



Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization
[Fall 2009]

President's Letter

by: Nancy Gray

Board of Director

Change is the theme of this quarter's letter. And change means we need the help of our Friends even more. There are exciting opportunities to see new things and help at our favorite park. Come check out the Discovery Center at the park. The Discovery Center is designed to introduce children and their parents to the nature around them. It is housed in the newly renovated Interpretative Center, which is next to the park amphitheater. We trained one set of volunteers to help at the center and we need more so we can extend its hours of operation and reach more people. It's always rewarding and fun to share the love of the outdoors with others.

Halloween at the Park on October 25 will be great again. The park has worked hard on a plan to improve the traffic flow getting into the park for Halloween. This event is always fun and we need volunteers to help. The ghosts and goblins are such fun on the nature trail around the new Discovery Center. Be sure to check out the information on Halloween elsewhere in this newsletter. And speaking of newsletters. We all enjoy the information every quarter. I sent out a request earlier looking for someone to help with the newsletter. We still need that special someone.

The last change is saying a fond farewell to our park interpreter, Craig Hensley. He has decided to make a career change and go work with children that need extra help in Kerrville. We all wish Craig the best. Craig has been a wonderful addition to the park and has gotten the interpretive programs going in high gear. The Friends group will do our best to fill in where we can until the park gets a new interpreter.

Consider an exciting change in your life. Come explore new things to do as a volunteer in the park. I hope to see more of all of you in this next quarter.

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With the summer coming to an end Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area I look back at what we have encountered in the past few months. This summer was a new experience for me personally as I have worked for the department for just over five years and this was the first summer that I have worked at a high volume park. The staff at GRSP is second to none. Our slow seasons would be considered busy at most other parks and our busy seasons could be compared to an amusement park, but the staff shows no lack of commitment and desire to make GRSP and HCSNA a better place everyday. This makes for not only a great place to work but also a great place for visitors.



As you can imagine water (or lack of) was on everybody's mind this summer. During the summer months drought has plagued our area as well as much of central Texas. A burn ban was implemented at the beginning of summer and is still in place today. We saw the Guadalupe River stop flowing at Hwy 281 and slow to a snails pace here in the park. Our biggest concern was the ability to make suitable drinking water. Thankfully recent rains have helped swell the river and we are much closer

to near normal levels for the month of August. The low river levels did not stop visitors from coming to the park however. Memorial weekend through the 4th of July showed visitation to be keeping pace with last years record numbers.

The staff at GRSP will be seeing some new faces in the coming months. Our park interpreter, Craig Hensley, I am sad to say has decided to pursue another career path and will be leaving our park at the end of August. This means that we will begin the process of hiring a new park interpreter and will hopefully have that position filled by the end of the year. Our lead ranger, Greg Nash, will serve as the temporary liaison



for volunteers and park hosts. We have also hired a new Back-up Utility Plant Operator, Russell Miller, who has taken the place of Daniel Pepin. Daniel Pepin subsequently has stepped up into the primary utility plant operator position. On another note our park manager, Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig, is continuing his special assignment in Austin, building a new website for camping reservations and

will not be available for day to day operations at the park. Scott Taylor has assumed the role of park manager and will continue to do so until Mark returns.



We look forward to the completion of the new Discovery Center as much work has been done. The center should be complete by the fall. When it is completed we will send out information on training

opportunities for volunteers to work in the new Discovery Center then plan for a Grand Opening. On the Bauer Unit, we were able to burn off the brush pile in the proposed parking lot, opening it up to the next step of actually leveling and putting down gravel. Also, hunting season is fast approaching and we are gearing up for our public hunts. The dates for these hunts are as follows:

Guadalupe River - Bauer Unit - Oct. 12-16; Oct. 19-23; Nov. 9-13; Nov. 16-20

Guadalupe River - Dec. 7-11; Dec. 14-18; Jan. 4-8; Jan. 11-15

Honey Creek - Dec. 7-11; Dec. 12-13; Dec. 14-18; Jan. 4-8; Jan. 11-15

Many thanks to the Friends Group and all of the volunteers who dedicate their time to help make Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area a better place. With your dedication and devotion we are one the most popular sites in the state park system. On behalf of the state park staff I thank you all.



Discovery Center Opens

by Tom Anderson

By the time you get this Newsletter Guadalupe River State Park will have a new addition. It is housed in the renovated Interpretative Center which is next to the park amphitheater. Tara Tucker, regional interpretative specialist, and Wendy Womack, Texas Parks and Wildlife Planner, will have



completed the first training session. Also present was Craig Hensley, retired park interpreter,

who explained how to use one of the twelve activity boxes that are in the center. The training for over 30 volunteers gave an overview of the exhibits and allowed trainees to become familiar with them and the activity boxes and backpacks. This center is focused towards children (and thus, their parents) to get them engaged in the outdoors. There will



be several activity boxes with furs, skulls, books, etc. These boxes will give visitors a hands-on experience with natural resources found at the park. The trained volunteers will guide the visitors in their exploration. Backpacks will be available for visitors to "check out" for further exploration outside. The backpacks have binoculars, field guides, magnifying glasses, etc.



Look for pictures in this issue that give you a glimpse of what is in store for you when you experience the Discovery Center. The Friends Group is partnering with the park by providing these trained volunteers to have the Center open on Saturdays and Sundays for 9-5.



