



## Summer 2012 NEWSLETTER

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

A non-profit organization

### Trails to the Past

Guadalupe River State Park

by Bryden Moon

### Board of Directors

### Gathering in the Past 2012 Homesteader Homecoming



On April 15<sup>th</sup> our friends and Friends members gathered for our 6<sup>th</sup> Homesteader Homecoming to learn more about settlement of our region at the magnificent venue of our hosts, Terry and Ronnie Urbanczyk's Honey Creek Ranch. Once again heritage surrounded us: the Urbanczyk ranch land was first owned by early Honey Creek pioneer Robert (H.R.) Moos, (one of the five original Honey Creek homesteaders, all of whom had their first land grants surveyed in 1867 and patented in 1871). And it turned out the links to the past



were not just outside in the lands and buildings.

In the party barn we were treated to another direct historical connection to the Honey Creek region: the Scheel family. Bernice Scheel Friesenhahn and Clarence Scheel told us with graphic words about how the Scheel family's life was interwoven with regional icons: the Germania Farmer's Verein @ Anhalt and St. Joseph – Honey Creek Catholic Church. Bernice and Clarence



had first-hand knowledge of our hosts' ranch, as their Great Grandfather Fritz Scheel purchased abstract # 428 (survey #722) from Robert Moos. And their father, Adolph, who attended our first Homesteader Homecoming in 2006, grew up on this land before leaving as a young man in 1933. Clarence and Bernice were joined

by other Scheel family descendants (group photo). To learn more about the Scheel roots, see our companion article [Scheel on Scheel](#) which includes excerpts from Clarence's presentation along with some of his wonderful family graphics.



A good time was enjoyed by all. Sarah Weidner Turner, who as a child would visit her Weidner Grandparents on Honey Creek S.N.A. lands, drove the farthest as she and her husband Bill came from Denton. Violet Weidner Wolfshohl, who grew up on Honey Creek S.N.A. in the Doeppenschmidt/Weidner house joined us. Barbara Wehe was recognized as attending all 6 Homesteader Homecomings. Clinton Acker

won a door prize drawing: Delray Fischer's newly-minted limited edition book, [The Lands of Texas – Volume III Kendall County](#). A special thanks to those who provided our traditional treats and our hosts.

There are more stories to be told!



<b>President</b> <b>Tom Anderson</b> tanderson46@satx.rr.com
<b>Vice Pres. / Maintenance</b> <b>Dave Kibler</b> djikib@gvvc.com
<b>Secretary</b> <b>Bob Gray</b> RGrayTX@gmail.com
<b>Treasurer</b> <b>J.W. Pieper</b> jwp1@gvvc.com
<b>Director / Discovery Center</b> <b>Richard Mizanin</b> rjmizanin@yahoo.com
<b>Saturday Night Program</b> <b>Craig Hensley</b> craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us
<b>Director / Education</b> <b>Holly Camero</b> chcamero@aol.com
<b>Director / Hikes</b> <b>Nancy Gray</b> grayabbott@aol.com
<b>Director / Historian</b> <b>Bryden Moon</b> Bemoonjr@aol.com
<b>Director / Webmaster</b> <b>Ed Sypniewski</b> capted@gvvc.com
<b>Chairman / Publicity</b> <b>Joan Nitschke</b> jen10@gvvc.com
<b>Director at Large</b> <b>Wilt Shaw</b> wshawjr888@aol.com

## Scheel on Scheel

by Bryden Moon

## Excerpts from Clarence Scheel's Homesteader Homecoming Presentation

**Welcome to the beautiful Honey Creek Ranch. I am Clarence Scheel, Bernice Friesenhahn's brother (Bernice presented first). Our Dad, Adolph, who was born in New Braunfels in 1912, was raised on this ranch until he got married in 1933, and moved to Converse.**

Before moving on to discuss his family, Clarence mentions one feature on the land that was tied to the land's first owner, Robert Moos. **Robert built a log home on one of the 160 acre tracts which is now part of the Honey Creek Ranch. When one of Robert's children died as a baby, he buried it in the garden next to his log home. Although the home was later moved, that grave still exists today and is surrounded by an iron fence in one of the cultivated fields on the Honey Creek Ranch. A dead cedar tree which had been shaped to grow as a cross still remains at the gravesite. My dad remembered that his family watered the cedar tree during droughts and trimmed the tree to keep its cross shape.**



