Commissioner Steve Radack wishes you a restful Labor Day Holiday with your family and friends. He invites you to his annual Hummingbird Festival at Kleb Woods Nature Center on Saturday, September 9, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

September witnesses the official end of summer. Kids return to their regular studies, and on September 22, the sun slips below the equator. This marks the first day of fall and is called the autumnal equinox. By month’s end, the days begin to shorten rather quickly and the Christmas season and winter solstice are closer than we expect. These celestial signals send the birds and insects into full migration mode. With each cool front, we witness a pulse of wildlife heading to the tropics.

Volunteer activities
Our volunteers have been in high gear, working on several projects and preparing for Hummingbird Festival. Recently, they completed a new fire ring for the scout camping area.

The woodworkers have completed a new set of shelves for the lobby in the Nature Center. The shelves are weathered bridge timbers salvaged from the woods here at Kleb. They are supported by Texas Republic-era bricks that were handmade by the workers of Abe Roberts. Abe Roberts was the proprietor of the New Kentucky settlement and plantation from 1828 through the 1830s.

Volunteers have also been preparing for our busy fall season, which begins with Hummingbird Festival and is punctuated by “Diggin’ Old Stuff” on October 21. They have cleaned flower beds, trimmed trails, renewed plant identification signs and cleaned the building from top to bottom. Volunteers have also had a bit of fun with two days of special activities just for them.

“Discovery Days at Kleb”
This summer program was designed to give kids an engaging summer experience in both history and nature. Our August programs were both nature related and were the best attended yet. The first was a snake program provided by Clint Pustejovsky of Texas Snakes and More. Mr. Clint was a great hit with the kids and helped them learn a great many facts about venomous and non-venomous snakes. He is an engaging speaker, but the crowd’s excitement reached its peak when he brought live snakes out of their bags. The up-close-and-personal experience with the snakes is one the kids will not soon forget, and many left with a greater appreciation for our slithering friends.
At left, the kids’ delight with the snakes. Center, this one required four men to hold it. At right, Mr. Clint demonstrates taking a selfie with the snake. Photos by Megan Ahlgren.

Our second program of the month featured Mary Anne Weber of the Houston Audubon Society who delighted the kids with her raptors. Mary Anne is a regular at Hummingbird Festival and will be here again this year. She took out each of her hawks, kites and owls to show the kids while educating them about avian biology, owl lore and bird conservation. The kids soaked it all in as they watched the live birds interact with Mary Anne. This program broke all previous attendance records for children’s classes. We need a bigger auditorium!
History Discussion Group
The August history discussion group covered the book *At the Birth of Texas - The Diary of William Fairfax Gray*. The book is rich in the history of our area. Gray wrote about the landscape, travel conditions, people he met, land use patterns and values. Most intriguing, he chronicled events as they occurred based on real-time experiences of the government and its people, including the rapidly changing information and misinformation of the time. He attended the Convention of Independence at Washington-On-The-Brazos in March of 1836. He was present at the interview of Travis' servant, Joe, when the Texans learned of the fate of the men in the Alamo. He met and wrote of Austin, Houston and Burnet. He met Fannin's widow. He knew Gail Borden, Wharton, Zavala, Rusk and many more of the chief players in the Independence movement. The book gave us insight into what these men saw and knew from the optimistic days of January 1836 to the desperate days of March, until after the Battle of San Jacinto in April. The discussion was so rich that it will be continued in September. We were only able to make it to January of 1836 in our first two hours. Next meeting, we will reveal additional reasons why Santa Anna was so desperate to catch and hang Zavala.

Houston Archeology Project
The Houston Archeological Society (HAS) has initiated a research project at Kleb Woods to study the historical archeology of the Kleb farm. They will map the site in detail including old fences, old trees, and other features. With special permission to use drones and ground-penetrating radar technology, they will attempt to determine the locations of all the out buildings that once serviced the farm. They will also excavate some specific sites in an attempt to confirm specific out buildings, such as the smokehouse. In addition to this basic research, they will use Kleb Woods as a training site for other archeologists and will schedule days to allow the general public to see archeology in action. They had their first work day in August and will have future meetings and workshops here monthly. They will also be operating an active dig for our "Diggin' Old Stuff Heritage Festival" on October 21.

German language classes
Formal German language classes will resume this month. German 1-A and 1-B are the equivalent of high school German 1, while our German 2-A and 2-B are the equivalent of high school German 2. Please consult the web calendar for class dates and times. If you have any other questions, please contact Linda Martin-Rust at klebwoods@pct3.com.

Bluegrass Jam
The monthly jam group meets the 4th Saturday of each month and plays from noon until 4 p.m. They would love to have you come and join them or just sit and listen. Future dates are August 26 and September 23.

Birding activities
The weekly bird walks are often hot in August, but signs of migration make the heat bearable. The lack of rain this summer has held the mosquito population in check so far. Migration is evident with sightings of Mississippi Kite, Solitary Sandpiper, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

The August Senior Birding Bus Trip's first stop was the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge headquarters on Lake Anahuac. This wooded refuge had few birds, but the seniors enjoyed the spiders, insects and luxuriant plants. The group then went to the Smith Point hawk watch tower. The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory operates this tower and mans it with a skilled
observer to count and record the annual fall and spring hawk migrations across the point. Migration had just begun when we were there, and we hoped to see some migrating Swallow-tailed Kites. We struck out with the kites but did witness some interesting migratory behavior by other species. High above the tower were soaring Magnificent Frigatebirds and Wood Storks. Several flocks of White Ibis passed on their way south. A small group of Swainson’s Hawks was also observed migrating. At least 30 tiny Blue-gray Gnatcatchers lifted off individually throughout the morning, striking out across East Bay toward Galveston or other points south. It seemed strange for them to set out at such a hot time of the day. One of the other highlights was an Olive-sided Flycatcher. A boreal nesting species, it is a late migrant in the spring and an early one in fall.

After a couple of hours on the tower, the group went out on the point and searched for birds along the marsh and beach. They found a variety of terns and shorebirds and were delighted to find three Clapper Rails, not a species one expects to find on a hot August afternoon.

The seniors then went to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge’s Shoveler Pond. There they found a plethora of Common Gallinule families with chicks of all ages. They also found Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and a variety of Herons and Ibis.

**Signing Up for Senior Birding Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)**
There is now a waitlist for the Sept 29 trip to Brazos Bend State Park and the October 6 trip. The October trip is unlike any we have done before. It will leave at noon (after lunch) and go to Quintana and Bryan Beach for some afternoon birding. We will then go to dinner at a local Freeport restaurant favored by the seniors, and then go to the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory for a special presentation on raptors by Bill Clark. Bill has recently published a new book, *Raptors of Mexico and Central America*. We will depart there about 9 p.m. and arrive at Kleb Woods about 11 p.m. You may now sign up for the November 3 trip to TOS's Sabine Woods where we will look for late fall migrants and arriving winter species. To sign up for these trips, email klebwoods@pct3.com or call 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.

The calendars for September and October can be found on the [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com) website at Community Calendars. There is also a link from the park's web page.

**Dog owners**: Pets are not allowed in Kleb Woods Nature Preserve. The scent they leave negatively affects wildlife. For your convenience and enjoyment, Precinct Three maintains five popular dog parks where your dog can run free. 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.