Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*. As you look into the night sky this month and contemplate the Christmas Star, you might be surprised by a falling star. The Geminids Meteor Shower can be spectacular on a cold clear night. It is considered by many the best shower in the heavens, producing as many as 120 meteors per hour at its peak. What’s even better is that the falling stars come in multiple colors. The shower runs annually from December 7-17. Its peak this year is the night of the 13th and morning of the 14th. Since the first quarter moon sets shortly after midnight, we should have dark skies for an excellent early morning show. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Gemini, but may appear from anywhere.

**Diggin’ Old Stuff**

This annual event was moved from October to November, and it seemed to pay off with cooler weather and greater attendance. The event was highlighted by the *Houston Archeology Society’s dig*. About a dozen of their volunteers had a display of artifacts and operated the dig where the children could participate under their direct supervision. They were excited to find artifacts that indicated Native Americans were here prior to recorded history. These are the first such items ever discovered at Kleb. We again had the North Harris County Regional Water Authority’s water trailer here. This wonderful exhibit explains how the history of the area is directly tied to water resources. It’s a very interactive history experience for visitors. Other activities included calligraphy, candle making, cotton ginning, natural dyes and old-fashioned games like button whizzers and walking on stilts. The day was serenaded by dulcimer players in the morning and bluegrass jammers in the afternoon. It was an enjoyable family friendly day enjoyed by more than 300 visitors.

Above, the archeology dig site with soil sifters in the foreground. Photo by Jim Pulliam.
At left, the archeologists and visitors carefully excavate the soil. Photo by Albert Holba.

At right, archeologists and kids sift through the excavated soil looking for small artifacts. Photo by Jim Pulliam.

At left, the blacksmith shows kids how to work copper. Photo by Albert Holba.

At right a girl uses two rocks to paleo-forge a piece of copper. Photo by Jim Pulliam.

At left, a candle making experience. Photo by Jim Pulliam. At right, kids removing seeds from cotton using the cotton gin. Photo by Albert Holba.
Volunteer activities
The Tuesday Volunteers are trying to stay busy, but there has been a string of bad weather that has rained on their parade. They do like the cooler temperatures and are eager to work on projects when the weather permits. The early freezes on November 14 and 15 have pretty much brought the summer vegetable garden to an abrupt end. The vegetable gardeners removed the dead plants and have begun winter crops and spring plans. 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 the cotton gin. Students learned how cotton evolved in the south from a secondary crop into the number one cash crop. Eli Whitney’s simple and small cotton gin transformed the production process that made that change possible. They heard the story of how Eli Whitney’s attempt to make money with his invention led to a patent, and how the exorbitant prices he and his partner charged for ginning cotton led to a great deal of competition. Through all of this, cotton production in the United States doubled every ten years from 1850 through the 1950s until the United States supplied ¾ of the world market. Following the presentation, the kids tried their hand at processing cotton. First they picked cotton and tried removing the seeds by hand. Then, they ran it through a replica of an Eli Whitney Cotton Gin, which was built by our volunteer woodworkers. Finally, they combed the fibers to prepare it to be turned into thread.
Closer Look at Nature
There was no class in November. The December 6 class will be “All about Sapsuckers”.

History Discussion Group
The November History Discussion Group was led by Harold Woods. Mr. Woods related his experience with some of the last surviving Doolittle Raiders. These raiders had flown their bombers off the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Hornet and bombed Tokyo in April 1942 as a retaliatory strike for Pearl Harbor. After dropping their bombs on Tokyo, all 15 bombers flew toward China but ran out of fuel and parachuted from their planes or were shot down. One crew made it to land in Russia. Amazingly, most of them survived. One of Harold’s close friends is Dick Cole, Jimmy Doolittle’s Co-Pilot on the raid. He went on to fly “The Hump” and participate in the air invasion of Burma, two of the most hazardous duties an airman could have during the entire war. He was eventually persuaded to tell his tale in a book published in 2015 when he was 101 years old. Another friend of Harold's was Hugh O'Brien (aka Wyatt Earp in the TV series) who was the youngest Marine Drill Sargent ever. He lied about his age when he enlisted and got away with it. Mr. Woods’s stories were highly appreciated by the record attendance of 31 people.

Harold Woods describes the Raider reunions and displays some of his photos and certificates from the reunions. Photo by Kendra Kocab.

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.

Birding Activities
The weekly bird walks in November were hampered by some cold and rainy weather. Our stalwart regulars persevered and were rewarded with winter arrivals and late migrants. Wintering birds that have returned in November included: Blue-headed Vireo, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Brown Creeper, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Lincoln’s Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Orange-crowned Warbler. A highlight of the November 21 walk was a Bald Eagle soaring over Draper Road.

The November Senior Birding Bus Trip was to Sabine Woods, Sea Rim State Park and Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. The weather was cool, windy and threatening rain or light rain throughout the day. Small songbirds were hard to come by, but the group persisted and eventually ended with a list of 91 species. One of the more interesting aspects of the day was the strong movement of waterfowl on the coast. The group saw hundreds of Scaup flying up the coast at Sea Rim State Park. They also encountered a flock of more than 250 Gadwall in the marshes at the park. At Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge they found about 50 Fulvous Whistling Ducks, which normally have already headed to Central America by this time of year.
Signing Up for Senior Birding Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)

There is currently a waiting list for 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 and the February 1 trip which to the coast to look for Scoters, Gannets and wintering Gulls. 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 December and January can be found on the 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 for more information.