Steve Radack, Commissioner
Harris County Precinct 3

Kleb Woods Nature Preserve

November 2018

Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a Happy Thanksgiving. May the joys of the holiday season reverberate in your spirit and throughout your home. October was cool and wet. The wet is normal, but the cool was record setting. It has been a great break from the summer heat and welcomed by most. The coolness has not stopped plant growth, and Kleb Woods is green and lush with almost no hint of fall color yet. However, many winter birds, riding the cold fronts from the north, have returned for winter.

We hope you join us for “Diggin' Old Stuff” on November 3. This fall festival has been moved back a couple of weeks this year in hopes of cooler weather and less conflict with other events. The flyer is attached to the end of the newsletter and can also be found on Commissioner Radack’s home page www.pct3.com.

Volunteer activities
The Tuesday Volunteers were as busy as ever, even without the pressures our fall event preparations usually bring. They continue to repair boardwalks, trim trails and perform many maintenance tasks. If the summer heat has kept you away, now is the perfect time to participate in their productive fun. The Vegetable Gardeners will switch the garden over to winter mode in November and always welcome additional hands for the changeover task. They often work on Saturdays if you would like to join them. With the wet October weather, the garden is full and lush. The Master Gardeners have continued upkeep of the Butterfly and Hummingbird flower beds as well as the Heritage Garden near the 1896 Kleb House. They will be planting and nurturing native species and working on reforestation efforts this fall. They would appreciate extra help. Master Naturalists continue to control invasive and exotic species, and fall is a great work time for them. The woodworkers continue building shelves and working on maintenance items. Our “Yaupon’s Worst Nightmare Crew” will start up on Monday December 3, if you would like to join them and get a good workout at the same time.

A Closer Look at History
The October class was about Texas state symbols. The kids learned how something comes to be recognized as a state symbol and were surprised to find out that Texas has 74 official symbols! Participants tested their knowledge of some while learning the history and meaning behind them. They heard about the contest that chose “Texas, Our Texas” as the State Song in 1929. Some sang along while listening to it. Many were amused by the resolution declaring Chili the State Dish, which claimed you can only be a real Texan if you appreciate Chili, and the only “real Chili” is made in Texas (without beans!). After learning about the battle to make the Bluebonnet the State Flower, the kids went outside and planted Bluebonnet seeds.

At left, kids plant Bluebonnet seeds and pat them in. At right the entire class participated in planting Bluebonnet seeds. Photos by Megan Ahlgren.
Closer Look at Nature
The class in October was all about Dragonflies. Participants learned all of the amazing biological features Dragonflies have which combine to make them one of the most successful predators in the animal world. They also learned about the 11,000 mile round-trip migration of Wandering Gliders, which is the longest migration of any insect and can take 4 generations to complete. Next, the class went outside to look for migrating Dragonflies. Migration is highly dependent on favorable weather conditions, so although hundreds of Common Darners were passing through the park the week before, the kids only found a few on the day of the class.

History Discussion Group
The October discussion was led by Karli Pittman, Kleb Woods and Cypress Top Historian. She discussed the book, *Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices: Women on Texas Cotton Farms, 1900-1940*. The discussion ranged from women’s roles in homes, including courtship, marriage and child bearing, to their work in cotton fields. The group also contrasted how different women’s lives in the city were from those on the farm. The book provides wonderful insights into the Kleb Farm and its neighbors during the period. Some of the participants shared stories of aunts and grandmothers who had experienced challenges described in the book.

Our next History Discussion Group on November 8 will be led by Harold Woods. Mr. Woods has a complex resume which includes being the organizer of the “Doolittle Raid Reunions” for many years. He came to know many of the Raiders and will share their stories and insights to this exclusive club of World War II Heroes.

German language classes
Formal German Classes are in full swing including 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. If you have any other questions, please contact Linda Martin-Rust at klebwoods@pct3.com.

Native Plant Walks
These walks are designed to introduce you to plant identification and, for more advanced naturalists, instruction about what characters distinguish similar species. They are led by two highly competent Botanists who have volunteered their services. The walks travel down various trails at Kleb Woods, and the Botanists identify various plants. More often than not, they share tidbits about the plant’s biology, uses and folklore. One interesting find was Water Fern, a new plant for one of the leaders. The walks concluded for the fall in October but will resume in March.

