If there is one lesson Mother Nature teaches us, it is; “Nothing remains constant except change itself.” \textbf{Martha Hix} joined RNC as the membership coordinator. When I began working with Martha, it was clear that the contribution for which she had the greatest talent was to serve as our publicist. We changed her role and she has done an outstanding job. In that capacity she was able to draw on her talents as a writer to feed the media information in a format that was easily usable, and she used her innate personable qualities to build relationships that provided RNC great coverage in various media outlets. Alas, it is these same qualities that have brought about a positive change in her life.

Martha is also an award-winning writer, having written 16 internationally published romance novels, plus two book-length business histories. Recently, she asked for a return of rights on her historical backlist and came away with a sweet deal from her former publisher, Kensington Publishing of New York. She couldn’t say no. As her old books are converted to electronic format, she’s going back to the future, to write book-length fiction again. Consequently, Martha will be leaving her paid position with RNC, but she promises to continue as an active volunteer. Rest assured, if RNC is throwing a party, Martha will be there to make sure no one goes away hungry! However, we will miss her talents as our publicist.

I will be meeting with our staff and with the board early in December exploring how best to deal with this new change in our organization. Fortunately, Martha has given us good lead time, she will be working until the end of January, and I trust we will find adaptive changes to fill the void she leaves.

Each year in January, we celebrate our volunteers and highlight their accomplishments. This year that event is slated for Thursday, January 22, at 4:30 p.m. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend so that we may all give our volunteers the thanks and recognition they deserve, and also give Martha Hix our thanks for the work – both paid and unpaid – she has done for us.

It is hard to believe we are wrapping up 2014. We have made great strides this year on many fronts.

Thanks to the leadership of Judy Ferguson, we’ve hosted wonderful exhibits. Tracy Gournay, our Education Chair, has successfully recruited additional team members including board members Peggy Thompson, Barbara Oates, and Morgan Williams who are already planning outstanding programs for 2015, while Tracy is handing the leadership baton to Peggy and Barbara. Our grounds continue to flourish and improve under the leadership of Barbara Lowenthal, John Quinby and Frank Dunlap. The Native Healing Garden group has become established thanks to Amy Coward and Sally Garrett. And while we welcome and celebrate our volunteer leaders, both seasoned and new, we also bid a sad farewell to others.

Laurie Pesez and Barbara Staggs continue to miss their cohort and friend, Ann Laughlin, now of Austin, who was part of our Gift Shop team for 25 years. As she deals with health issues, we miss the faithful dedication of our friend, Pat Nelson, as a Tuesday morning Riverside Guide. And, we mourn the passing of charter members, Bob Dewers, Harold Walsleben and Bill Laing, as we salute their contributions throughout the years. Yes, change is inevitable. Nature teaches us that adaptation is how we survive. Even still, I do believe it is not only acceptable, but also appropriate to stop and give our thanks for the gifts that volunteers and members have given that sustain this organization. We have a legacy to continue. I look forward to witnessing the creative and financial contributions that will emerge, and facilitate positive outcomes of the changes that inevitably and continually come our way.

Wishing you all a happy holiday season, and come celebrate with us at our Christmas Tea and Silent Auction at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20.

Mary Muse
2014 EVENTS at RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER
150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville ∞ 257-4837
www.riversidenaturecenter.org ∞ RNC.Kerrville@gmail.com
Open to the public. Reservations/RSVPs are strongly recommended.
And always—please check for changes/cancellations.

‘Hill Country Wildlife’ Exhibit at Riverside Nature Center, through Jan. 10
M-F, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sundays, 1-4 p.m.
Get an eyeful of the creatures—scary to magnificent—that make their home in the Hill Country—some that you may not even know about. Learn their habits and habitats, enjoy their diversity and find out how they live their lives. No charge, but donations always appreciated. RSVP to 257-4837; for general info, visit www.riversidenaturecenter.org. Next exhibit is tentatively titled “Hill Country ROCKS.”

Nature Detective: Mammals, Saturday, Dec. 6
1-2:30 p.m. Susan Sander and Craig McCain present their CSI class/lab, this time to observe, search for clues, and reach conclusions about mammals. Geared to 3rd-6th graders. Participants will take home a sample from their project. Member’s kids or grands pay $5; non-member kids, $8. RSVP to 257-4837.

NOTE: TIMES FOR “NATURE DETECTIVE” WERE UPDATED TO 1-2:30 P.M., THE CORRECT TIME.

