Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a restful Labor Day holiday. Perhaps you enjoyed it with family and friends and NCAA football through the entire holiday weekend. Labor Day was established as a National Holiday in 1894 to celebrate the accomplishments of our labor force. It seems that sentiment has been lost over the years. Like with most other holidays today, there are major events: ball games, store sales, car dealership marathons, and all sorts of things that prevent many workers from being honored. Some simply have another workday. If you are fortunate enough to have the day off and choose to go shopping or attend an event, please show those working an extra expression of appreciation.

There was a drop-in tour of the Juergen’s General Merchandise Store Museum this month from Tracy Gee Community Center. The group was touring Precinct Three’s Community Centers and visited the Historic Park Museum while they were at Juergen’s Hall Community Center. They enjoyed reminiscing among the old store artifacts. We also had a regular flow of individual visitors, many from activities at the Community Center as well. One long-time Cypress resident stopped by and told us some stories of visiting the old bar fifty-plus years ago.

The August Cypress Top Historic Bus Trip visited some interesting locations in Waco. The Seniors first visited the McLennan County Courthouse built in 1901. The architect was James Riley Gordon. The Courthouse features three justice-themed statues. On top of the central dome stands Themis, the Greek Goddess of Divine Order. In her right hand, Themis holds a double-edged sword that represents the law as the chief instrument of justice. Her left hand holds aloft a pair of scales intended to symbolize the weighing of facts in the balance by the courts. The other two statues are located on the upper roof below the dome. One is Justitia, the Roman Goddess of Justice, and the other appears to be a classical version of Lady Liberty.

The interior of the courthouse is as ornate as its exterior. A rotunda goes up through all four floors, leading to a stained glass, domed ceiling. At ground level, a map of McLennan County is inlaid into the floor of the rotunda. This floor also has a paneled mural by Ruth Smith, which depicts the history of Waco. This mural fascinated many Seniors. One said they could spend the whole trip looking at it in detail.

The old Courthouse has seen many trials over the years; one of historical note was when Clyde Barrow, of Bonnie and Clyde fame, stood trial there in 1930 for numerous criminal charges, including burglary and theft. Judge Richard I. Munroe sentenced Barrow to a two-year prison sentence for his offenses. However, Barrow broke out of the McLennan County Jail before he could be transferred to the State Jail in Huntsville.
Lunch was at a legendary Waco restaurant, George’s. Established in 1930, even with a change in owners it is still going strong. I think the Senior’s favorite thing was that the lunch special (a meat and two sides) was only $6.99. The special even included chicken-fried steak! They thoroughly enjoyed their hearty lunch.

After lunch, the Seniors visited the Armstrong Browning Library on the campus of Baylor University. This research library was built specifically to house the world’s largest collection of materials from Robert and Elizabeth Barret Browning. The building is adorned with what is thought to be the largest collection of secular stained glass in the world. Baylor commissioned stained glass windows that depict many of the Browning Sonnets. They are large and spectacular, yet intricate in design and story. One of the most recognizable sonnets in the building is etched into a wall near an altar where weddings often take place. Sonnet 43 begins, “How do I love thee,” and many of you probably know the line that comes next.
The following from the library website indicates the true significance of the collection, which the Seniors had too little time to see and appreciate.

The depth and variety of the resources and collections in the Armstrong Browning Library are not easily expressed in a few phrases. In round numbers, the Library houses more than 27,000 books and over 11,000 letters and manuscripts—enough resources to take several lifetimes to explore.

The Library's greatest strength is in its materials focusing on the lives and works of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, including original letters and manuscripts, books from the poets' library, all of the first and many successive editions of their poetry, secondary works and criticisms, their poetry set to music, portraits, and memorabilia too numerous to list. The Armstrong Browning Library has become the world's largest collection of materials related to the Browning's.

In recent years, the Library has become known as a 19th-century research center after adding substantial book and manuscript collections on Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, Joseph Milsand, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Dickens, as well as on many other 19th-century writers and on most areas of 19th-century culture. Growing collections of 19th-century women poets and 19th-century theological pamphlets are among its newest avenues of expansion. Building on the nucleus of books given to Baylor University by A.J. Armstrong in 1918, the Armstrong Browning Library continues to acquire significant holdings for all parts of its collections. The founder's dream for a world-class 19th-century research center has become a reality.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was plagued with ill health and spent most of her time in her bedroom, which was spacious and also served as her recreation area and workspace for her writing. Through strategic effort, a representative of the University acquired much of her personal belongings when her estate was sold. These artifacts are set up in a re-creation of the room where Elizabeth spent most of her days. It is a remarkable feeling to see the personal space of such a famous and revered person.
At left, a Senior admires the artifacts of Robert Browning. At right, the Seniors at the quarters of Elizabeth B. Browning. Photos by Kendra Kocab.

At left, the young guide was highly knowledgeable and enthusiastic. At right, Senior J.R. blesses the trip from the balcony. Photos by Kendra Kocab.

Before heading home, the Seniors made a quick stop at the “Branding the Brazos” sculpture at the base of the Waco Suspension Bridge. The suspension bridge was built in 1870 with locally produced bricks for the base, and steel and cable from the same New York supplier that would later make the Brooklyn Bridge. It was the first bridge to cross the Brazos River, which allowed the Chisolm Trail to be extended through Waco. Hence, the sculpture, which depicts a Chisholm Trail cattle drive, features three bronze cowboys on horseback and 25 bronze cattle. With the bridge, the sculptures, and the surrounding trees, the setting is lovely and makes for a great photo-op.
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 **September 20** trip to the San Felipe de Austin Museum and other Central Texas sites, the **October 4** trip to the old Bellville Jail in the morning and the Warrenton Antique Festival in the afternoon, and the **November 8** trip to Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery State Historic Sites. Rest assured that you will have multiple opportunities for great kolaches on all of these trips. 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 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 Three website. www.pct3.com. There is a link from the park web page as well.