Here we are ushering in a new decade. Let’s raise a glass and give a hardy cheer for 2020. I can’t shake a particular mental image every time I write, say or hear the new year: an optometrist and eye charts. Instead of trying to erase this picture, I’ll embrace it as my motto for the year. Why don’t you join me in looking at the new year with perfect vision and clarity.

This improved visual acuity will come in handy as we begin the facelift on the Nature Lab and Lawson Store. The Molting Challenge was hugely successful. Remember, a generous but anonymous benefactor challenged us to raise $5,000 by December 31. Each dollar raised would be matched. I am thrilled to announce, we not only met the challenge but exceeded it. Our benefactor gladly increased the match by an additional $2500. Once again, we met and exceeded this goal. As of December 26th, we have raised a grand total of $17,376. The contributors have made it very clear that they stand behind the longevity and sustainability of Riverside Nature Center. This vote of confidence is just what the doctor ordered.

Fresh and clear insight is what our Board of Directors will offer in the new year. Please plan to attend the Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, January 23 at 5:00pm. At this time, the officers and new directors will be elected. Here is the slate of officers and directors at large:

- **President** – Barbara Oates  
- **Vice President** – Tara Bushnoe  
- **Past President** – Peter Lewis  
- **Secretary** – Bryan Brown  
- **Treasurer** – Jeff Gelsone

- **1st Term Director** – Becca Bigott  
- **1st Term Director** – Zoe Van Dyke  
- **2nd Term Director** – Malcolm Matthews  
- **2nd Term Director** – Liz Ross

That same evening we will be introducing the newest member of our staff, Gaylynne Robinson. Gaylynne will be heading up our education program as our Environmental Educator. Gaylynne will bring an enthusiastic and broadening outlook. (see page 3 for more details)

You won’t need binoculars for the new exhibit. But do bring your keen visual sense and zest for knowledge as we go to the “movies”. No spoiler here. You’ll have to see for yourself. Plan on joining us on premiere day, January 18th.

As you can see, the launch of this new decade is full of new beginnings and promises of great things to come. I invite you to take my hand and together we will traverse this expanding path with open and expectant eyes.

Until next time…
RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Saturday, January 11, 1pm-3pm
Oak Wilt & New Discoveries Workshop

Arborist Karen Rockoff shares new information about Oak Wilt that you don’t want to miss out on! Please RSVP by calling 830-257-4837.
See Page 6 for more information.

Tuesday, January 21, 10:30am-11:30am
RNC NEd Talk

See Page 8 for more information.

Saturday, January 18, 8am-9:30am
RNC Bird Walk & Talk

Join in the birding fun by meeting Paul & Deloris Sellin in the G Street parking lot of the Kerrville River Trail. Free and open to all ages.
See Page 8 for more information.

Thursday, January 23, 5pm-6pm
RNC Annual Member Meeting

We will review 2019 accomplishments & financial status & reveal plans for 2020. Election for new officers & directors will be held.

Wednesday, January 29, 1pm-2pm
Collette Tours Presentation

Collette Tours presentation for the Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains, featuring Louisville, Gatlinburg, & Asheville. Take a visual tour, and see the tour plans and activities. A percent of the proceeds from your booking go to Riverside Nature Center.

For more information on upcoming events visit: http://riversidenaturecenter.org/about-rnc/calander/
Enjoy the cinema?
Are you a bird enthusiast?
Do you just like learning about our natural world?

We have you covered at Riverside Nature Center.
Join us for the exhibit premiere on Saturday, January 18th.

Schedule of festivities:

8:00am - Bird Walk & Talk along the Guadalupe River: G Street Trailhead

12:00pm - Red carpet roll out

1:00pm - What is a Bird & Why are They Important? with Dr. Chris Distal
MEET GAYLYNNE

Starting in early January, I have the good fortune to be taking the position of Environmental Educator for Riverside Nature Center. Will you come join me for a cup of coffee (or tea)? I’m interested in hearing your ideas for expanding the educational offerings at RNC for 2020.

I’ve already started my wish list to include an environmental youth leadership program, a beginner’s botanical illustration class, a nature book club (have you read The Wilding yet?), have wildlife art and photo exhibits, encourage meditation in the garden, offer the patio for pickers and fiddlers, folk singers, movie nights, and a dance under the stars.

I’d also like to see more demonstrations using plants, herbs, spices, and oils in cooking, growing, and crafting. And presentations on Hill Country archaeology and Native American culture.

We are also making plans to update the Science Lab building to accommodate more ongoing activities for both kids and adults.

High on my wish list this upcoming year is to begin a formal research study that will open more doors for grant opportunities so that we can continue to grow.

I plan to work in partnership with the community to offer broader programming to appeal to new and standing members and, as always, we need volunteers to help us carry out our mission. I already know that our volunteers are resourceful, generous, and knowledgeable.

Have you heard the expression “share your light with me”? It’s asking another to share their wisdom with us. So, I’m asking you to share your light with me. Let’s start this new partnership together. What’s your passion? What would you like to learn? Or teach? This will be a busy year and we also have the beautiful new bird exhibit coming soon.