**In 1867, my great grandfather, Friedrich or Fritz Scheel, immigrated from Michelsrombach, Germany as a 19 year old boy with his parents and family to the Honey Creek area. Fritz's father, my great great grandfather, Bernhard Joseph Scheel patented 160 acres of land where the Catholic Church now stands.**

**In 1876 a group of local ranchers got together to discuss ways to protect against cattle rustling. They formed the Germania Farmer Verein (Anhalt) or society which still exists. The charter member list includes Friedrich, Hermann and Robert Scheel, Robert and Casper Moos, George Friedrich Kunz and his step son Michael Bechtold. My dad was a member of the Verein for more than 50 years and I have been a member for about 30 years.**



**In 1876, Fritz Scheel married Elisabeth (Elise) Schwab. They were married at Honey Creek on 1 Nov 1876 in the home of George Friedrich Kunz by Father John Kossbiel.**

**This photo (left) shows Fritz and Elise Scheel's family in about 1897. The tall son on the left is my grandfather Eugen Valentine. The baby on Elise's lap is Lucia. In 1907 when Lucia was 9 years old, she was bitten by a rattle snake on her way to school and died that same day. This photo (right) shows Lucia's iron grave marker on the new Honey Creek Cemetery behind the**

**present day church. The inscription reads: Lucia Scheel, geb 7 Juli 1891, Gest 25. Juni 1901, Des Morgens Schlangenbiss macht Abends Dir den Himmel gewiss. That translates to: Lucia Scheel, born 7 July 1891, died 25 June 1901; the morning snakebite certainly means heaven for you in the evening. This tombstone has been featured in various books about unusual grave markers in Texas.**



**Fritz Scheel became a very successful rancher and stone mason. Rather than raise cattle, he bred mules. Once the mules were about 2 ½ years old, he would carefully select two mules that were similar in height and color, and his two oldest sons, Eugen and Alfred, would train or break the mules into a 2 mule team.**

**His mule teams were highly sought after by the farmers in the fertile valleys around New Braunfels and commanded about \$500 per team, a large sum of money during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Before and during World War I, the Army had a large demand for draft horses. So Fritz changed from raising mules to raising draft horses**

**which he sold to the Army.**



Fritz's oldest son, my grandfather Eugen Scheel, inherited the two 160 acre parcels including the home. Most of those 320 acres and the home are part of today's Honey Creek Ranch.

A major revolution of wheat and oats farming in the Honey Creek community occurred in approximately 1900, when Fritz's oldest son, Eugen, and Eugen's friend Willie Moos, son of Robert Moos, purchased a grain cutter that not only cut the grain but also tied it into bundles.

In 1905, Fritz's oldest son, my grandfather Eugen Scheel, married Marie Syring from the community of Comal near New Braunfels. Marie's grandfather, Christopher Syring, was one of the founding fathers of New Braunfels.

Five children were born to this union. This photo (right) shows the family in approximately 1920. L-R Bernard, Adolph, Eugen Sr, Eugen Jr, Marie, Agatha and Christine. Life was difficult on the ranch. They only had about 35 acres of land in the valley below the house that they could cultivate for crops. The rest was rocky hill country which had very poor quality native grasses. They had a few dairy cows for milk and butter and a few head of beef cattle and hogs for meat. Eugen always had a flock of sheep which provided wool for sale and mutton to eat. They raised chickens and



turkeys for eggs and meat. Eugen planted corn, wheat, sugar cane and oats. All of the grain he harvested was used to feed their horses, mules, livestock and poultry. Marie had a large vegetable garden and orchard and canned a lot of the produce for use throughout the year. They used the community molasses press and cooker at the Kneupper Ranch that we toured last year to produce molasses from the sugar cane. Excess molasses, butter, eggs and poultry were sold to the general store at Bergheim, 5 miles away, where they would purchase the staples they could not produce. Mr. Engel at the store kept a ledger of items they brought in for sale and items they purchased such that very little money actually changed hands.

