Valentine’s Day is approaching and romance rings through Harris County Precinct Three Commissioner Steve Radack’s Kleb Woods Nature Preserve. While the calendar says winter, the lengthening days signal to the woodpeckers and titmice that it is spring. Woodpecker drumming can be heard daily and the “peter peter” of the titmice are now a daily event on sunny mornings. Even the Pine Warblers have begun to call. They will be building nests by the end of the month.

Volunteer activities
The cool weather makes outdoor work comfortable and the volunteers have been extremely active. The “Yaupon’s Worst Nightmare” Crew often number seven or more. They continue their productive work rescuing trees from encroaching brush. Please consider joining them on Mondays from 8 a.m. until noon. The Tuesday volunteer crew has recently completed a new flower bed, worked on several new displays for the Nature Center and kept the trails and grounds clear and attractive for visitors. A group of volunteers went to the Nature Discovery Center in Bellaire to rescue some heritage shrimp plant that will soon be lost to a remodeling project. They transplanted it to Kleb Woods where it will be appreciated for years to come by migrating and wintering hummingbirds. The gardeners will have a planning meeting on Feb. 11th at 1:30 p.m. if you would like to join them.

History discussion group
In January, the group discussed the geographic limits of Spanish power in North America through the eyes of Villasur and Terreros. We also explored the impact of Pope’ and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 on limits to Spanish power as overlords as well. Our next History Discussion Group will meet on Feb.11th, at which time we will take a look at early 20th century Texas, the oil boom and the H.L. Hunt families from the perspective of the ultimate insider, Margaret Hunt Hill, in H L and Lyda: Growing Up in the H L Hunt and Lyda Bunker Hunt Family As Told By Their Eldest Daughter.

Closer Look at Nature class
The Closer Look at Nature Class in January was about Arbor Day and planting trees. This class is especially appropriate since Elmer and his father, Edward Kleb, planted the trees on this piece of prairie 149 years ago. The students learned about the Arbor Day tradition, the value of trees and how to care for and plant them. Following the class, they went out and harvested tree seedlings to take home and nurture so they can plant them in their yards next year.
Information on future classes can be found at the Nature Center or you can check the precinct's website.

**German classes**
The three German classes, 1-A, 1-B and 2-A continue. Check the website for dates and meeting times. German 1-A and 1-B are the equivalent of high school German 1, while our German 2-A and 2-B are equivalent of high school German 2. If you would like additional information about these classes, please contact Linda Martin-Rust, education director, at klebwoods@pct3.com

**Birding activities**
January is a busy month for birders, who invariably want to try out new binoculars, cameras or other Christmas gifts. They also are prone to resolutions, like all of us, and many start their year off with gusto. Attendance has been high and the birders have been rewarded with nice lists for each walk during the month, sometimes in spite of less than the best weather. The Wednesday birding program in January was a presentation by a Lone Star College student, Ruth Harrison, who has recently completed a study of winter hummingbird territoriality at Kleb Woods.
The senior birding bus trip in January was to Williamson County near Granger Lake, where the group found some prairie specialties. Fog was dense and all the seniors were happy to have a professional do the driving. They arrived at the appropriate bare plowed field at 10 a.m., but there was still a dense fog. Mountain Plover are difficult enough to find, and the fog made seeing anything more than a hundred yards away even more challenging. However, luck was with them and they soon found a nice group of Mountain Plover. With patience and persistence, every participant was able to get a scope view of this rare plover.

Following the successful plover hunt, the group had lunch and returned to the plowed fields north of Lake Granger. Their next target was Burrowing Owl. This small owl breeds in Canada and winters in open prairie in Texas. True to their name, they spend a great deal of time on the ground and shelter in burrows and culverts. The bird is a favorite among trip participants.

Following some quality owl time, the group then went to yet another stretch of barren ground to search for Horned Lark and McCown’s Longspur. Again, they were successful. Unfortunately, the birds would not cooperate for scope views or photographs. The bus then headed for Willis Creek Park. This Corps of Engineer facility is good for birding. Our targets were Harris’ and Fox Sparrows. These large, well-marked sparrows are favorites among birders. Both species were found, although the Fox Sparrows were camera shy.
At left, the seniors study sparrows in a thicket by Granger Lake. Photo by George Valdez. At right, a Harris' Sparrow. Photo by Jerry Chen.

At left, a view of Granger Lake. At right, some Redhead ducks in a nearby farm pond. Photos by George Valdez.

The calendars for February and March can be found on the website. There is a link from the park web page or you can look under the Community Center events calendar. The website is [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com).

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**Dog owners:** Pets are no longer allowed in Kleb Woods. For your convenience and enjoyment, Precinct Three maintains five popular dog parks where your dog can run free. They are the **Millie Bush Dog Park**, 16756 Westheimer Parkway, in George Bush Park; the **Danny Jackson Family Dog Park**, 4828 ½ Loop Central Dr., near Loop 610 and Westpark; a dog park in **Congressman Bill Archer Park**, 3201 Highway 6 North; **Deputy Darren Goforth Dog Park**, 9402 Barker Cypress Road and **Beverly Kaufman Dog Park** located in Katy at Paul D. Rushing Park, 9114 Katy Hockley Road. The dog parks have their own set of rules. Please visit the Precinct Three website [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com) for more information.