Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff hope you have enjoyed your summer. Following the June Cypress Historical Society’s Hands-on-History Summer Camp, July has seemed rather quiet. We are saddened to tell you that park historian Jim Wilson has resigned his position. He has been a fine historian and contributed greatly to our programs at Cypress Top Historic Park and at Kleb Woods Historic Farm as well. He will be missed, and we wish him well in his future endeavors.

We had several special tours in July: a Boy Scout tour on the 12th and groups from Building Rainbows on the 16th and 17th. If you would like to schedule a special tour for your group, please contact us by email or by phone.
The July 20 Senior History Bus Trip went to Beaumont and toured the Chambers House in the morning and the Fire Museum in the afternoon. The Chambers house was built in 1914 by a local lumber man in Beaumont. In 1914, the Chambers family bought the home on Calder Avenue. Calder Avenue was lined with mansions during this oil-boom era and while the Chambers were not wealthy, they were upper middle class and did their best to keep up appearances. The Chambers had two daughters, Ruth and Frances. They grew up in the house and although they left to attend college, both girls returned to Beaumont to live with their parents. Neither girl married; both lived out their long lives in the house. Ruth was born in 1903 and Florence in 1912. Ruth preceded Florence in death and after Florence died in 2004, the house was turned over to the Beaumont Heritage Society. Because they were shrewd investors with the $150,000 their father left them around 1950, the daughters’ estate was about twelve million dollars. This money has been put in a trust to benefit various Beaumont non-profits as well as pay for the upkeep of the house.

The house is not a mansion, but is elegant and spacious, especially for two petite women. They left their parents’ rooms as they were when their parents died, including the tops of the dressers with stray items from pockets and purse. The house had been little modified, but bathrooms were added. A grand façade was added to the front of the house so that it blended in with the mansions that once surrounded it.

At left, the Chambers House. Photo from the Beaumont Heritage Society website.
At right, the museum director talking about the sisters pictured in the portrait. Photo by Fred Collins.

At left, seniors look around Ruth Chambers’ bedroom. At right, one of Ruth’s favorite hand-sewn dresses with her pictured in it. Photos by Jim Pulliam.
Following the tour, the group went to lunch at a restaurant selected by our former historian, Jim Wilson. It was a fine selection, and the seniors enjoyed the variety offered on the menu. Most of the seniors cleaned their plates in spite of large portions. I think one can assume they enjoyed their lunch.

At left, the seniors pose for a picture to commemorate our former historian. Photo by Fred Collins. At right, the seniors enjoy lunch. Photo by Linda Martin-Rust.

From lunch, it was off to the Beaumont Fire Museum. This is a small but fascinating collection of fire equipment and memorabilia from Beaumont area fire departments. The tour was led by a delightful firefighter. Her ability to speak about the equipment from a user perspective made the tour more interesting than any historical fact or figure could. Contrasting how the equipment worked and how the firefighters think about it today was fascinating. The museum is well laid out and well cared for, as we would expect from firefighters. The story about Major, the fire horse, was classic. When there was a fire, Major was hitched to a buggy and sent, driverless, to pick up the chief from his home. He was then said to be able to find where the fire alarm was ringing even without the chief knowing where to go. Beloved companions of the firemen, Major and three fire dogs are buried below the firehouse.

At left, a hook-and-ladder. Photo by Jim Pulliam. At right, the firefighter explains how an alarm is pulled. Photo by Fred Collins.

A 75-foot-tall horse-drawn ladder wagon was the forerunner of the ladder trucks today. It also carried many hook-and-ladders. I had always heard the term “hook-and-ladder” and thought it was the name of the ladder trucks. Little did I know, it was a hook with a ladder attached so fireman could scale multistory buildings. Today, it could pass as an act in Cirque du Soleil. Our guide’s favorite piece of equipment was the light truck. Invented, developed and built by the Beaumont fire station, it was the prototype used across the county for the better part of the 20th century. One of the fascinating stories was the way fire alarms worked prior to our digital age. They had a wire from the alarm to the dispatch panel which would turn on a light and let the attendant know what alarm number it was. A card was pulled from a file which gave the physical address of the alarm. The card would also indicate the closest fire station. A telegraph-like message, which would appear on a ticker tape as a series of holes and spaces, was then transmitted to the fire station. For instance, a hole, several
spaces, three holes, several spaces then four holes would indicate alarm box 134. The fire station would then dispatch to that alarm. If the chief arrived and thought he needed help, he would pull the alarm again and the sequence would repeat to the next closest fire house. The fire fighter who gave us the tour pulled the alarm so we could see it light up on the board and hear the alarm.

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

There is now a waitlist for the **August 17** trip to the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History in Bryan and a tour and lunch at Messina Hof Winery, and the **September 21** trip to tour old Victoria and to visit the Victoria County Courthouse. You may now sign up for the **October 26** trip to New Braunfels to tour the Comal County Courthouse and Gruene Historic District, and the **November 16** trip to the Sam Houston Home and Museum in Huntsville and the Fanthorp Inn in Anderson.

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 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, we 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. 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 August and September calendars can be found on the Precinct 3 web site. www.pct3.com. There is a link from the park web page as well.
COMMISSIONER STEVE RADACK
INVITES YOU TO THE

11TH ANNUAL KLEB WOODS HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2018
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

HUMMINGBIRD BANDING:
Sumita Prasad will be capturing and banding hummingbirds throughout the day. She will be assisted by Jim Renfro; both are licensed hummingbird banders. In addition to seeing these feathered jewels up close, you will learn about their unique structure and amazing biology.

RAPTORS:
Houston Audubon Society Education Director Mary Anne Weber will display several live raptors to be photographed in a natural setting. She will field questions and show her raptors throughout the day.

NATURE TALK:
Staff naturalist Kendra Kocab will present A Closer Look at Nature. This class is part of an ongoing series designed to give school-aged children a closer look at our natural world. Today’s 20 minute presentation: Hummingbird Biology at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

NATURE WALKS

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Featuring as many as 100 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds!

HISTORY TALK:
Kleb Woods staff will introduce visitors to A Closer Look at History. This series is designed for school-aged children. Each class investigates a historical topic. Today’s 20 minute presentation: The Story of Elmer Kleb & His Woods at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

WHAT:
Everything you want to know about hummingbirds — including identifying, attracting and gardening for hummingbirds. There will be games and activities for the whole family. There will be nature walks throughout the day. The Kleb House will be open for tours and the blacksmiths will be demonstrating in the barn.

WHERE:
Kleb Woods Nature Center, 20303 Draper Rd. at Mueschke Rd., Tomball 77377
http://www.pct3.com/parks/kleb-park/

WHEN:
Saturday, September 8 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Admission is free. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own refreshments. Drinks and snacks will not be sold.

For additional information, call Kleb Woods Nature Center at (281) 357-5324.