At Christmas time, Eugen had a contract with Incarnate Word College in San Antonio to provide cedar trees to decorate their large chapel. Eugen and his family would cut those trees as well as others on his ranch and Eugen would load them on his wagon and take them to San Antonio. After delivering the trees to the college, he would peddle the remaining trees in downtown San Antonio.

Eugen and his family were quite poor, but they were strong supporters of their pastor, Father Virgilius Draessel (pastor at St. Joseph – Honey Creek) and provided him with food and care. While others had cars, Eugen and his family still used the horse and buggy. When his brother in law Ferdinand Syring purchased a Model T, Eugen bought Ferdinand's converted horse drawn ambulance that he had been using as the primary transportation for his family. Eugen modified it once more and used it for light hauling.

It took Eugen and Marie and their family two years to save enough cash to purchase a Model T. .

Eugen and Marie's family in 1930 on their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (see photo). Bernard was already married and had a daughter, Leatrice. Adolph is on the left. As they got older, Eugen and Marie were the last Scheel Family to remain in the Honey Creek area and they wanted to live closer to their children. They sold the ranch to



Mr. Kleck in 1951...

**Education for Schools**

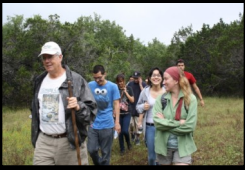
by Tom Anderson



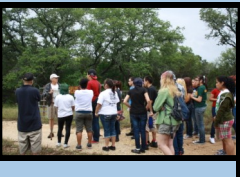
The Friends and park staff put together an educational program for the School of Excellence. This is a charter school in San Antonio. They came on three days for the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. We provided a 4 station rotation so that we could divide the groups into smaller numbers. There were 221 students total and 8-9 teachers/chaperones for each day they were in the park. Some of the activities we provided were: Mammals native to the Hill Country, Plant and animal adaptations, Geology and fossils of the park, Bird viewing and binocular use, and River Ecology. Each grade level arrived around 9:30 am and after a short introduction they were divided into groups and led to their starting activity. After the four 40 minute rotations they had lunch at the picnic area and took a nature hike and enjoyed time by the river. The following friends volunteers assisted in the program: Richard Mizanin, Holly Camero, Lisa Whitehead, Tom Anderson, park host Sheryl O'Donnell, and park staff Bill Beach.

**"Special" Honey Creek Hikes**

by Nancy Gray



**"Special" Honey Creek Hikes** The beautiful weather this spring has encouraged many groups to request special guided hikes through Honey Creek State Natural Area. There have been over ten requests for special hikes between the middle of March and the middle of May this year. In addition to the regular 9:00 AM Saturday morning Honey Creek hikes the friends group's trained interpretive guides are available on request to lead Honey Creek hikes at other times. These special hikes can be slanted toward the special interests of the requesting group. The groups this spring have been very diverse- schools, scouts, master naturalists, church, and mothers of preschoolers. If you have a group that is interested in a special hike, please request it with the park at least two weeks in advance. When you request, tell us your desired date, the size of the group and any special interests. There is a \$2.00/person fee for these special hikes with a \$20.00 minimum. All of the Honey Creek guides are volunteers. The money collected is used by the friends group to help Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek in many various ways. We hope that you will remember this opportunity the next time you are planning an activity for a group and come enjoy the beauty of Honey Creek with us.

**New Additions to the Viewing Area**

by Tom Anderson



Park Hosts Richard and Sheryl O'Donnell have made a great addition to the Wildlife Viewing Area. Above the viewing windows they have added an area where familiar birds might be seen in the area. This area is slanted so that reading about the birds is made easier. The park staff has put together the information that is shown in this structure. See pictures that in the newsletter that explains.