Come by for that coffee and let’s get acquainted.
HAPPY NEW YEAR, HAPPY BIRD YEAR!

By Susan Sander

Join Riverside Nature Center in celebrating our feathered neighbors and friends. The Return of the Birds could easily be about us returning our attention to birds and how our lives intersect.

Throughout time humans have had a connection with birds. Native Americans certainly had an eye out for birds, particularly as food, but many others held symbolic significance: crow for wisdom, eagle for courage, and raven meant danger-has-passed so was a good sign. Thunderbird’s wings caused winds and thunder which for Southwest tribes meant rain. We recognize the bald eagle as our national bird; a white dove means peace, storks bring babies, and the Phoenix is to rise above adversity. Cardinals, Gulls, and Orioles play baseball, and if you think our craving for chicken nuggets is a new thing, it started with the domestication of a jungle fowl in South Asia about 10,000 years ago, and generations of selective breeding to the chickens of today.

Our relationship to birds falls into 3 arenas: 1) food from domesticated chickens, ducks, geese, even turkeys; 2) pet canaries, parrots, cockatoos to zoo birds; and 3) the wild birds (that includes hunting). But you might not think of birds as a link to deep-time, yet all birds are descended from a dinosaur. Think of bird evolution as just the “on-going miniaturization of dinosaurs” - from a 6’ velociraptor to the bee hummingbird whose total length from tip of beak to tip of tail is only 2.25 inches! Today field guides recognize 9-10,000 bird species. Yet in 2016, American Museum of Natural History study suggested that with new DNA research there could be 18,000 species. More for the life-listers!

For the past decade I’ve been watching my avian yard-mates. I’m fascinated by how they live their days in a city environment, and what their presence/absence tells me about how well my garden works for them. Finding insects for their babies is insect control for me. Quid pro quo! In the city we might overlook birds since they blend into the foliage. But imagine not hearing any singing? Last September the bird poop hit the fan with articles in National Geographic, Audubon, Smithsonian relaying a study that “300 billion birds across 31 species” have been lost in North America since 1970! That’s 1 in 4! Am I seeing 12 different cardinals or the same 4 during a day? Over a week? Volunteers tally birds during the annual Christmas one-day counts held across the country. Each year the numbers drop sometimes due to that day’s weather, but the trends are disconcerting. Each year more habitat is lost to fire, floods, development, and agriculture/forest clearing. Although more people might put up feeders or add native plants for food it’s not enough to offset the bigger picture.

American Birding Association lists 1,116 bird species for North America (US & Canada). Texas can claim 639 but more than 2/3 are migrants since we’re smack dab in the central fly-way that funnels the birds in the Midwest and Canada down to Central and South Americas – and back. We also host avian winter-Texans (robins and cedar waxwings are but two). What happens in Texas has a huge impact on bird survival in the Western Hemisphere, especially during migrations.

Check out the RNC exhibit along with upcoming programs to increase your skills at being a better bird-steward. You’d be surprised what you can find within the city limits!

For more information:
https://www.audubon.org/news/north-america-has-lost-more-1-4-birds-last-50-years-new-study-says#
Oak Wilt & New Discoveries

Saturday, January 11
1:00 – 3:00 pm

Are you under the impression that Oak Wilt is a disease affecting only live oak and red oak species?

New evidence proves that many of our native oak trees are susceptible and already suffering from this disease.

Join Karen Rockoff, ISA Certified Arborist, as she sheds light on the pervasiveness of oak wilt and the best means of management.

Lacey oak
Post oak

Riverside Nature Center 150 Francisco Lemos St 257-4837
My Terrarium Log
By Gaylynne Robinson

My new year’s commitment is to finally get started with learning to make terrariums, open, closed, and aquatic. I’ve really learned a lot from youtube videos by Life in Jars, Serpa Designs, Green Aqua, and The Green Machine, but that doesn’t replace the real life experience of finding local bits of wood, rock, plants, and tiny creatures, and then attempting to create a healthy habitat for them.

I hope to share my terrarium log with you each month here in the newsletter. I’m a beginner at this but it should be fun to discover terrarium making together if you are a beginner too. If you are experienced, know that your kind and helpful comments and insights are appreciated. So here goes:

12/15 Today I went by Salvation Army and found several glass jars, some with lids, that I thought might be suitable to make a terrarium. I chose a square jar with a lid much like a mason jar. For my first terrarium, I decided to see what I could assemble from my own yard. I first added a layer of granite chips, then some rock chips, a little sandy soil, and finally a thin layer of dirt I had sitting in an empty pot. I found a few pieces of bark and took a little bark off some old, dry firewood. I will surely wear gloves next time to protect against splintery wood. I added three limestone rocks, a few tiny twigs and leaves, and finally two slabs of moss growing in the shade under my outside faucet. I draped these over the wood. I then added a sprig of some grass cover I found in the yard. I gently poured in about a half a cup of dechlorinated water and closed the lid. I’m keeping it in a shaded area inside the house.

