



Summer 2011 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

Homesteader's Homecoming

by Bryden Moon

Board of Directors



On May 1st we hosted a gathering that was truly special – friends and neighbors assembled under the banner of our 5th Homesteader Homecoming. This year's homecoming was unique as we were invited onto the Honey Creek Springs Ranch (J & A Gass Ranch) by sisters Joyce Gass Moore and Cindy Martinez. Their ranch contains the lands of two of

Honey Creek's original settlers, G. F. Kunz and Johann Adam Kneupper. As the event unfolded at the Johann Kneupper home site, our guests were able to get a break from the weather by sitting under the sheltering branches of a heritage oak tree. Between the welcomes and introductions by our Friends' president, Tom Anderson, and a brief overview of the day's events coupled with a short background sketch on Johann Kneupper (see related article on Johann Adam Kneupper), Clarence Scheel and his sister, Bernice Friesenhahn, gifted our Friends organization a historic, panoramic photo of St. Joseph –



Honey Creek once owned by their father Adolph Scheel (a former Homesteader Homecoming participant and Friends member). In the 1932 photo, Father Draessel and the church's parishioners are celebrating his 60 years of priesthood. After concluding this portion of the program and taking a short hike, we reconvened at our next venue. The Kneupper Chapel (Maria Help Chapel) is a handsome private structure that was used for various religious services by the Catholic community. Joyce Gass Moore submitted forms to obtain a Texas Historical Commission marker, which dates its construction in 1878 and she recalled many memories and details from the event.

Here we also learned from



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Honey Creek Homesteaders

by Bryden Moon

notes that are attributed to Father Draessel, that he visited the site in 1902: **February 4 on Tuesday I said a low Mass in Maria Help Chapel wherein we prayed a litany to ask for rain.** (Father Draessel indicates that **Old Man Kneupper, Hubert Moos, and the Bechtolds** were there). **It rained hard so that I didn't get home till afternoon. Thank God. It soaked in.**

Finally we caravanned to another special icon in Honey Creek heritage, the springs and the headwaters of Honey Creek. Located just outside of our park's boundaries, it is a beautiful oasis. Here was a blend of history and natural history. On the history front, a passage was quoted from Alfred Engel's **Centennial: St. Joseph's Catholic Church of Honey Creek 1876 – 1976**. This oral history, which was passed from generations, describes Engel's forebears (his maternal great-grandmother Christina Bechtold Kunz and her husband, G. F. Kunz, and his maternal grandfather Michael Bechtold) and their journey to obtain land: **As they walked north from Anhalt, they were to come upon some unclaimed land belonging to the state. There they found another stream which emptied into the Guadalupe River ... They went up this stream and found where the water was bubbling from under a rock ledge. They decided to look no longer for land because this would be the place for their new home.** We

were standing at the site that was described in this oral history.



Besides the breathtaking beauty, we were served up natural history when Kurt Menking gave an extensive & fascinating presentation on caves and tunnels tied into the area. He has been exploring this region since the 1980s and was able to discuss his findings as well as answer the many questions that were asked about our regional geology.

We

concluded a very special afternoon with our own tradition, a sampling of sweets brought in by our guests and friends. It was good to see our friends and neighbors. A special thank you again to our hosts, Joyce Gass Moore and Cindy Martinez.

There are more stories to be told!

Wilt Shaw & Kay Moon





President's Letter/ Scout Project

by Tom Anderson

From past newsletters you have been made aware of the Wildlife Viewing Area at the park. This is a work in progress and progress is being made. We now have a water feature provided by John Gansel, a young man who made this his Eagle Scout Project. John is a scout in Troop 2010 from Boerne. John designed, raised money, and provided the leadership of his troop to make this project a reality. I was fortunate to go to the park on March 27th and meet John and his father (See picture in this issue). In my opinion young men such as John deserve more credit for what they do. Instead our media often give air time and column space to individuals that do negative things. Because of

this our attitudes become distorted toward today's youth. John is one of many youth that do positive things in our community. During our meeting it was quite clear John with his father's guidance has become a young leader that his troop can be proud to have produced. Very few scouts become Eagle because of the many requirements that must be perfected. John is not just satisfied to have accomplished this level but is continuing on for an environmental award of which this water feature will



be included. Thanks John and Troop 2010 for helping to make Guadalupe River State Park the best it can be.