**Scouts at Work**

by Dave Kibler

On Saturday, 14 April, members of Boy Scout Troop 285, sponsored by Coker Methodist

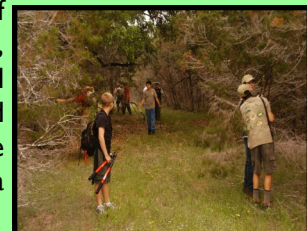


Church of San Antonio, took on a major trail maintenance project in the Bauer Unit of the park in order to improve the condition of the Box Canyon Trail which leads to the scenic overlook of Curry Creek on the eastern Boundary of the Bauer Unit. Ash juniper limbs were removed from the trail area, and many rocks were removed from the tread of the trail. This will certainly enhance the utility of this remote trail. In addition, another contingent from the troop



performed maintenance along the Hofheinz Woods Trail in the area of the Bauer House. As this work proceeded throughout the morning, a third group of volunteers from affiliated Venture Crew

285 of Coker Methodist Church, picked up trash along the river banks in the day-use area of the park. All joined for a splendid lunch of bratwurst and all the fixings, proved in part by the Friends of GRSP. A total of 64 Scouts, adults, and Venture youth participated. Many of these young people then camped for the night in the Bauer Unit of the park. These projects are performed semi-annually by these groups, who are looking forward to a return trip in the fall of 2012.

**Greetings**

by Scott Taylor &amp; Craig Hensley

Well, it seems like forever ago that we lost our park interpreter position but in fact it was just five months ago; which really does seem like forever for us. Well... we will just have to consider that time water under the bridge and look forward to a new beginning. With that being said, I am pleased to announce that we have filled the position and we here at the park are super excited to announce Craig Hensley's return to Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State natural area. For those of you who remember Craig from his reign here at Guadalupe River a few years back I am sure you will join me in my excitement. For those of you who did not get the chance to meet Craig now is your chance. Craig is a true professional at the top of his game; he is a wealth of knowledge and a bundle of energy; a true pleasure to watch, listen to and most of all learn from. When you get the chance, swing by the park to say Hi or catch one of Craig's amazing programs. I am certain that you won't be disappointed. Well, without further ado, Craig ...

- **Scott Taylor**

Greetings...Again!

Some of you will already know me and to you let me say how wonderful it is to be coming back to arguably the most beautiful state park and natural area in Texas! For those of you whom I have not yet met, I look forward to that day. I told Scott and the search committee that I would hit the ground running if hired and I am fixin' to do just that with a full slate of programs, beginning on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Instead of listing all of them here, please know that I will be working to get them on the Friends website as soon as possible and then getting the word out to the community, as well. I will tell you that I plan to offer a children's family program every Saturday morning, which I know will overlap with the walk at Honey Creek but I am hoping as happened before that we will both win in terms of audience participation. I am also hoping to offer some kind of program on Sunday mornings – the first two Sundays in June will feature bird walks at Honey Creek in search of Golden-cheeked Warblers and other birds. I will also work with Bill and the Friends with Saturday night programs, delivering a few in between a good selection of guest speakers. Eventually I can see offering some Friday night programs for arriving guests, as well. Lastly, I hope to offer a few select natural history workshops on subjects ranging from wildflowers to birds to butterflies. And, of course there is that wonderful Interpretive Center which I can't wait to get back to! I would mention that we have scheduled the butterfly count for the park and natural area for Friday, June 15. Some of you may know Kip Kiphart; we'll be working together on that and could really use additional volunteers to help for all or part of the day – you don't have to be an expert, just willing to learn and participate. Finally, I hope to get going with bird banding and other research/resource monitoring projects in the coming months both in the park, over on the Bauer Unit and at Honey Creek. Okay I better stop now or I will overwhelm even myself. It is a true honor for me to return to Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area. I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones. The Friends group has great plans in the near term and I hope to help them as I can as well. I know they need your help to continue their outstanding service to those guests that visit the park and natural area each and every week. I hope you'll join us as we move forward!

- **Craig Hensley**

**Calendar and Upcoming Events**

by Craig Hensley

**Calendar and Upcoming Events**

**San Antonio Astronomical Society** is hosting its summer Star Party at **Guadalupe River State Park** Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8 pm. Telescopes will be set up in the Day Use parking lot for a clear view of the night sky. Call the park at 830-438-2656 for times and details or check us out on facebook: Guadalupe River State Park – TPWD. Park entrance fee (\$7 per person age 13 and over) or Annual Pass is required. Program donations are appreciated.