Here are some questions I hope to answer:
Can the moss really live without additional oxygen?
Are there any creatures that hitchhiked into my terrarium? Did I put too much water in the jar? The room temperature is 72 degrees and we are in mid-December. Is it too warm or too cool for the moss to survive? I would like to grow more moss for future terrariums.
What kind of moss is it? After looking on Google for moss identification, I think my moss is Anacamptodon splachnoides, or knothole moss. It looks like a tiny forest of trees and there are a few tall spores standing in moss.

12/16 I don’t see any creatures yet in the moss terrarium and there’s quite a bit of condensation on the side of the glass.

12/17 I stumbled upon a clearance rack of nearly dead succulents for fifty cents each. I watered them and put them in a sunny windowsill. I’m saving them for a larger terrarium. Still no change in the moss terrarium.

If you have any experience with terrariums or have any suggestions, please let me know. I hope to make an aquatic plant terrarium next. I’ll let you know in the next newsletter how it goes and if the moss terrarium survives. I admit I’m checking it about every five minutes, is that too much?
Kevin Hartley will be starting off our new year of NEd Talks with a presentation on the Grand Canyon National Park & What Most Visitors Don’t See. The presentation will take place on Tuesday, January 21st from 10:30am-11:30am. Join us as Kevin discusses the amazing backpacking routes available, as well as the geology, botany, prehistoric peoples, park history, & some day hike options.

If you have an interest in birding make sure to join Paul & Deloris Sellin as they take you on a bird-viewing journey during the Bird Walk & Talk. Saturday, January 18th will be the next walk. At 8:00am they will lead the group down the river starting from G street parking lot.

You can meet Paul & Deloris in front of the visitor center at 8:00am or at G street parking lot at 8:15am.
YOU ARE INVITED TO A SPECIAL TRAVEL PRESENTATION AT
THE RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER!
January 29, 2020
1:00 – 2:00 PM

Mike Sprute of Gateway Collette Travel Tours will present information about the upcoming travel plans in September 2020 for the tour of the BLUEGRASS COUNTRY & the SMOKY MOUNTAINS.

Featuring Louisville, Lexington, Berea, Gatlinburg & Asheville!

Louisville, Kentucky is famous for thoroughbreds, Churchill Downs, & the Kentucky Derby Museum. Old historic Louisville has a walking tour with Victorian mansions. Also, there is the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory, plus the Bourbon Trail. Then on to Lexington with rolling pastures, horse farms on the way to Berea, & a mecca of arts & crafts. While in route to Gatlinburg, enjoy more views of the Bluegrass Country. Stunning sights await from Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Asheville in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

This tour has a variety of interests for the traveler:
Beautiful natural sights,
Horse racing,
Baseball,
Distilleries, Breweries & Wineries
Arts & Crafts.

The time honored traditions of America’s Southeast are yours to enjoy in this tour!
Your booking helps us, too.
A percentage of the proceeds go to Riverside Nature Center.

To see more information about the trip, [https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/953865](https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/953865)
RNC NEW MEMBERS
11/24/19 thru 12/23/19

Ron Zaremba
Diane Phillips
Dr. William Morris
John & Janise Shaver

RNC DONORS
11/24/19 thru 12/23/19

Julie Clay
Tyra Kane
CJ Colvert
Robin Hale
Pat Howell
Paula Foster
Bryan Brown
Paula Harley
Patricia Harte
Edward Brogan
Virginia de Wolf
Catherine Henry
Francisco Garcia
Marsha Baumann
Rick & Kay Harter
Katy & Carl Kappel
Mike & Karen Burkett
Charles & Kathy Boortz
JC Mehner
Susan Lipp
Gary Noller
Edna Platte
Patricia Little
Robert Shock
Pamela Laing
Mary Thomas
Dorothy Leslie
Donna Schloss
Janet Spangler
Harriet Redwine
Pamela Lienhard
Nate & Tara Smith
Chirstine Morrison
Barbara Lowenthal
John & Jenise Shaver
Malcolm & Peggy Matthews
Rae Tucker
Rachel Young
Charles Sullivan
Maura Windlinger
Debbie Thompson
Mark & Linda Stone
Paul & Jaydean Urban
Bill & Mary Lee Tennant

PARTNERS IN NATURE

CENTURY 21
The Hills Realty

CRENWELGE
Service 1927
Sales 1940

La Quinta
Real Ranch
LLC

ROCKOFF
TREE SOLUTIONS
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 advance the stewardship of our natural environment. 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.

RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER

150 Francisco Lemos St. Kerrville, Texas 78028
(830)257-4837
www.riversidenaturecenter.org

RNC OFFICERS
Barbara Oates-President
Peter Lewis - Past President
Tara Bushnoe - Vice President
Judy Ferguson - Secretary
Jeff Gelsone - Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS
Liz Ross
Bryan Brown
Joe Hawkins
Jake Walther
Bernice Fischer
Peggy Thompson
Malcolm Matthews

We would love it if you will
Like us on Facebook
(Riverside Nature Center Association)

and follow us on Instagram
(riversidenaturecenter)

Support RNC
DONATE NOW!
http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/about-rnc/donate/general-donation-form/