2nd Annual Christmas Village Party, Saturday, Dec. 20
2-3 p.m. At least 16 Christmas village pieces will be up for auction, starting Dec. 16, with the close of bidding at the Christmas party. Call 257-4837 for further information and to confirm the time.

2nd Tuesday Brown Bag Lunch & Learn, Tuesday, Jan. 13
11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. RNC Naturalist Susan Sander presents, “The Winter Garden is Alive.” Start the New Year with a resolution to become a better observer of nature. Let Susan guide the way.

SAVE THE DATES
Volunteer Appreciation Celebration
Thursday, Jan. 22, 4:30-6 p.m.

Town Creek Cleanup Team
Saturday, Jan. 24, 9 a.m. to about noon

Nature Detective: Fossils
Saturday, Jan. 24, 1-2:30 p.m.

RNC Grounds Beautification
Saturday, Jan. 31, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Nature Detective: Ancient Animals
Saturday, Feb. 7, 1-2:30 p.m.

2nd Tuesday Brown Bag Lunch & Learn, Feb. 10, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

RNC Grounds Beautification
Saturday, Feb. 28, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

2nd Tuesday Brown Bag Lunch & Learn
March 10, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Nature Detective: Bats
Saturday, March ___, 1-2:30 p.m.

RNC Grounds Beautification
Saturday, March 21, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Spring Native Plant Sale & Festival
April 18, 2015, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Native Healing Garden
Please note that the medicinal herb gardeners will not meet December through February. Please plan to join the herbalists when they return on Thursday, March 15. Contact 257-4837 for further information.
Valeska Danielak

Valeska Danielak, a native Texan and social worker at the Kerrville State Hospital, joined the Riverside board after becoming active in the Hill Country Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists.

She said, “Ironically, I learned about the HCMN program while attending the Earth Day celebration at Riverside Nature Center. Back then, they offered canoe rides and the lady leading our canoe was in the Master Naturalist program. I thought it sounded perfect for me. I wanted to build up my eligibility to get into the HCMN program, so started volunteering at Old Tunnel.”

She began at the famed Old Tunnel bat emergence site in 2009. Having completed the HCMN program in 2010, she served on the board in 2013, holding the office of Membership Director.

When asked about her interests at Riverside, Valeska replied, “…One of the traditions I have with my 7-year-old brother—who lives two hours away—is celebrating Earth Day at Riverside. We’ve been coming since he was a baby. Karen Millikan in the children’s craft room is our favorite stop!”

This animal lover struggles with "deer management" and other dispatching techniques. “I don’t eat animals and have been a pretty diligent vegetarian for nine years. I thinking bird watching is fantastic—would love to see Riverside get a bird-blind or a more dedicated bird-watching area like it had in the past.”

As the Kerrville River Trail has attracted a new group to pass by our perimeter fencing, Valeska wants to ensure that our bat houses stay visible.

It’s natural, this interest. Passionate about the outdoors, as well as in running, she feels that being outside connects her to the seasons in a “very personal way.” She started running in 2006, got serious in 2010 with the first of many half-marathons; she’ll run her first on Dec. 7.

RNC will definitely be cheering her to the finish line!

Native Plant Society of Texas

Will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 9 at Riverside Nature Center. Refreshments will be provided. The topics are decorating for the holidays using native plants, and protecting plants that are not deer resistant. The N.I.C.E. (Natives Instead of Common Exotics) featured selection for winter will be introduced and a drawing will take place to give it to a lucky participant.

For more information contact Barbara Stidham at 830-928-3202. See the Native Plant Society web site at npsot.org/Kerrville.
Our Unsung Hero, Revealed

Every few months, an exceedingly pleasant fellow would walk into Riverside Nature Center for a chat with the staff. We always enjoyed what he had to say. Carl Hix especially loved swapping stories about the good old days in the oil patch with him—a rock hound extraordinaire, he’d spent his career at Conoco, achieving the position of director for North- and South American geophysics. Before leaving RNC, this kindly gentleman would pull out a checkbook to write in an amount that matched the contributions collected since his last visit. He never looked for accolades, no fuss or to do. He was our hero. Big time.

For Harvest Moon, his wife wrote a note, enclosing a check, to say that he just wasn’t up to any more visits. Last Saturday, he passed from this life.

His touching memorial service included how much he loved his time spent at Riverside Nature Center. He and his wife were charter AND life members of Riverside. “There were only 25 life members,” Susan Sander remembers, “and they were two of them...rare members of RNC and obviously staunch supporters who, while in the background, were certainly keeping an eye out for the organization’s financial well-being. Over the years of losing various members, I find his level of dedication to RNC a rare gem, as was Elena Brineman’s.”

Yes, we will always miss those nice little visits and his unflagging devotion to our mission. We are pondering how best to remember our unsung hero. In the meantime, please know Riverside Nature Center will never forget William Edmund “Bill” Laing.

Kris Bobbitt

RNC Treasurer

Kris Bobbitt and her husband, Jim, retired to Kerrville in 2012, becoming Riverside Nature Center members in August of that year. Like Valeska Danielak, Kris qualified as a Texas Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter, before joining RNC. This is Kris’ first term on the RNC board. We are delighted to report that she soon accepted the challenges of taking over and settling in to the office of Treasurer.

“With the help of fabulous board members and staff,” she said recently, “the outgoing treasurer Taylor Scogin and I will make the transition seamlessly.”

Getting the job done is nothing new to Kris. She is a retired FBI Special Agent who taught at the Training Academy in Quantico, VA, when she wasn’t assigned to Domestic Terrorism. We are awed at her background and are delighted to have Kris Bobbitt on the board and in charge of the money!
Harvest Moon

Carl Hix, right
Tara Bushnoe, below

Gracie Wagner

Peggy Thompson

Paige Wenner & Analaura McCrae

Donna Brewton, who later won the COOL RIVER CABIN raffle plus $100 for being in attendance, plays Turkey Bingo with RNC director Lisa Williams and Lisa’s husband, Chuck.
Please note our new email address, RNC.Kerrville@gmail.com. This is the address to use when you wish to do such as: RSVP an event, find out about a program, or check for weather cancellations/closings, and so forth. Thank you in advance for using the new e-address!

HARVEST MOON

Kay & Merrick Harter

Frank & Julie Dunlap

Martha & Pete Miesch

Chuck & Lisa Williams

Peter Lewis, Jeff & Rhea Robin

Barbara & Mike Oates
November was an interesting month in the meadow. In the early part of the month there was such a frenzy of nectaring by the insects and pollen-collecting native female bees. The lesser goldfinches were clinging to the stems of the tropical sage, slipping their beaks into capsules to collect the seeds.

The thoroughwort (Ageratina havanense) and golden-eye (Viguiera dentate) continued to bloom until mid-month. These are now joining the many summer wildflowers in their scruffy seed-making phases. The native grasses were showing off their seed heads and are now providing much needed seed not only for the meadow but winter food for the birds.

If you get a chance to tour the grounds, look beneath the dried material and you will see some of the rosettes for the spring wildflowers. Bluebonnets (Lupinus texensis), standing winecup (Callirhoe leiocarpa), scarlet penstemon (Penstemon triflorus), and standing cypress (Ipomopsis rubia) are just a few that are already above ground. Many more will be coming along in the next few weeks.

These rosettes are very hardy; they can withstand the cold temperature and even some snow.

After the mid-November freeze, you might have been lucky enough to see the “frost” on the frostweed plant (Verbesina virginica). This occurs when the sap freezes and expands, causing the stem to split open. Early morning is the best time to see this before the sun melts it.

Be sure to bring binoculars to spot some of the birds that call the nature center home for the winter.

In conclusion, I want to remind you that it is not too late to sow your wildflower seeds. The ideal time to do this is September through mid-December.

Happy holidays!
What is a “Riverside Nature Center”

Located at the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Town Creek in the Hill Country town of Kerrville — 2010 population, 22,347— Riverside Nature Center is a 501[c][3] nonprofit organization, owned by its members and primarily operated by volunteers.

We provide highly valued experiences for the community's adults, families, and children in order that they not only come to appreciate the region’s natural resources, plants, habitats, and wildlife, but also to become stewards of these resources now and in the future.

VISITORS CENTER & GIFT SHOP
9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Weekdays
10 to 3 p.m., Saturdays & 1 to 4 p.m., Sundays

RNC BOARD & OFFICERS:
Rick Ertel - President
Peter Lewis - Vice President
Judy Ferguson - Past President
Gwynn Groggel - Secretary
Kris Bobbitt - Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS:
Valeska Danielak
Frank Dunlap
Wynn Kilgore
Barbara Oates
Peggy Thompson
Lisa Williams
Morgan Williams

MEMBERS JOINING IN OCTOBER/NOVEMBER
Betty Johnston, David Hunt, Gillian Stieren, Marie E. Brown, Midge Saunders, Susan Livesay, Terri Volrath, Larry Altman, Eileen Goldsen, Courtney & Nancy Kay