**Golden Cheeked Warbler Walk** through Honey Creek State Natural Area. Join Park Interpreter Craig Hensley along the trails in search of the endangered Golden Cheeked Warbler and other seasonal birds. **Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 am – 10:30 am.** Bring your binoculars, water and sturdy hiking shoes. Meet at the historic Rust house inside Guadalupe River State Park, 830-438-2656. Park entrance fee (\$7 per person age 13 and over) or Annual Pass is required. Program donations are appreciated.

**Ongoing Event**

**Honey Creek State Natural Area** - Guided Nature Hike Saturday mornings at 9:00 - approx. 2 miles and 2 hours. Bring water and comfortable shoes. Meet at the historic Rust house inside Guadalupe River State Park. For details go to [www.honeycreekfriends.org](http://www.honeycreekfriends.org) or call the park at 830-438-2656. Park entrance fee is required. Donations to the Friends Group are appreciated.

**Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area**

3350 Park Road 31 Spring Branch, TX 78070

Phone: 830-438-2656 Fax: 830-438-2229

Contact: Joan Nitschke, Friends Group, 830-816-8996, [jenl0@gytc.com](mailto:jenl0@gytc.com)**Saturday Night Program**

by Craig Hensley

Date	Subject	Time	Speaker
2 - Jun	Star Party - SAAA	8:00 PM	Danielle Rappaport
9 - Jun	Bats of Texas	8:30 PM	Craig Hensley
16 - Jun	Deer in Urban Settings	7:00 PM	Kara Campbell
23 - Jun	Creatures of the Night	8:30 PM	Craig Hensley
30 - Jun	Frogs & Toads of Guadalupe River State Park	8:30 PM	Craig Hensley

## President Letter

by Tom Anderson



What a great spring! Wild flowers blooming, native grasses growing, water in the Guadalupe, the semi-annual park work day and river clean-up by the scouts, Saturday morning hikes being attended with record numbers, many special hikes for varied groups, and educational opportunities for school groups (see articles and pictures) being provided by the friends. All of the above are outstanding but the highlight for the spring was the annual homecoming homesteader's day. Please look for the articles about this event in the newsletter. We are grateful to Terry and Ronnie Urbanczyk for hosting and to Bernice Friesenhahn and Clarence Scheel for presenting. Bryden Moon, our historian, coordinated this event again.

If the above blessings were not enough I am pleased to announce the addition of former office manager at Guadalupe River State Park, Joan Nitschke who has joined our group and has agreed to be the publicity chairman. This has been a much needed position. The Friends and the park do so many things and we now have a voice to make sure the events are publicized.

The gifts keep on coming with the June 1<sup>st</sup> start date of Craig Hensley returning to his position as park interpreter. I know many of you will be excited to see some of the programs already on the calendar. Please check our webpage [honeycreekfriends.org/](http://honeycreekfriends.org/) for events that did not make the newsletter publication date. The summer will be busy as well.

We have two Eagle Scout projects that will be starting. The scouting program has been an integral part of the park and we appreciate all these young men and women do. We welcome you to join our group and take part in any or all that we do.

## 2012 Dues

by J.W. Pieper

### 2012 Membership Dues Are Now Payable

With the New Year approaching it is a time of renewal, and if you have not renewed your Friends of GRSP/Honey Creek membership for 2012 it is time to do so. As you know, this newsletter keeps you current with the activities at the Park, but the costs of sending out the newsletter are continuing to increase.

As a reminder, we are a 501 (c) 3 organization which means that contributions to the Friends organization are tax deductible. Just use the application on the inside back cover of this newsletter and mail your check to the official address for the Friends, 3350 Park Road 31, Spring Branch, Texas 78070 or drop it off at Park Headquarters on your next visit.

The Board of Directors has authorized the cancellation of subscription privileges to the Quarterly Newsletter in June for all members who are in arrears.

### 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](http://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 first  
Thursday at 6:30 pm.  
And bring a friend!**