Trails to the Past

A few editions back, we followed Mr. C. F. Bergmann's three part journey: a trek across Germany to Bremerhaven, his transatlantic voyage to Galveston and Indianola, and finally the



overland trip to San Antonio. It was exciting to hear his first hand account - words that convey his 1857 views. Continuing with that same theme, we are lucky to find a similar but even earlier accounting of the obligatory overland trip from the coast; a requirement for all who desired to establish a new home in the Texas Hill Country. "The Sufferings of the First Emigrants", was written by Fritz Goldbeck, who came to Texas when New Braunfels was established in 1845, at the age of 14. I'm sure his memories were still vivid when he put his first-hand experiences to words and then gathered this poem and other prose into his 1895 copyrighted book - Since 50 Years. At the end of the poem, I'll

tell you about the small journey this poem took to arrive in this column.



The Sufferings of the First Emigrants

In the dark shadows of the forest,
In the swamps, in green fields,
Everywhere in the wide country
Find the signs of their graves.

The sunrays were glowing,
The air was heavy and oppressive,
While a small wagon was making
Its way through the heavy dust.

A small mule was pulling it
Through the deep sand.
The little conveyance reminded
One of the German fatherland.

A man, his wife, four children
Followed eagerly,
While the wagon held all
Their earthly possessions

The good people moved
Toward the town of Braunfels.
Two more days and they
Would reach their destination.

There were clear springs,
There the air was pure,
And there they would find
Their new home forever.

Unfortunately the wagon broke
Before they made there.
Leaving them helplessly stranded
At the edge of the woods.

Dull the thunder rumbled.
A storm was coming fast.
The poor people without protection
Felt their hearts grow heavy.

The bad storms were raging
With unbroken fury.
The rain came down in sheets.
The poor ones lost their courage.

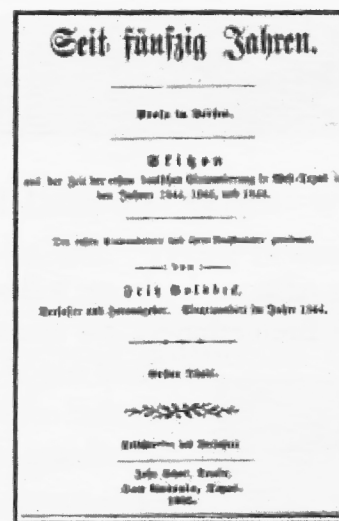
They were hardly protected
By the trees.
And soon all of them were shaking
With fever and with cold.

A farmer found them later:
But most of them were dead.
Only one little boy
Could be saved from this disaster.

Do you know the big nut tree
Growing in Dor's prairie?
That is where you find their grave,
If the wind did not blow it away.

Many are happy to enjoy the
The fruits of the present
Without remembering that
They sprout out of graves.

Brenda Anderson - Lindemann shared this poem - a dark but very real world insight into the first pioneers' struggle to cover the 162 miles to the first German colony in the Texas Hill Country. This poem was included in an old 5" X 7" book that she found nestled with other books in her parents' garage. While some of the books were in very poor condition and others were intact, this one had only lost its cover. Copy-righted in 1895, its title in German: Since Fifty Years by Fritz Goldbeck.



Wanting to understand the text, in 2000 Brenda loaned the over 100- year-old book to an out-of-state family member who was fluent in German. Apparently there was a misunderstanding, as Brenda tells me that the book might now be on "permanent" loan. However, undaunted, Brenda soon discovered the German-written poems were printed in another source - a large book written about the Bremer family.

In the 2003 - 2004 time period, Ingrid M. Lingle, a friend of Brenda's, started translating the words. She plans to put all the translated prose in a book in the near future.

There are more stories to be told!

Provided by Joan Nitschke

Verta Mae Vanecek, long time rancher and neighbor on Park Road 31, passed away unexpectedly on September 15, 2009. Verta always had a ready smile and infectious laugh, and could be seen each afternoon giving her cat a ride in her golf cart. Her husband, Joe Vanecek, was an early and active board member of The Friends of GRSP / HCSNA. He played many roles, from bringing goats for Earth Day to stripping and painting the Rust House in one of its early renovations. Joe particularly enjoyed sharing his knowledge of wildlife and hunting, and was at the park at 5:00 am during the Public Hunt program, working side by side with park staff. Joe passed away in 2000. They were loyal friends and shall be missed.

HALLOWEEN IN THE PARK 2009

Guadalupe River State Park

Sunday night, October 25th, the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek SNA will again host the annual Halloween in the Park for children ages two to twelve.

"Halloween at the Park" allows children to walk down a wooded path lit by candlelight and lanterns while being greeted by costumed characters with candy treats along the way. Just the experience of walking through the trees at night, feeling the wind and hearing the night sounds is a special, unique experience. After completing the trail that starts and ends at the amphitheater, visitors can have hot dogs and refreshments. A storyteller will be telling age appropriate stories at the amphitheater.

The event will begin at 6:30 PM with storytelling and trick or treat for young children (2-6) followed by the same activities for big spooks (7-12) from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Hot dogs and drinks will be served between 6:30 and 8:30 PM while they last.

The Park has worked with the Friends to expedite Park entry. The fee at the entrance to the park will be a \$10.00 flat fee which includes entrance, parking, and event. If you wish to make an additional donation to the Friends you may do so at the event.

Due to the tremendous response in the past couple of years we need community support to man the trail stations where volunteers in costume will provide and hand out candy. We also need volunteers to assist with food, decorating, and donation collection. If you are interested in participating in this event, please contact:

Nancy Gray at grayabbott@aol.com, 830-229-5376, or
Tom Anderson at tanderson46@satx.rr.com, 210-241-1916

If volunteers identify themselves at the gate they will get free admission to the Park. Y'all come!

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

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We're on the web!
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!