Trails to the Past

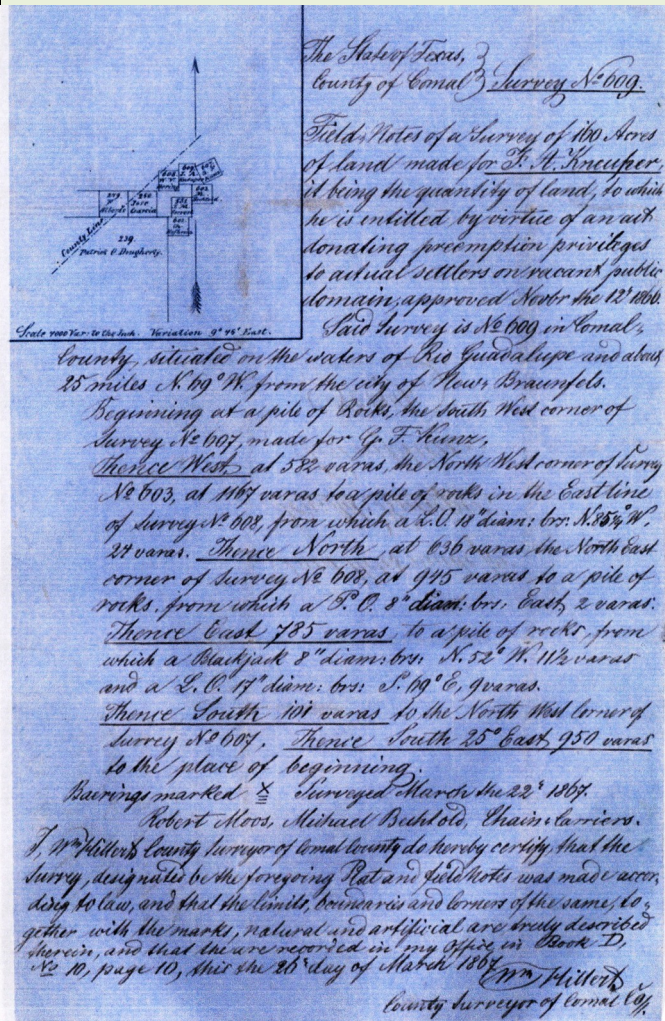
by Bryden Moon

Johann Adam Kneupper was not our actual host for this year's 5th Homesteaders' Homecoming (our real hosts were sisters, Cindy Martinez and Joyce Gass Moore), but as we toured the homestead grounds of Mr. Kneupper, one of the original founding members of the Honey Creek community, we were treated to the fruits of his labors which he carved out in the 1870s on his final homestead. On display were the simple but sturdy, handsome structures. Seeing these buildings and reading the translated words he penned in 1877 and later (read below), nearly brought back him to the present. The

Honey Creek traditions evolved when Kneupper came out here with four other families and all 5 families had their Honey Creek land surveyed in 1867 and patented in 1871. (Kneupper's actual land survey left).



So who was Johan Adam Kneupper? He was born on July 29, 1827 in Holler, Nassau – not a united Germany yet. Johann was married in 1852 to Margaretha Jaeger, shortly before he and his wife came over to Texas with his brother, uncle and various other relatives on the Hermann Theodore arriving in December, 1852. All of the Kneupper's five children were born in Texas. His first son, Peter, was born in 1853. In 1856 Johann had 160 acres surveyed less than five miles outside of New Braunfels and there was a neighbor of another future Honey Creek settler, G. F. Kunz. His next three children, Maria (1856), Wilhelm (1859), and Margaretha (1861) were probably born outside of New Braunfels. His land survey at Honey Creek was in 1867, when he was 40. Their youngest child, Anna, was born at Honey Creek in 1869. By 1877 he had already built a multiple-structure compound as we learn from a letter he wrote back home to family in Nassau,



"...1 story, 10 feet high with an attic from 3 to 4 above for grain storage...we have 3 rooms with a kitchen beside them attached with a nice oven...an extra house with a room and bed...where the hired hands and our boys sleep...20 steps from our house are the houses for butter, corn, and fodder for the cattle..."



