The holidays are quickly approaching and many of you will be traveling or welcoming visitors. This time of year can be a bit frenetic and may even cause a little anxiety, so remember to take a deep breath, relax and reflect. I can’t think of a better place to find a bit of solace than at the nature center. The arboretum, gardens and inhabitants are all fabulously celebrating a fall festival. The colors, activity, smells and sounds are all food for thoughtful contemplation.

This reminds me of something Maya Angelou wrote, “We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” Riverside Nature Center has gone through many changes since the initial purchase of the site in 1992. Once a piece of property largely dominated by non-native and some rather invasive vegetation, it has transformed into a diverse and naturally viable and valuable landscape. It has taken the hard work, passion and dedication of hundreds of volunteers and staff to create this urban oasis.

Riverside Nature Center will be celebrating its 25th year in 2017 and celebrate we will. But this is no time to rest on our laurels. We still have challenges to meet and goals to achieve. Riverside Nature Center must become essential to our community at large, not just to the folks who call RNC home.

I would like to welcome the newly elected 2016-2017 Board of Directors who are fervently committed to piloting RNC into the next 25 years.

Peter Lewis (President), Barbara Oates (Vice President), Rick Ertel (Past President), Judy Ferguson (Secretary), Kris Bobbitt (Treasurer), Tara Bushnoe, Valeska Danielak, Frank Dunlap, Wynn Kilgore, Liz Ross, Malcolm Matthews and Peggy Thompson

It is my hope that you will take some time during this holiday season, as I suggested earlier, and visit the nature center. Contemplate the role you have had in the metamorphosis RNC is undergoing and how it has affected you. I believe you will see your mark at every turn and be pleased with the result. Ideally you will want to share your experiences with someone new to RNC and invite them to become involved.

Safe travels and best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving.

Becky
**NOVEMBER 2016 RNC Events Calendar**

**Tuesday, November 8, 2016**  Brown Bag Lunch & Learn  
11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.  *"The Gatlin Site, A Unique Early Archaic to Late Archaic Archeological Site in Central Texas"* with guest speaker RNC member Steve Stoutamire, geologist & Hill Country Archeological Association member. Bring your lunch and learn about Kerrville’s now famous historical site.

**Thursday, November 10, 2016**  Conversations with Conservationists 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.  Blair Fitzsimons, founding executive director of Texas Agricultural Land Trust is ready to talk about preserving the wide open spaces in Texas. Wine & cheese reception.  RSVP $20 suggested donation.  See the details on page 3.

**Saturday, November 12, 2016**  Second Saturday Spiffy Up  
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  RNC building and grounds committee sure could use your help in getting the nature center ready for autumn.

**Thursday, November 17, 2016**  Mackinac Island Collette Travel Tour Presentation  
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
The Mackinac Island during The Tulip Festival, and the Grand Hotel in its Victorian splendor is the next booked trip from the Riverside Nature Center for May 2017.  Enjoy the Collette Travel Tour presentation and see how you can help RNC by taking a great trip.  Details on page 7.

**Saturday, November 19, 2016**  Bird Walks & Talks  
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.  
Meet Paul & Deloris Sellin in front of the nature center to sight and hear the latest feathered friends that are migrating our way during the early morning.  Free Fun for all ages.

---

Thanks to all the volunteers that made 2016 Fall Native Plant Sale & Festival such a success.
Conversation With A Conservationist

Thursday, November 10th

5:30 - 7:00 pm

with

Wine & Cheese Reception

Interested in conserving part of Texas’ legacy of wide open spaces?

Join a discussion with Blair Fitzsimons, founding Executive Director of the Texas Agricultural Land Trust and noted Texas Wildlife Association’s “Woman of the Land”. As a landowner, Blair understands the day-to-day challenges of farming and ranching. Through TALT, she promotes the conservation of open space, native wildlife habitats, and natural resources of Texas’ private working lands.

RSVP: (830) 257-4837 or mckerrvilles@gmail.com
Suggested donation $20.00

RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER
ASSOCIATION

150 Francisco Lemos St.
RNC Naturalist Susan Sander checks out a Columbian Mammoth at the La Brea Tar Pit in Los Angeles. It’s hard to imagine that this same species also wandered around the Texas Hill Country 20,000 years ago and was hunted by the Paleo-Indians up to 10,000 years ago. Discover who left “Footprints” and other clues in our area with the next exhibit – opening in early November.