Birding activities
The weekly bird walks in October attracted good participation. The increase in participants corresponds with an increase in birds. Migration is in full swing, and more winter birds arrive with each passing cold front.

A Roseate Spoonbill, one of three that graced Moccasin Marsh in October. Photo by Kirsten Tucker.
Some other fall migrants seen this month include: Greater White-fronted Goose, Wood Stork, Broad-winged Hawk, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Gray Catbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wilson’s Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Indigo Bunting.

Wintering birds that have returned include: Rufous Hummingbird, Northern Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, House Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Thrasher and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

The September Senior Birding Bus Trip was on the 28th, too late for the previous newsletter. That trip was to Coleto Creek Park and Lake Texana. The morning worked out well, but the afternoon was cut short by scattered showers that scattered our birders. At Coleto Creek the birders found a mixed flock of migrants that included Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Black-throated Green Warbler. They also found a couple of brilliant Baltimore Orioles. Other highlights were Inca Dove and Belted Kingfisher. A Great Blue Heron with an apparent fish barb sticking out of its throat was an interesting bird. Butterflies and wildflowers made the trip even more enjoyable. The group had lunch at a seafood restaurant in Edna and were surprised at the quality of food in such an unassuming café. After lunch they tried birding in a wilderness park on Lake Texana. While they heard a few birds, including White-eyed Vireo and Barred Owl, the showers started and ran the birders back to the bus. A few attempts were made at other spots, but the rains cut the trip short and they headed home.
The October trip was an unusual one to Quintana, Freeport and then an evening program at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Lake Jackson. The bus left at noon and returned at 11 PM. The seniors first visited Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary. They are building a new observation tower there, so most of the park was inaccessible and the birds were scarce. Next, participants stopped at the Quintana jetty to study the Gulls, Terns, and shorebirds. The highlights were a couple of Magnificent Frigatebirds soaring past the jetty and pestering the Gulls. After a quick, unsuccessful stop to look for Monk Parakeets in Freeport, participants had a delicious dinner at a restaurant. The final stop, and the real highlight of the trip, was at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory to hear Kevin Karlson talk about his new book, *Birds of Prey: Hawks, Eagles, Falcons, and Vultures of North America*. The crowd got a preview of some of the many spectacular photos in the book and were regaled with stories of how some of these photos came to be.

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

There are currently waiting lists for the **November 9** trip to Sabine Woods and Sea Rim State Park and the **December 7** trip to go to see the Whooping Cranes in the Aransas area. You may now signup for the **January 4** trip to Williamson County to look for Mountain Plover, Burrowing Owl, and McCown’s Longspur. 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 November and December 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.
Commissioner Steve Radack invites you to
Diggin’ Old Stuff Heritage Festival

Discover “The Way We Was.”
Celebrate early Texas culture at Kleb Woods Nature Center.
Saturday, November 3, 2018 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Dulcimers & Bluegrass**
Enjoy music from 9 a.m. to noon with the Northwest Harris County Dulcimer Society, the Lone Star Strummers, and the Cy-Fair Jammers. Then, from noon to 3 p.m., jam with Bluegrass Rising.

**Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site**
Play 19th century games.

**Texas Water History Lab**
Learn about the importance of water in early Texas history and see how an aquifer works.

**Cypress Historical Society**
Join members on a tour of the 1836 Kleb home site.

**Houston Archeological Society**
Society members will supervise an authentic archeology dig. Kids 7 years and up may participate. Bring gardening gloves.

**The Kleb Woods Blacksmiths**
Forge a keepsake with the blacksmiths.

**WHAT:**
Celebrate early Texas culture with historians, blacksmiths, and more. Visitors can also pick and comb cotton, use natural plant dyes to make your own bandana, make candles as an early Texan did, watch a woodworker use human-powered equipment, and test your early Texas knowledge to identify hand tools and archeological finds.

**WHERE:**
Kleb Woods Nature Center, 20303 Draper Rd. at Mueschke Rd., Tomball 77377
http://www.pct3.com/parks/kleb-park/

**WHEN:**
Saturday, November 3, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

FREE admission. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own refreshments. Drinks and snacks will not be sold. We recommend you wear closed-toe shoes, comfortable clothing, and apply bug spray and sunscreen.

For additional information, call Kleb Woods Nature Center at (281) 357-5324.