In later correspondence (estimated to be written in 1902) he wrote “...we **have a cemetery at the church.**” And after 50 plus years in Texas with over 2/3rds of that time at Honey Creek, Johann Adam Kneupper died on February 6, 1903 and is buried in that cemetery he described (current St. Joseph – Honey Creek site). It was truly an honor that we were able to gather at this regional stalwart’s land during our most recent Homesteader Homecoming. In the next edition we’ll further explore the Honey Creek traditions of G. F. Kunz, Michael Bechtold, Hubertus Robert Moos, Casper Moos and Johann Adam Kneupper.



There are more stories to be told!

Park Happenings

by Chris Dooley

Once again, as the school year draws to a close, we are preparing for an increase in our visitation. Despite the low water and drought we are expecting large weekend crowds and plenty of campers. We at the park are fortunate to have been able to hire several new office and maintenance for the summer months. Our new faces will help us stay open later, give better customer service, and keep the park clean and running during our busy season. We are very grateful to have the help this summer, so please welcome our new employees.

All these visitors will be coming to a river that is getting lower and lower as the spring rolls into summer. We are running well below our average flow for this time of year, and relief is nowhere in sight. There are no dams upstream of the park, so we are at nature’s mercy when it comes to abnormally low (or high) river behavior. However, the periods of low water (as well as the occasional flash flood) are a small price to pay for being on a completely natural section of the river. This lack of water is of course a result of the drought we have been in for the past several months. Those who visit the park will notice that our vegetation is extremely dry, and even the cedars are feeling the stress of drought. As a result of these conditions, Comal County is currently under a burn ban. While the park still allows the use of containerized fuels like propane and Coleman fuel, wood or charcoal fires are prohibited to prevent the accidental spread of hot ashes. Please contact the park for more detailed information.

As you drive down the park road past the headquarters you will no doubt see evidence on our ongoing water system repair project. This plumbing project along the park road has been ongoing since February, but we can nearly see the finish line now. For most of the month of April our park staff has been digging a trench and laying PVC pipe from our headquarters down to our water treatment plant. The project has meant hundreds of man-hours spent in all weather digging, bedding, laying and backfilling over a mile of pipeline. We still have long way to go with this project, but once it is completed we will again have running water and functioning restrooms at the headquarters.

We are well into our regular Saturday Night Interpretive Program schedule for the year, and we are happy to report that attendance overall has been very good. We are still receiving many compliments on our Discovery Center, which has been just for just over a year now. Many families are taking the opportunity to borrow one of our backpack, which are full of guides and tools a family can use to explore the resources we have in the park. As always, we are looking for volunteers to help staff the Discovery Center, lead hikes, and present programs on Saturday nights. So if you have an interest, contact the park and we’ll be happy to put you to work!

As we move into another busy summer, we are looking forward to seeing all of our Friends at the park. We have been working hard this spring to provide everyone with the best recreation opportunities we can, and we always appreciate the support that the Friends of Guadalupe State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area provide. Thank ya’ll again!

Park Clean up Day

by Dave Kibler

On Saturday, 2 April, a group of sixty-seven enthusiastic volunteers made significant contributions to the appearance of the park. While about twenty of the workers combed the banks of the Guadalupe River within the park boundaries for trash and debris, the main body descended on two trails in the southeastern portion of the park, clearing back the ash juniper (mountain cedar) which had overgrown sections of these equine/hiking trails. Work proceeded for three hours in the pleasant April temperatures, as the youth and adults of Boy Scout Troop 285, sponsored by Coker Methodist Church of San Antonio, again displayed their spirit of cheerful service in performing these needed

tasks. After completing the work, all hands were treated to a hot lunch of venison sausage and all the trimmings prepared by several of the Scouters near the riverfront. A parent from the troop donated the sausage, while The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area organizations donated the funds to make the rest of the great lunch possible. The boys and adults of Troop 285 look forward to this semi-annual service project as a way to demonstrate their Scout Spirit.



Honey Creek Interpretative Guide Training

by Nancy Gray

The Friends Group conducted training to prepare new interpretive guides for Honey Creek on Saturday April 16. Four people participated and learned about the principles of interpretation, geology, flora and wildlife diversity of the area, the history and heritage of the area and stewardship as well as participating in an example Honey Creek hike. One of the 4 trainees had already assisted on 3 regular Honey Creek hikes and became certified with this training. A second has already assisted on a hike. We want to give special thanks to everyone who helped arrange and conduct this successful training.

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.org

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!