Dear Members and Friends... by Becky Etzler, Executive Director

The Annual Membership meeting was conducted last month. I would like to thank those members who attended. If you did not go and you’re thinking “Ah, it’s just another meeting. It doesn’t matter if I’m there or not,” I would like to remind you how important the membership is to the health, wealth and the existence of Riverside Nature Center. Your voice and vote do matter. Not to mention, you missed a nice glass of wine and some pretty tasty snacks.

The 2018 Officers and Directors were nominated and elected into office. Congratulations!

Peter Lewis, President
Barbara Oates, Vice President
Rick Ertel, Past President
Jeff Gelsone, Treasurer
Judy Ferguson, Secretary

Kris Bobbitt
Tara Bushoe
Frank Dunlap
Malcolm Matthews
Liz Ross
Peggy Thompson

Together, we are looking forward to an exciting and eventful 2018.

Speaking of exciting and eventful, I am pleased with the interest and initial steps taken in our Preserving Kerrville’s Night Skies campaign. In collaboration with The Hill Country Alliance, RNC is bringing together community leaders, businesses and citizens who are concerned with the prevalence of light pollution and light trespass in Kerrville. The first meeting adjourned having agreed upon the following actions:

Develop a public awareness campaign through presentations
- Service organizations
- County Commissioner’s Court
Incorporate Dark Sky agenda into Kerrville’s Comprehensive Strategic Plan.
- Address Steering Committee
- Attend February Open House meetings
Conduct a survey using a sky quality meter in various area of the city.
- Identify commercial properties already utilizing night sky friendly lighting.
Publicize and support current star party programs @ Schreiner University and UBarU.

This is truly a community effort. If you are interested in this campaign, mark your calendar for March 1 at 7:00pm. A second planning meeting will be held at the nature center.

Did you hear that the Brown Bag Lunch and Learn series has been discontinued? This is another exciting change for 2018. Beginning this month, we will present our monthly NEd Talk: Nature Education Talks. The talks may not necessarily be a talk at all. It may be a hands-on demonstration. Something else different about NEd Talks is the fee structure. There is no set admission fee. A suggested donation will be advertised and welcomed.

I mentioned earlier how important our membership is to the livelihood of Riverside Nature Center. To keep our door open, we need to open our door to new members. We will be kicking off a membership drive this year. I invite you to join me in recruiting friends, family, co-workers, even that weird guy down the street. You might even like to serve on the Membership Committee. Drop me a line and say, “I’m in!”.

Until next time...  Becky
FEBRUARY 2018 Riverside Nature Center Upcoming Events/Programs

Tuesday, February 13, 2018
5:00 p.m.
Volunteer Appreciation Party
We love our volunteers! And we plan on sweetening them up during the Volunteer Appreciation party.

Saturday, February 17, 2018
8:00-9:30 a.m.
RNC Bird Walk & Talk
Join Paul and Deloris Sellin as they take you birding along the Guadalupe. Meet in front of the visitor center. All ages welcome.

Tuesday, February 20, 2018
10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
NEd Talk - “Proper Pruning of Perennials”
RNC starts off the NEd Talks this year with picking & pruning the perfect natives for year-long blooming presented by Kathy Lyles. Texas perennials prefer particular techniques, and we will learn how. Suggested donation $5.

Tuesday, February 27, 2018
1:00 p.m.
Collette Tours “The Best of Eastern Canada”
Please join us to see what is in store for those who travel with Collette Tours to The Best of Eastern Canada. See more information on page 5.

Save the Date:
March 1, 2018
7:00 p.m.
“Preserving Kerrville’s Starry Skies Part II”
Come and see what the issues are and take part in our future plans. RSVP please, to ensure seating.
Thank goodness it’s The Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country. We are doubly grateful to this outstanding organization. By way of a Community Foundation grant, we were able to upgrade our audio-visual equipment. The purchase of a 75” smart tv, sound bar, blu ray player and dedicated laptop constituted the upgrade. This equipment lends an increased degree of professionalism to our presentations. It also provides us additional educational display opportunities. We kicked off its use at the Annual Membership Meeting in January.

Our second thank you to The Community Foundation is for developing a new program called One Wish. Area non-profits were invited to submit a wish list of no more than three unique items not to exceed $5,000. These wishes were published in a catalogue made available to TCF fund donors. We submitted our wish for new patio furniture made from recycled materials. Gratefully, an anonymous donor fully granted our wish. We hope you will take advantage of the new outdoor space. Bring your lunch and dine al fresco.
Most people know that the Guadalupe River starts in Kerr County, but where exactly? What does that place look like? The farthest upstream sign for the North Fork is Klein’s Crossing and there’s no water there, just tumbled rocks.

What’s the water like at the start of the river? Does it roar or murmur? Where does it go when you can’t see it from the road?

The basic water cycle posters show snow-capped mountains draining downhill to rivers to the oceans. But that’s not what happens here. Our river starts with rain and its own journey through rock.

How many creeks join in? We are first in line for Guadalupe River water, then who uses it? How long is its journey? What kind of landscapes does it flow through? What endangered bird relies on its health at the other end? What turns the placid flowing river we see along the River Trail into a raging brown torrent, churning up sediments, heaving downed trees?

