Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season. Our History Discussion Group at Kleb Woods Nature Center in November will be led by a Cypress Top volunteer, Jay Gavitt. He will review and discuss the book *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* by Nathaniel Philbrick. This history book describes the experiences of the Pilgrims of the ship Mayflower and their difficult experiences settling in Massachusetts in 1619. While most of us know the legend of the Pilgrims, much of the reality is left out of our popular history stories. If you would like to hear the true story of the Pilgrims, including that first Thanksgiving, I hope you will join us on November 14. You will have a good story to impress your family during Thanksgiving dinner.

The October Cypress Top Historic bus trip went to Bellville for breakfast at a popular bakery, but they soon all ended up in jail! They were hauled to the Historic Austin County Jail in the Precinct bus. The old jail is now a museum, and the Seniors enjoyed an in-depth tour. Inside the beautiful 1896 brick and stone building is a variety of displays telling stories of past sheriffs, bad men and hangings. There were other exhibits, too, that were a bit more light-hearted. The kitchen featured a beautiful wood burning stove and a very early icebox. A piano and an organ are on display that formerly belonged to local residents. The guides were congenial and knowledgeable.

At left, the Austin County Jailhouse. Photo by Jim Pulliam. At right, a jailhouse docent shows off a rare vintage icebox. Photo by Gary Olson.

At left, a docent tells about the gun collection of Bellville’s first policeman.
The cellblock is a depressing place even now when empty and one has no fear of being locked up. However, several of the Seniors did enjoy a photo opportunity from inside the old cells. The hangman’s noose and the gallows trap door does nothing to abate the depression one feels from being in this jail.

Austin County is one of the oldest counties in Texas since it was the center of Stephen F. Austin’s 1821 Colony. Consequently, much of the pivotal early history of Texas took place in the County. One room was devoted to Austin County’s prominence in the state’s history.

The map above shows the routes of the Mexican and Texian armies during the War of Texas Independence. Photo by Fred Collins.
The San Felipe Flag displayed at the museum was new for me. The plaque interpreting the flag quotes an 1836 Texas newspaper describing the flag presented to the San Felipe Militia by the ladies of the community before the Militia departed to join the Texian Army.

“The flag presented to the San Felipe Company was made according to the pattern proposed in the Flag of Texas and Independence. The English Jack showing the origin of the Anglo-Americans; thirteen stripes representing that most of the colonists in Texas are from the United States; the star (white on a field of green) is Texas; the only state in Mexico showing the least spark of liberty; Tricolor is Mexican showing that we once belonged to that Confederacy; the whole flag is historic.”

After the morning history tour, the group went to the Antique Festival in Warrenton. They ate lunch and shopped all afternoon. Most found a few treasures to take home and all seemed to enjoy the unique offerings of the vendors and the festive atmosphere.
At left, a Senior finds a unique gasoline heated iron. At right, the Seniors end the day in an air conditioned antique mall. Photos by Jim Pulliam.

Signing Up for Senior History Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)

You may sign up for:

The **November 8** trip to Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery State Historic Sites.

The December trip is **SATURDAY, December 14**. It will go to the Bastrop Christmas Historic Home Tour. To attend you must purchase your ticket directly from Holiday Homes Tour. Presented By: Bastrop Museum & Visitor Center, 904 Main Street, Bastrop, TX 78602, Phone: (512) 303-0057. Time: 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Price: Early Bird Tickets $15 until Nov. 15, $20 Regular Price. [https://www.visitbastrop.com/event/holiday-homes-tour/238/](https://www.visitbastrop.com/event/holiday-homes-tour/238/) Because of a parking conflict at Juergen's Hall, this December special trip will leave from Kleb Woods, 20303 Draper Rd, Tomball, 77377.

The **January 24** trip will be to Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site. Lunch will be at a Freeport seafood house and the afternoon will explore the historical marker sites of Velasco.

Sign up for future trips by emailing cypressstop@pct3.hctx.net or calling (281) 357-5324. You may only sign up yourself plus one friend/spouse. No multiple reservations. You will get a confirmation e-mail a week before the trip if you have a seat.

**Cypress Top Historic Park** is open seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to dusk. **The buildings** are open Tuesdays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Formal tours of the museum complex led by CHS volunteers begin from Juergen’s Store at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. each Tuesday. However, our staff and volunteers are happy to have you visit the store anytime while we are there to give you an impromptu tour of any of the buildings. **Group (6 or more) tours may be booked Tuesdays through Saturdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.** Group tours are subject to staff availability, so we recommend you make reservations at least one month in advance. The park and museum buildings are open to all and, as with all events offered at Cypress Top Historic Park, **admissions and tours are free**.

**Juergen’s Hall is a community center**, offering many activities and classes for all ages. Please check the Precinct Three website at [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com) for hours of operation and offerings of Juergen’s Hall Community Center.

Members of the **Cypress Historical Society** are in the Cypress Train Depot (bright yellow building) at Cypress Top Historic Park every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and also on the third Saturday of the month from noon to 3 p.m. They have a great deal of genealogy information on most early Cypress area families. Drop in and visit them when you are in the area.

The November and December calendars can be found on the Precinct Three website under activity calendars. Select from the drop down menu. [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com).