Naturalist Note: for those who love keeping track of the wild things, check out this bird migration map.  
YELLOW and BLUE FLOWERS

Thank goodness for some beautiful fall bloomers. Sometimes we think only grasses and seeded wildflowers will be all there is to see in the landscape, but not so.

As you drive into the Nature Center one of the first bloomers you can spot is Cowpen daisy. Check out other locations as well. The seeds of this annual are easy to collect and it seems to thrive in grungy looking places like a cow pen, hence the name. One of my first wildflower mentors said that it grew easily in soil fertilized with a cow paddy. Not an attractive image, but the flower sure is a pretty image with yellow flower heads up to 2 1/2 inches wide.

All the others are perennials such as Golden-eye. You can see in the gardens that it has a distinctively different yellow flower head. Also check out zexmenia that seems to love dry soil and is deer resistant. Yipee!

The Texas aster is one of several purple asters that butterflies love for nectar in the fall. We need each and every nectar bloomer for our favorite flying insects regardless of the species.

Mealy Blue sage is a favorite that normally is a spring bloomer, but we have a surprise re-blooming because of the great rains and warm days. You can't predict rains and temps in the Hill Country. Bloomers do not check out the calendar.

Gayfeather, or Blazing Star, on its sometimes 2 1/2 ft. tall stem, is always a welcome sight in the fall. The purple flower heads seem to like caliche.

Take a walk through the paths at RNC and try to spot as many of these late bloomers as you can, and pat yourself on your back when you do.
First Graders Lone Star Safari from KISD Daniels, Starkey, Tally and Nimitz Elementary Schools toured the Riverside Nature Center, and learned about BUGS!, Elevation, Migration, and Pollination, as they looked closely at our "What's in YOUR Backyard" exhibit in October.

Susan McKinley - Pollination and Migration

Susan Sander - Topical Elevation

Peggy Thompson with KISD 1st graders

Judy Ferguson explaining bugs in the compost
Our 8-Day National Parks Tour through RNC with Collette Travel by Stan and Carolynn Cobbs

With the initial help of Lydia at RNC, we enjoyed The Northern National Parks & Salt Lake City Tour in September. The trip was well planned in advance with an excellent tour manager, bus driver and accommodations.

The highlights of the trip were the amazing scenery (enhanced by the weather i.e.: low 29° to high of 78° and 8” of snow), entertainment and shows, as well as good leadership from guides. Being from Texas, the mountains and their majesty spoke to us of God's creation including animals, rivers, lakes and waterfalls.

The trip was a joy from it's beginning to the farewell banquet with 42 travelers representing 28 states. The three hotels were all 5-star, new and accommodating. All of our breakfasts and half of our dinners were provided in the package.
GUIDE

Volunteers Needed

The Riverside Nature Center has a special designation of volunteers named the Riverside Guides. They greet visitors as they enter the center, showcase the exhibit, and make themselves available to answer questions and give directions or walk the grounds with visitors as a docent.

Serving as a Riverside Guide has been a great tool for learning more and gaining skills for Master Naturalists or people interested in Texas wildlife.

A Riverside Guide is capable of several tasks: answering the phone, gift shop sales, research or enter survey data for the naturalist, direct visitors to reference materials, and solicit folks to log in.

Some of the benefits of serving as a Riverside Guide include getting to meet a variety of different folks of all ages and sharing Hill Country experiences. Since Riverside Guides are RNC’s front-line ambassadors, there is regular orientation about events, programs, and the inside scoop of exhibit facts and features so that they are equipped to present current information.

Current Guides include Larry Altman, Joe Braly, Joy Bradford, Karen Burkett, Susan Clark, Clara Horton, Crystal Ledesma, Martha Miesch, Edna Platte, Bonnie Powers, Mary Lee Stewart, Liz Ross, and Maggie Tatum.

With our new hours of operation at the visitor center, the time slots are: Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. or 2 – 6 p.m.

Currently we need guides for Friday mornings, Monday & Tuesday afternoons. We also need guides who can fill in on an emergency basis, to aid during special events, and to help with administrative projects.

If you are interested in becoming a Riverside Guide, or volunteer in other ways, please come by and fill out an application and begin an interview with Lydia Jetson or apply through e-mail at RNC.Kerrville@gmail.com.

Melinda Wasson, Riverside Guide Coordinator

wassonmelinda@gmail.com

Riverside Nature Center was a site for the KACC Annual Kerrville Outdoor Painters Event again this year.

