March has been a delightful month with just enough rain to keep the flowers blooming. Our bluebonnets, planted by a class last October, are brightening the entrance path. The Boy Scouts who prepared the area did a great job as did the class that planted the seeds. Elsewhere in the nature preserve spring is marching on with trees leafed out, butterflies flying and birds arriving. It’s the most beautiful time of the year for the park.

**Volunteer activities**

In March we celebrated our volunteers with a St. Patrick’s Day brunch of green eggs and ham. It was our way to say “thank you” for all that they do and to let them know how “lucky” we feel to have such wonderful volunteers!

The **Tuesday volunteers** have numbered eight or more each week and have accomplished a great deal. Their work has varied from trimming plants to grinding stumps to replacing boards on boardwalks to putting up bird houses. They are certainly a versatile lot. The **master gardeners** have completed the tasks of cutting back frozen plants and cleaning flower beds in anticipation of the spring growing season. Our **vegetable gardeners** patiently waited for dry weather and were able to get the new plants in before the end of the month. The **woodworkers** have built a rack to store excess cedar limbs for future projects, repaired the door knob on the Kleb house and wired together a porpoise skull to mount for display. That’s versatility! The **Yaupon’s Worst Nightmare Crew** completed another great season clearing two significant areas for reforestation, reworking the wetland trail and clearing yaupon off many young trees to stimulate their growth.

**A Closer Look at Nature**

The class in March was about bats but occurred too late in the month to report in this newsletter. The final two classes for the spring semester will be April 19: Life in the Pond, and May 17: Aphids and Aphid Eaters (Ladybugs, Lacewings, and More!).

**A Closer Look at History**

The March class was all about Texas history since March 2 is Texas Independence Day. The kids learned about the events of the revolution in 1836. To help them get a better feel for how events and battles unfolded, they imagined themselves as participants and traveled with Stephen F. Austin to Mexico City where he was thrown in jail. They then pretended they were present for the battle at the Alamo.
They “traveled” to Washington-on-the-Brazos and signed the Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836.

Then they were with Fannin on the prairie at Coleto Creek, defeated in battle, captured, and marched back to Goliad.
The kids with Fannin are caught in the open prairie and captured by the Mexican army. Photo by Fred Collins.

The class gave the kids some key facts about the Texas revolution. The interactive nature of the class should help them remember some of these events. Hopefully the experience made Texas history not just names and dates to memorize but memories to appreciate and savor.

For the April class they will travel with Sam Houston on his way to San Jacinto and Texas Independence. Future programs will be April 5: The Road to San Jacinto, and May 3: World’s Fairs and Expositions.

History Discussion Group
The discussion in March was led by Jay Gavitt, historian and former teacher. Since March is National Women’s History Month, Jay talked about women’s suffrage in the West. Our discussion got off to a lively start as participants examined laws governing women’s property rights in Texas. This included laws protecting women’s property from the overreach of husbands. We also looked at the benefits of not being an American woman: Spanish/Mexican women enjoyed property rights not existing in the United States at that time. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the women’s suffrage movement was its early success in the West, and its eastward migration, countering the western migration of American pioneers in search of Manifest Destiny.

Our next history discussion on April 12 will be led by Fred Collins, park director and author, and will discuss Gail Borden. Borden was a key figure in Austin’s Colony, the first newspaper publisher in Texas and the creator of Eagle Brand Milk and the Borden Milk company. The May 10 discussion will be about Mexican Revolution hero Pancho Villa, based on the book The General and the Jaguar: Pershing’s Hunt for Pancho Villa: A True Story of Revolution and Revenge by Eileen Welsome.

Houston Archeology Society Project
The society used a ground penetrating radar to search for evidence of former structures on the property when they met for a workday on March 24. It is highly educational to watch them work and discuss the tools of their trade. Please check their website for future work days at Kleb Woods Nature Preserve.

German language classes
Formal German language classes continue with a German 1-A, German 1-B, and German 2-A. 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.
Birding activities

The **weekly bird walks** in March were filled with anticipation of spring migrants. The month saw the arrival of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Parula, and Black-throated Green Warbler. On every walk participants have been serenaded by a chorus of songbirds. Ruby-crowned Kinglets are especially vocal. While they often call during the winter, their beautiful song is normally heard only in the spring before they migrate north to their breeding grounds.

The March **Senior Birding Bus Trip** went to Angelina National Forest to the Boykin Springs Recreational Area in search of several piney woods specialties. We were fortunate to have good weather and with our early 5 a.m. departure arrived at Boykin Springs in time to hear the last of the dawn chorus. The group soon heard one of their target birds, Bachman’s Sparrow. Unfortunately, it took considerable effort before they got brief looks of this pine-savannah bird. One photographer was quick enough on the trigger to capture an image of the elusive bird. This uncommon species is restricted to grassy pine stands in the southeastern U.S. and is only found in a few areas of Texas. The group was eventually able to locate a pair of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, but the birds were high in a distant pine and the views were less than hoped for. The difficulty with the birds was compensated by lovely scenery. Dogwoods, fringe trees, and azaleas were in bloom. The many beautiful butterflies and dragonflies were a delight, especially for the photographers.
The group went to Martin Dies Jr. State Park for lunch and some afternoon birding. The seniors were teased by the almost continual song of several Yellow-throated Warblers, but the birds proved to be almost impossible to find. Near the picnic area, they found many water birds that swelled the day’s species list. Of particular interest was a Bald Eagle that buzzed the group and allowed the photographers a great opportunity.

At left, the view of B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir from Martin Dies State Park. Photo by Jean-Michel Lanskin. At right, a Bald Eagle makes a close approach. Photo by Albert Holba.

**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 **April 6** trip to the Austin area to search for Golden-cheeked Warbler (5 AM to 5 PM) as well as the **April 27** and **May 11** trips, which will both go to the coast to look for spring migrants. You may also now sign up for the **June 1** trip which will be around the Greater Houston Area to search out exotic species like Egyptian Goose, Indian Peacock, Red-vented Bulbul, Northern Red Bishop and Scaly-breasted Munia. 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 February and March 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.