Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you Happy New Year. We look forward to a new year of providing the community with a window on Cypress’ roots and past at Cypress Top Historic Park. We will provide some new displays and reinterpretation of the tens of thousands of artifacts in the facility’s museums. If you have not met, our “new” historian I hope you will stop in and meet her. She has a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm.

Our Volunteers have brought back screen door push bars to the park. These were an important form of advertising in the early 20th century. They were originally metal, and then often porcelain. They are now admirable collectors’ items. The old Juergen’s Store had many over the years, but all were sold or stolen. Our woodworkers teamed up with a volunteer who is a talented painter to recreate a couple of push bars that once graced the store’s screen door. Take some time to stop and admire them the next time you are in the neighborhood.

The December Cypress Top History Bus Trip went to Bastrop for the Holiday Homes Tour presented by the Bastrop County Historical Society. The Tour is an annual event held on the second Saturday of December, highlighting the historic homes of downtown Bastrop. The festive lights and decorations brought out the spirit of the season as participants walked from home to home. Many of the Seniors enjoyed lunch and some shopping along Main Street before beginning the tour. The first home along the way was a new addition to the Holiday Homes Tour. The Alf Jung House, built in 1895, is a Folk Victorian style red brick home that now operates as a law office. Decorated traditionally, the home was a favorite among several of the Seniors. Onlookers admired the fireplace as the docent explained how the original owners of the home were married in front of that same fireplace years ago.
The next stop was the Kleinert-Grisenbeck Home built by Charles and Mary Kleinert in 1887. The German Victorian style cottage appeared very cozy and modern. Several Christmas trees added holiday cheer as participants passed through the elegantly decorated home. Many in the group stopped to enjoy the large backyard before they continued their journey to the First United Methodist Church of Bastrop on Main Street.
The First United Methodist Church of Bastrop was the first church organized in Bastrop. It was established in the mid-1830s, when Texas was still under Mexican jurisdiction and protestant worship was outlawed. However, the church pictured above was not constructed until 1925. It was assembled to replace the original structure from 1851 that was damaged by a lightning strike. Participants enjoyed listening to stories told by the docents about the long-standing history of the church in Bastrop. The poinsettia flowers scattered throughout were a nice touch.

Moving on to the next stop, the Seniors were greeted by homeowner Geoff Connor, former Texas Secretary of State, at the historic Allen-Flower House. Some of the most elaborate decorations were found in this stunning home. Built in 1852, the house was used for boarding by the Military Institute, established across the street to train young men to fight during the Civil War. Governor Sam Houston was a frequent visitor of the home while his sons attended the institute.
The final two homes of the tour were rather close to one another, giving hope to tired participants that a well-deserved rest was not far away. The Howell House was a traditional dogtrot house until it was moved and renovated in 2004. The original downstairs was a three-room house built during the 1850s. This home has been transformed into a beautiful two story with a pool in the backyard. Some of the Seniors joked of soaking their feet in the hot tub out back. The final stop on the tour was the beautiful home of Margaret Chambers. This house was built in 1852 by Bartholomew Manlove, the First Major of Bastrop. The Texas Greek Revival style house was the first residential structure to acquire a Historical Medallion in Bastrop County. After a full day on the Holiday Homes Tour, the waiting bus was a welcome sight for tired feet. The Seniors loaded the bus to head home, with one last bit of holiday cheer from a Santa Beaver at the Buc-ee's rest stop.
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 January 24 trip 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.

The February 28 trip to San Felipe de Austin and after lunch the Turnverein Halls in Cat Springs and Bellville.

The March 13 trip to The History Center in Diboll and a museum in Lufkin.

Sign up for future trips by emailing cypresstop@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 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 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 January and February calendars can be found on the Precinct Three website under activity calendars. Select from the drop down menu. www.pct3.com.