Commissioner Steve Radack wishes you a restful Labor Day holiday with your family and friends. Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City. Many cities and states adopted Labor Days during the 1880s and by 1894, 23 states had official labor days. In June of 1894 Congress made it an official Federal Holiday in the District of Columbia and all territories. Today the holiday is more likely celebrated with a super store sale, a picnic, or family get together over an early football game than a parade celebrating the laborer.

Our August History Bus Trip took us to Beaumont and then on to Port Arthur. In downtown Beaumont, the group began the day at the Edison Museum. It is housed in the perfect venue for Thomas Alva Edison; the renovated Travis Street Substation building, which originally came on line in 1929. The museum celebrates the innovative achievements of Edison, whose accomplishments extend far beyond the light bulb and include the phonograph, an electronic vote recorder, and a working motion picture camera. Perhaps Thomas Edison's career would never have gotten on track had there not been an incident involving a train. At the age of 14, Edison and a friend were hanging out alongside the railroad tracks in Edison's childhood home of Port Huron, Michigan, when they noticed a train approaching. They also noticed a young boy in danger of being hit by the train. Edison dashed to the tracks and grabbed three-year-old Jimmie MacKenzie, saving his life. It just so happened the child's father was a station master in Mount Clemons, Michigan. Mr. MacKenzie was so grateful he offered to train Edison as a telegraph operator, thus launching the great inventor's career.
At lunch time, participants dined at a fine bayou-side bistro, and enjoyed the ambience of the quaint hideaway. They greatly enjoyed feeding the turtles and alligators that floated below the deck just outside the dining area. In all it was a fun and memorable lunch.
The seniors then went to the Museum of the Gulf Coast. This museum captured the history of the Gulf Coast from New Orleans to Galveston and included multiple Halls of Fame for area notables, from O.A. “Bum” Phillips to Janis Joplin. The Joplin exhibit gave us an opportunity to see a replica of the late singer’s car. This may be the closest we will ever get to her actual Porsche, since it sold at auction for $1.76 million in 2015. The three Halls of Fame recognize the region’s musicians, sports personalities, and other well-known figures. The museum did a fine job interpreting the natural history of the region as well. Exhibits extended from pre-historic times to the present.

We also had the opportunity to visit the historic mansion Pompeiian Villa, built in 1900 and reminiscent of villas of ancient Pompeii. Saved from demolition in the 1960s by the Port Arthur Historical Society, Pompeiian Villa was extensively renovated and opened to the public in the early 1970s.
At left, tour participants enjoy the Mediterranean flavor of Pompeian Villa’s interior. At right, one of the rooms off the Villa’s central courtyard. Photos by Jim Pulliam.

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

Future trips: You may now sign up for all history bus trips through the end of 2017. September 15 Bastrop Museum & Visitor Center, October 27 Montgomery County Fernland Farm, November 18 (Saturday) Liendo Plantation Civil War Reenactment and December 1 Antique Christmas Shopping. Sign up for future trips by emailing cypressstop@pct3.com 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 dawn to dusk. The buildings are now open Tuesdays through Thursdays from 9 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, we are happy to have you visit the store anytime while we are there, we will likely have time 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. It offers 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 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 September and October calendars can be found on the precinct 3 web site. www.pct3.com There is a link from the park web page as well.