Tom Hussey from Auburn, NY enjoyed his plein air artistry one morning during the event at RNC.

He did a watercolor with the pomegranate tree in the foreground.
“From the Sign Team...”

At the end of October, the Sign Team met to discuss how best to keep up with changes in botanical names (which seem to occur with surprising frequency).

Retired graphic design specialist and Master Naturalist, Larry Eskridge is working with a label maker to print out names in various fonts and sizes. We can now change just part of a sign by applying a sticky back strip over the outdated name. It’s a real money-saver over having a sign company create a whole new sign for every change.

Our budget is small; we appreciate your donations to our sign budget very much. The signs help during educational tours of the garden, and for any gardener who comes to RNC to learn more about Hill Country native plants.

The Master Naturalist group that put in a new native plant/pollinator garden at the side entrance of Kerr County Courthouse is interested in improving their signs. So Jill Bowen sat in on this month’s meeting to learn how we order and manage our signs at Riverside Nature Center. It’s helpful to share what works!

Team members Julie Clay and Mary Thomas spend many woman-hours to maintain a spreadsheet for us, showing the nearly 350 forbs, shrubs and grasses at RNC, along with their USDA plant codes, correct botanical names, plant family and bloom periods (whew!). Our Team uses the spreadsheet to keep sign names up-to-date, and identify where the signs are at any given time. Some signs rotate in and out of the RNC Sign Shed.

We discussed symbols used in botanical gardens to indicate a plant’s use by butterflies, bees, dragonflies as a pollinator plant, or for food/habitat by birds. If you see a butterfly or a bird symbol on a plant sign at the Nature Center, you’ll know that plant is important to the ecology of the Hill Country.

We expect to be putting out little signs on the perennial plants that say, “I’ll Be Back!” It’s a pleasure to watch the gardens change throughout the year. This type sign helps us all keep tabs on seasonal changes.

RNC Sign Team members include Master Naturalists Marion Worthington, Susan McKinley, Julie Clay, Larry Eskridge, Mary Thomas, Barbara Marquer and Kay Harter.
RNC Brown Bag Lunch & Learn:
“The Gatlin Site, A Unique Early Archaic to Late Archaic Archeological Site in Central Texas”
with guest speaker RNC member Steve Stoutamire.

The Gatlin site was accidentally discovered by TXDOT road crews in 2004 while constructing the Spur 98 connect to Thompson Drive on the south side of the Guadalupe River just west of Kerrville. Construction was halted and a professional archeology company from Austin was called in, subsequently performing four months of excavations within the right-of-way. Analysis of all site materials and data was then worked for four years by teams of professional archeologists, paleo botanists, zoo archeologists, etc. These findings were significant and established the site as one of the most significant finds in Central Texas within the last 20 years.

Steve Stoutamire is a retired petroleum geologist with a BA degree in anthropology/archeology from Florida State University and an MS degree in geology from Texas Tech University.

After retiring in 2007 he and his wife Nancy moved from Houston to The Kerrville area. He embarked on an “avocational career in archeology”. Steve is a member of the Hill Country Archeological Association, the Texas Archeological Society and serves as a state archeological steward for the Texas Historical Commission. These positions focus on public education on archeology and site work on public and private lands.

Bring a lunch and join us for an informative presentation about our local archeological site. Tuesday, November 8, 2016 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. RNC members $8 Nonmembers $10 Free with new membership.

Thank you, John Quinby, for our new welcome sign showing the new hours of operation.
THANK YOU

Donors: September 22 - October 24, 2016
(Does not include renewals)

Barbara Lowenthal  Susan & Kenneth Longacre  Laura Laing

MEMBER JOINING  September 22 - October 24, 2016
Karen Persely

We're in a dilemma
it's plain to see;
People seem to think
our dishtowels are free!
If they've been taken to wash,
our gratitude abounds
But we'd appreciate their return
after making the rounds.
When you check your supply
and find towels to spare
Please remember us
as you gladly share.

Jeanette Watson

Chalk Festival
Thank you artist
Bryan Higgins from
Riverside Nature Center Association
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.

Our mission is to foster greater public awareness and appreciation of the Texas Hill Country’s natural resources through education, information, and by example. We provide quality educational experiences for the community's children, adults and families; and we serve as a resource center for the community on native plants and nature related information.