Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a Happy Father’s Day. We suggest a family outing to one of our many beautiful parks to celebrate the day.

May became so hot and dry we found ourselves needing to water trees until the end of the month, when Kleb picked up 5.4 inches of welcomed rain.

**Volunteer activities**
The Tuesday Volunteers have made some old-fashioned tomato cages which complement the vintage trellises in the garden, giving it an authentic 19th century feel. The rains finally allowed the garden to really take off, and harvest will soon be upon the vegetable gardeners. They are now in full weed control mode.

The Tuesday Volunteers have continued with the general maintenance of the grounds. They reworked one of the banks of our new water feature that had sunk from all of the visitors standing on it and enjoying the running stream. Volunteers had a couple of downed trees to clean up because of the thunderstorms as well. The master gardeners have been removing invasive plants from our butterfly and hummingbird gardens, transplanting native wildflowers and putting out plant identification signs. Our woodworkers have been busy in the workshop, building cabinets and shelves. They are also working on replacing our platform bird feeders, which often host raccoons in the night who are pretty tough on the platforms.

**Plant Walks**
We held two plant walks in May thanks to the volunteer leadership of two fine botanists, Charles Peterson and Paul Roling. The walks were held on a Saturday morning and a Wednesday afternoon, and both were well attended. We have had requests from participants on both walks for more. We are working on that thanks to our leaders’ generosity.

**A Closer Look at Nature**
The class in May was about aphids and the animals that eat them. Aphids are considered garden pests, but they have many natural predators that should be welcomed in your backyard. The most famous aphid eaters are ladybugs. Other aphid eaters include assassin bugs, lacewing larvae, hoverfly larvae, crab spiders, and birds. After class, the kids looked very
closely at plants to try to find aphids or aphid eaters. Unfortunately, the dry weather and late spring had not given rise to many insects. It turns out the class was a week too early, as the recent heavy rains has led to an increase in insects.

“The Closer Look at Nature” series will return in September. For summer, we have scheduled a series of Discovery Days. All of the nature topics will be by guest presenters and include live wildlife. These classes will be on certain Thursdays from 10-11 a.m. Please consult the calendar for dates and topics.

A Closer Look at History
The May class was about World’s Fairs and Expositions. The kids learned the history of these once great and significant events attended by millions. The class reviewed many of the novelties and inventions which were brought to public awareness at these exhibitions. Some were technological inventions like the telephone, while others were things we take for granted today like Belgian waffles and ice cream cones. Following the classroom session the kids visited various booths that gave them an experience similar to attending a fair. Each station represented a different world’s fair and highlighted significant products that it introduced to the public such as Cracker Jack and the Ford Mustang.
“The Closer Look at History” series will return in September. For summer we have scheduled a series of Discovery Days programs for which some of the history topics will have guest presenters, and all will include live animals or hands-on activities outdoors. These classes will be on certain Thursdays from 10-11 a.m. Please consult the calendar for dates and topics.

**History Discussion Group**

Fred Collins, Park Director and author, led the discussion of the book, *Banana, The Fate of the Fruit That Changed the World*. Written by Dan Koeppel, the book traces the banana as the fruit of knowledge in the Garden of Eden through its spread across the tropical regions of the world. It points out that it seems so illogical that a tropical fruit that spoils in seven days would become the most consumed fruit in the United States surpassing both apples and oranges in consumption. The entrepreneurs who pioneered this food revolution became rich and powerful beyond any logical bounds, and caused a continuing plague of control and interference with Latin American countries through most of the 20th century. The banana industry for almost 100 years more or less ignored diseases that threatened the cloned banana we all eat. Today the threat is being taken more seriously by international organizations that are more concerned about feeding the masses in Africa and Southeast Asia who depend on bananas for much of their calories.


**German Language Classes**

Formal German language classes concluded in May. We will offer these classes again in the fall. 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. There will be three Introduction to German Language classes this summer. If you have been curious about taking German, we suggest you attend one of these summer classes to get a feel for the language. These classes are one hour and you only need attend one of the three. 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 early May are held with great anticipation of migratory birds. May 5 was a good day with 16 individual migratory warblers along with an assortment of other spring migrants. May 9 also had some migrants, but after that all of the birds seen on May walks have been limited to summer residents.

The second late April Senior Birding Bus Trip went to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, Houston Audubon Society Sanctuaries at High Island and finally to Rollover Pass. The variety of habitat insured a great variety of birds, but the group was lucky enough to catch a migratory bird fallout. The combined total species list for the day by the participants was 155 species. To the delight of all those on board, this was our highest total ever for a bus trip. The list included these species: eight Flycatchers, five Vireos, five Thrushes, 21 Warblers, two Tanagers, two Grosbeaks, two Buntings, and two Orioles. One of the final birds of the day was a rarely seen male Bobolink at Yacht Basin Road.

Our May trip was to Texas Ornithological Society's Sabine Woods Sanctuary. This wonderful place is an isolated oak mott just behind the Gulf marshes, exactly one mile from the beach near Sabine Pass in Jefferson County. When migratory birds come across the Gulf and need a patch of woods to feed and rest in it is the only rest stop for miles around. Birds were scarce in the morning but a few were found. A Red-eared Slider turtle was determined not to be disturbed as it dug a hole and deposited its eggs right next to a bench where several participants sat. We were not so fortunate with the weather, and there was no fall out on this trip. Thus, the group spent more time at Sea Rim State Park where they found a nice variety of shorebirds. In addition to the shorebirds, the group encountered several Soras, a variety of Terns, several waders including Least Bittern and Roseate Spoonbill, and a walking Common Nighthawk. The day's total species count was 103, making it a nice day but admittedly a bit of a letdown after the spectacular late April trip.
At left, a breeding plumage Dunlin sandpiper. At right, a four spotted Pennant dragonfly. Photos by Kirsten Tucker.

At left, phalaropes usually forage while swimming but this one is chasing flies. At right, a breeding plumage Stilt Sandpiper. Photos by Albert Holba.

At left, a female American Redstart. At right, an egg-laying Red-eared Slider would not let observers keep her from her mission. Photos by Albert Holba.

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

You may now signup for the **July 6** trip which will travel to Jones State Forest to search for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and points east near the Lower Trinity River in search of Swallow-tailed Kites, and end the day at Baytown Nature Center.
The August 24 trip will be to Lake Somerville, Bryan Lake, the Biodiversity Teaching and Research Collection at Texas A&M University. 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 June and July 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.