friends by volunteering for:**

Interpretive hikes                       Outdoor Ed. Programs                       Trail Maintenance  
 Historical Drama                       Evening Programs                       South Island Beautification  
 Trail Ride Event                       Fundraising                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

Send checks payable to "Friends of GR/HC, Inc. Mail to: 3350 Park Road 31, Spring Branch, TX 78070  
 Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization.  
 All donations are tax deductible.

**Friends of Guadalupe River  
and Honey Creek, Inc.**

3350 Park Road 31  
Spring Branch, Texas 78070

We're on the web!  
[www.honeycreekfriends.com](http://www.honeycreekfriends.com)

*The Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek, Inc. is a non-profit organization working with Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area.*

*The "Friends" meet monthly at the Park. Please join us on the second Thursday at 7:00 pm.*

*And bring a friend!*