Walking along the river is a great place to ponder such things, the flow of water and the flow of life. And to think about connections. I recently read a line by Natalie Diaz that struck me to my core – it embodied what I hadn’t quite put in words, “We carry the river, its body of water, in our body.”

I live and work in Kerrville. And every time I drink from the tap I think of the river, and give thanks. Yes, it is part of my body. In one way or another it has been part of my life for over 30 years.

I gravitate to bodies of water. I’ve lived near, by, even in, them my whole life. A small lake was my first swimming pool. During college I’d walk across the Mississippi. From a small island I looked out over what seemed like a shoreless Lake Michigan. Each body of water had its own voice, but in the really big picture it’s all the same water that’s been on this planet forever – it just moves around, over and over again.

Yet water never acts the same. Sure, we had floods from snow melt in Illinois and crashing waves on Lake Michigan, but I had never experienced floods that flashed out of nowhere to cover acres or miles of land.

When I moved to Comfort I heard that the Guadalupe River could do that but it was hard to imagine as I drove high over it on the old 87 bridge until one day on July 17, 1987 it went totally crazy. Suddenly that bridge felt like it was like floating on a swirling lake. A day later it was almost back to normal.

In 36 years I’ve learned a lot about the river and to read the landscape it travels through in an effort to understand why it does what it does, goes where it goes. Who lives in it, over it, alongside it? It’s a great teacher. But it won’t abide the foolhardy.

The river is why we are here in this place. Peoples, ancient and modern, knew its importance. Camps morphed into towns; it’s the river that ties Comfort, Center Point, Kerrville, Ingram, Hunt together. It’s the wildlife corridor. It’s that essential to life.

This year discover the Guadalupe River. And try this – if you walk just over a mile a day along the River Trail by the end of the year you would’ve walked 430 miles, the equivalent of the Guadalupe’s journey to the Gulf. But unlike the river’s path yours would be mostly level with just a slight drop in elevation versus a 2400’ drop. Imagine that journey!

Richard Coleman & Jason Perry working on the wall that shows the Guadalupe elevation drop..
Riverside Nature Center invites you to a Collette Tour presentation
Tuesday, February, 27, 2018 at 1:00 p.m.

Mike Sprute will present “The Best of Eastern Canada” tour highlights,
trip scheduled for September 30 – October 7, 2018.

The tour will feature Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Niagara Falls and Toronto.
Join us and see how you can adventure through Eastern Canada.

A portion of the proceeds will go to Riverside Nature Center.
What you may see this month at RNC - February 2018
By Martha Miesch  Photos by Marilyn Knight

It's hard to imagine seeing anything of interest on the grounds of RNC this month with the freezing temps we have had. But frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*) has been the eye catcher for the second time in recent months. We started seeing its blooms from August to November. Then January surprised us with temps below freezing and we saw clumps of ice on the ground at the bottom of the stem.

Sometimes you can see a split in the stem close to the ground that seems to be oozing ice. The stems can be 3 to 6 ft. tall so it's hard to miss.

Continues on next page
Frostweed likes to grow in the shade of large trees and that's where you will find it, close to the NPSOT gardens at the Nature Center. When the flower begins to bloom in the early fall, it seldom catches your eye because it competes with a few other natives. But it's hard to miss when you spot the clumps of ice in the winter and all the lovely bloomers are dormant. Many of us are thinking "What is that?"

It is a plant to value because we know it is a nectar plant for migrating Monarchs, and there is no question but we do need to provide food for these treasured butterflies.
NEW MEMBERS
12/21/18 thru 1/24/18
(Does not include renewals)

Leslie Harrah

RNC DONORS
12/21/18 thru 1/24/18

Frank Nelson
Warren & Judy Ferguson
Brad & Genie Flink
Mimi McMillan
Charles Sullivan
Jim & Priscilla Stanley
Ruth King
Ed Wallace

Ron K. Stoepel,
Ken Stoepel Ford
Mike & Liz Ross
Linda L. Ross
Jack Millikan
Harriet Redwine
Barbara Oates
Andy & Laurie Pesez
Riverside Nature Center is happy to Introduce
Haley Larranaga, our new graphic designer!

Haley is fervently working on graphics and banners to display and help us visualize the concepts of our new exhibit, as well as the newspaper ads we have in the Kerrville Daily Times. She will also soon tackle the website and its contents, as that remains to be an ever-changing task. Haley originally hails from Vail, Colorado.

She has been a Kerrvillian since the age of 5. She grew up hiking, fishing, swimming and being outdoors. The Nature Center was always a “go to” place for family outings, and Haley continues the tradition and lifestyle she shares with her five-year-old daughter, Emma. Emma loves the river and parks here, too.

Haley went to the International Academy of Design and Technology in San Antonio for Graphic Design (IADT for short).

“My favorite part of designing is the freedom to be creative and make something beautiful and informative for others to see.”

When you get a chance, drop in to welcome Haley and if you like her designs, feel free to let her know!
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.