



# Riverside Nature Notes

The Riverside  
Nature Center

Volume 22  
November, 2006

## 2006 Down By the Riverside in Review by Priscilla Stanley



The major activity at our annual Down By the Riverside Event is our Native Plant Sale. Since Fall is the best time of the year to plant trees in the Hill Country, we were able to offer for sale over 200 trees and shrubs representing 40 different native species, including some hard-to-find species as well as some old favorites. There were also over 800 perennial plants on sale from 34 different, mostly native species.

Thanks to the wonderful support by our supporters, most of these plants were sold to patrons from both near and far. In fact it was reported that some folks came from as far as Junction, San Antonio and San Marcos. All these plants should brighten many gardens and landscapes in the coming years, since

they are water-thrifty, low maintenance, and grow very well in our often extreme climatic conditions.

This year's spectacular snout butterfly migrations seemed to have piqued interest in our lovely Hill Country butterflies because the presentation on "Know Your Hill Country Butterflies" by Master Naturalist, Thomas Collins, drew a large crowd. There was also an excellent presentation earlier in the morning on "Native Plants to Attract Butterflies" by Master Naturalist, Sandra Magee. The last presentation of the day was concerning the new "green" Ford called the Escape. Brady Huddleston from Ken Stoepel Ford talked about the many benefits of driving this newest hybrid car, and he was able to bring one for our visitors' perusal.

A highlight of this year's event was the children's activities taking place in the Nature Lab. The kids enjoyed working on several different wooden building projects **donated by Lowe's**, and they even got to paint them. Thank you, Lowe's!

Some folks saw the Guadalupe River from a different perspective as they glided under the towering cypresses during their canoe rides up and down the river.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Kerrville and the surrounding areas for their support in purchasing plants and participating in the other nature activities at our Nature Festival. We also want to thank our many volunteers who made this event possible, including Riverside members, Texas Master Naturalists, the First Presbyterian Youth Group, as well as students from Schreiner University.

Be sure to mark your calendars for Sat., April 21st, 2007 for RNC's annual Earth Day Celebration!





## Meet RNC's Volunteer of the Month, Mary Ellen Summerlin by Barbara Staggs



It doesn't take long after meeting Mary Ellen Summerlin to realize that she is a multi faceted, very talented person. She is not a native Texan, but as the saying goes, "she got here as fast as she could". Mary Ellen actually grew up in Iowa. However, her mother was a native Texan, and that is what brought her to Abilene Christian College to get her degree in English. She eventually met her husband, Tim, here, and they married on August 1, 1968. They started on their journey together by moving to Connecticut where they stayed for four years. While there, Mary Ellen worked at the Sterling Memorial Library, Mother Goose Day Care and East Haven Kindergarten. They moved back to Texas to the Port Arthur area and both did various jobs while they were trying to find their career niches. Mary Ellen did substitute teaching and did grading for a teacher. What was initially a stop gap job in Beaumont turned into 21 years of living in Port Arthur. They ended up buying Tim's parents' house, and Mary Ellen's career in politics began.

She was encouraged to run for the Board of Alderman position for Griffin Park, a suburb of Port Arthur, and she won!. Port Arthur wanted to incorporate Griffin Park so this was a great political learning experience. Not one to be idle, during this time she also went back to college to get a teaching certificate. She next ran for the pos-

ition of Port Arthur city council member. After sitting next to the mayor at the meetings, she was convinced she could run for mayor, and in 1990 she won! She served a two year term, but then the terms were changed to three years. She ran for mayor a 2nd time and won AGAIN! In 1994 after serving two years of that three year term, her husband, Tim, was offered a job in Chattanooga, Tennessee, so they had to move. