The holiday season at Riverside Nature Center has an extra-special slant in 2013. For years, Angelo Falzarano gave his time and efforts for the betterment of our center, with one of his most endearing gigs being Chief Butterfly to lead the children’s parade during our spring and fall festivals.

Recently, he donated his Christmas village collection for silent auction to benefit RNC. Judy Gausnell, Riverside Guide, took charge of setup. Around 70 people attended the Christmas Tea & Silent Auction, with all the lovely pieces finding new homes.

We send HUGE THANKS to Angelo for a holiday gift that will be such a help to our treasury, while creating so many nice holiday memories. Big thanks to Judy for lending her style and flair to the project. We also thank Partain Photography for donating a family-portrait package to the silent auction.

ANGELO FALZARANO with chief Christmas village designer JUDY GAUSNELL, one of our dedicated Riverside Guides
Riverside Nature Center provides highly valued experiences to 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. The year 2013 was rich in experiences. **Legions of Volunteers** keep this place going at full-tilt year around. Guided by a gifted board and staff, the center program is thriving.

A newly refurbished Visitors Center and three exhibits highlighted 2013. The grand opening in April revealed an expanded exhibit area and offices. The grant awarded by **Hill Country Charity Ball Association** made this dramatic improvement possible. That grant money was also used to expand our rainwater harvesting system.

The first exhibit, not surprisingly, featured **The Guadalupe: Our River of Life**. UGRA provided video presentations and helped with hands-on exhibits. Visitors learned about water conservation and river’s critical role in Hill Country life.

The 2nd exhibit, **WICKED: Wild in the City of Kerrville Every Day**, acquainted visitors with our urban environment’s variety of wildlife. WICKED attracted a large crowd of both children and adults. Throughout the summer, kids from the Kroc Center and other local entities flocked to experience the exhibit and nature programs.

RNC President **Judy Ferguson** may be an educator at Schreiner University, but she doesn’t mind a bit, getting down on the floor to teach kids about nature.
Variety is the operative word for educational programs: from geocaching to the life cycle of monarch butterflies, from rainwater harvesting to early life in the Hill Country, to a program on falcons and other raptors, which brought large crowds, some standing room only. A popular adult event was “Estate Planning in the Hill Country: What Every Landowner Needs to Know,” presented by Thomas Hall, an attorney from Dripping Springs. Susan Sander led several summer Family Nature Nights that especially appealed to children.

The meadow, which suffered from the drought, has begun to revive. Welcome rains and constant attention made all the difference. Barbara Lowenthal, one of our plant wizards, has directed the restoration process. The monthly column in the newsletter, written either by Barbara or Martha Miesch, keeps our readers informed about native plants and their care. The gleaners likewise had a busy year.

Hill Country Archeology Association, with help from Kerrville Elks Lodge #2081, planned and installed 17,000 Years of Hill Country Life.

Riverside plant experts added plants used by Native Americans for food, medicine, and clothing. This popular educational program has been extended into February 2014.

17,000 Years of Hill Country Life is extended into February 2014
Bring the kids during the HOLIDAY VACATION to this excellent lesson in local History!
EXTENDED BY POPULAR DEMAND

GOT PHOTOGRAPHIC...SKETCHING...GRAPHICS DESIGN...
VIDEO EXPERIENCE...?
Have a few hours to spare for volunteering?
Can we talk?
Please contact Mary, Susan, or Martha at 257-4837

News flash!
Amy & Sally announce new classes in basic herbalism, day or evening classes. The Native Healing Garden continues every 3rd Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.
More news next month, or contact sally@earthlightenergies.com 830-562-3682.
People call us for information on plants, bugs, or they will bring in a leaf or flower or critter asking for identification. Then again we may be offered a turtle or a snake, or on a good day, a tarantula. We thrive on surprises.

A continuing challenge in 2013, as always, is maintaining financial support. Our two fund-raisers, Harvest Moon and a non-event appeal—code-named “Coffee on Your Back Porch”—raised operating funds. We experienced a modest increase membership revenue. Grant money from several local foundations helped as well. So have gifts through the Planned Giving Program…But the budget remains very tight.

The opening of the Kerrville River Trail brought significant numbers of new visitors.

Our naturalist Susan Sander conducted several seasonal walks that provided an insider’s view of the River Trail’s history, planning, and construction.

Speaking of naturalists, Thomas Collins led monthly fauna counts as well as two “Big Sits” for bird-watching. He is joined by hardy volunteers in these enumerating events, with the spring Sit bringing 1st place for the team from Texas Parks & Wildlife and the autumn count bringing $500 to the RNC treasury. Way to go, Tom and the Big Sitters!

Last, but certainly not least, we celebrate the success of two area-wide events: Earth Day and the Fall Festival. These native plant sales brought many eager buyers, the children’s programs delighted dozens of youngsters, and the educational programs informed all.

Some gentle rains, a few thunderstorms, lots of volunteer help, and a new visitors center with great exhibits and educational programs made RNC a must-see destination for visitors to the area.

The year concludes with high hopes for 2014.

Visit us and see what it’s all about!
MEET THE FOLKS WHO SHOW UP REGULARLY TO RUN THE CENTER

Mary Muse is our executive director. Mary is our only fulltime employee. Susan Sander will be our naturalist, at least through 2014. Carl Hix, MBA, is our accountant. Martha Hix works with marketing and publicity. Jeanette Watson wears the Jill of All Trades hat. Lydia Jetson, Mary’s assistant and weekend receptionist, comes to us through the generosity of Experience Works.

The Riverside Guides, headed by Melinda Wasson, are all volunteers who have taken special training to greet and assist visitors. Regulars this winter have been:

   Diane McMahon, Donna Brewton, Fane Downs, Dr. Guy Harrison, Joy Bradford, Judy Ferguson, Judy Gausnell, Karen Burkett, Kay Harter, Maggie Tatum, Marian Worthington, Martha Miesch, Nancy Alford, Nina Wagner, Paul Devine, and Pat Nelson. Vickie Bagwell is also a dedicated RG; regrettably, her family has health issues. May 2014 be a better year for the Bagwells.

While he’s not a Guide, horticulturist Dr. Shannon Smith is always available for consultation, advice—whatever you need!

All those tidy brochures near the side door? Virginia “Ginny” de Wolf is in charge of information management.

Barbara Lowenthal is our meadow supervisor. John Quinby, Andy Pesez, and Tim Lewis work the grounds and maintenance, with Jeanette Watson always on the team and a new recruit who’s joined this year, Frank Dunlap. Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S., are our certified herbalists. The gift shop is managed by Ann Loughlin, Barbara Staggs, Karen Burkett, and Laurie Pesez. All are volunteers.

The Education Committee meets monthly. Peggy Thompson not only joined the board of directors this year, she also took over as committee chair. Other regular members are Dr. Guy Harrison, Martha Hix, Mary Lee Gowland, Susan Sander, and Tracy Gournay.

Kudos to everyone who gave presentations at the Brown Bag Lunch & Learn series. We started the year with the incomparable JOE LUTHER. CYNTHIA BURGIN followed. Some of our other presenters were CAROL HAGEMEIER, LEIGH THOMAS, CATHY DOWNS, CHARLIE ALLISON, and DAVE ROGERS.

The RNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS has been invaluable in their leadership and in their support. The current board is listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Thanks go to all these fine folks... and to the many, many more who always lend a hand but aren’t mentioned!
WINTER FUN IN THE SUN, OR CLOUDS
Revised...
Fallen leaves and frost-wilted blossoms...all in piles, huddled together awaiting the scratch of rake tines. Yep. It's that time again. Time for three sessions of winter tidy-up at Riverside Nature Center. So...put down that mug of cocoa. Find your gloves and your favorite rake, and then put them to work.

“We’ve got berms and flowerbeds in pretty sad shape,” grounds supervisor John Quinby disclosed.

“And we have quite a bit of leaf pick-up, as well as dead plants and weeds to remove.”

If there is another tool that you love like a brother, bring it along. “Come out and lend us a hand. We’ll buy the doughnuts, and we might even talk some coffee and Cokes out of the folks in the Visitors Center.”

Each work detail meets at 9 a.m. on a Saturday, particularly Jan. 18 (not the 25th, original mentioned), Feb. 15, and March 8. “We’ll finish around noon,” Quinby also said.

If the temperature dips below 40 degrees, the work detail will be postponed until the next Saturday.

BROWN BAG LUNCH & LEARN, 2014

Please note an increase in the cost to attend the brown bag luncheons. RNC members will pay $5. Nonmembers will be charged $8. It will still be FREE if a person becomes an RNC member during the luncheon.

RECURRING EVENTS at Riverside Nature Center

GROUND & BUILDING MAINTENANCE, every Wednesday morning. Volunteers needed to keep the grounds & improvements in working order and looking nice.

FAUNA CENSUS, 1st Fridays, 9 a.m. Walk and count the critters, particularly birds. NOTE: January census is 2nd Friday. ALWAYS check for date changes.

MEADOW TENDING, every Wednesday, 9-11 a.m. RNC meadow is undergoing a renovation with help of dedicated volunteers. Demonstration garden to be tended. TOWN CREEK CLEANUP, quarterly, Saturday a.m. Work with Upper Guadalupe River Authority along Town

Harvest Moon 2013 Memories

Gamemaster MAGGIE TATUM—the world’s best sport and an Aussie BORN to the Riverside Guide arts—oversees WILDLIFE RACES at Harvest Moon 2013.

Ace Meadow Maid SUSAN LONGACRE’S husband KEN provided as much entertainment as he received, when dealer BARBARA OATES goaded him (it didn’t take much) into Ken’s take on the Chicken Dance upon frequently winning at Turkey Bingo during Harvest Moon.
Christmas arrived early at RNC!

With lights from Angelo’s Christmas village and figurine Santas as backdrop, Pat Nelson and Dr. Gloria Olsen (pictured above) presented checks to Judy Ferguson and Mary Muse on Dec. 7 for the Planned Giving Program.

Mary said, “Pat and Gloria took advantage of the 2013 extension of legislation which allows lifetime gifts up to $100,000 from an IRA without undesirable tax effects.”

Both Mary and Judy mentioned their appreciation at having supporters such as Pat and Gloria, with Mary summing it up: “This money will further our mission to educate the public in preserving and protecting the Hill Country environment.”

Gloria is a former president of Riverside, and Pat volunteers each Tuesday morning as a Riverside Guide, greeting and assisting visitors.

PLANNED GIVING

By Wes Dorman

This article is a reprint from last month. We’re running it as a reminder of this great way to help Riverside Nature Center during this holiday season.

Good news! The charitable IRA rollover legislation was extended for 2013, making it possible to transfer lifetime gifts up to $100,000 from an individual retirement account (IRA) without undesirable tax effects.

You may contribute funds directly from your IRA, if...
- You are 70-1/2 or older at the time of the gift.
- You transfer up to $100,000 directly from your IRA. This opportunity applies only to IRAs and not to other types of retirement plans.
- You transfer the funds outright to one or more qualified charities like Riverside Nature Center.
- You make your gift by Dec. 31, 2013; this will qualify as a 2013 gift.

The process is fairly simple and makes it possible to give a significant donation, while meeting the annual distribution requirement for your IRA without the ordinary income tax consequences.

Your financial advisor and/or attorney is always the best place to turn for further information.
Riverside Nature Center presents
The Beauty of Britain

A group of nature lovers from RNC is going next autumn. Want to know about joining this great adventure...?

The Grandeur of London
Windsor Castle & Gardens
Wisley
Cambridge
Sherwood Forest

Yorkshire Castle Howard
Harlow Carr
Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh
Scottish Night Farewell

SPECIAL TRAVEL PRESENTATION
MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2014
TIME 2:30 p.m.
Riverside Nature Center
150 Francisco Lemos, Kerrville TX 78028
JANUARY EVENTS
Open to the public. No reservations unless noted, but RSVPs are appreciated.
Please check for changes/cancellations. Call 257-4837 for info or reservations; for general info, visit www.riversidenaturecenter.org.

‘17,000 Years of Hill Country Life’
Through February 2014
9 a.m.-4 p.m. M-Gs, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. Sundays. By popular demand, the exhibit is extended through February. Developed by Hill Country Archaeological Assn. and sponsored by Kerrville Elks Lodge #2081, the exhibit celebrates the first Hill Country peoples, and how they used available natural resources and primitive technology to build earthen ovens and to make tools and weapons. FREE but donations are appreciated.

Winter Solstice on the River Trail
Saturday, Dec. 21
2 p.m. Pump oxygen into your veins and leg muscles—preventative maintenance before fruitcake and hot buttered rum!—with a walk to celebrate the winter solstice. Suggested donation $3, $5/family.

Happy New Year!
Wednesday, Jan. 1
1-4 p.m. Visitors Center is open.

Who Doesn’t Love a MYSTERY?
A popular food items at the Christmas tea was cream cheese with pesto sauce.
Yet we staffers don’t know who brought it. Someone said it was a man. Who is this gentleman…?

Special food thanks to Barbara Oates, Barbara Lowenthal, and Larry Hagen.

Monthly Fauna Census
Friday, Jan. 10
9-10 a.m. Census-takers count birds and other lovely creatures within RNC and along the riverbank. Wear walking shoes, bring binoculars. Beginners OK. No charge.

2nd Tues. Brown Bag Lunch & Learn,
Tuesday, Jan. 14
11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Paul Fleming, Heart of the Hills Fisheries Science Center, on Texas’ state fish, the Guadalupe bass. Cost is $5 RNC members, $8 non-member, free if joining RNC at the meeting. (New fee for 2014.)

Native Healing Garden
Thursday, Jan. 16
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Learn about native medicinal herbs, then tend the garden. Bring something healthy for the potluck lunch. Led by certified herbalists Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S. Donations fund garden.

Winter Cleanup, Part 1
Saturday, Jan. 18
9 a.m.-noonish. Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St. Workday to tidy the grounds via raking and weeding, etc. Wear gloves and bring your favorite rake. Temperature below 40? Work postponed until next Saturday. RSVP appreciated.

RNC Tour, the Beauty of Britain
Monday, Jan. 20

Herbs at Twilight, ‘Herbal Aphrodisiacs’
Thursday, Jan. 23
6-7:30 p.m. Just in time for Valentine’s! ♥ ♥ ♥ Bring loving into your life with awakening and circulation-enhancing herbs. Led by certified herbalists Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S. $25/$20 RNC members.

Town Creek Cleanup Team
Saturday, Jan. 25
8:30 a.m. Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St.; meet in parking lot. Work with Upper Guadalupe River Authority to detail Town Creek. Necessary to join at least a week in advance. RSVP to 257-4837, or email to lewistw43@yahoo.com.

Volunteer Appreciation Celebration
Wednesday, Jan. 29
4:30-6 p.m. Enjoy wine, cheese, and other tasty tidbits at the annual celebration for the multitude of volunteers who operate the nature center, from pulling weeds to frontline ambassadors in the Riverside Guides program. No charge for each registered volunteer and their guest. RSVP, please.

DON’T FORGET TO LOG YOUR 2013 HOURS!
Susan Sander’s Family Nature Adventure will run monthly, April through September, in 2014.
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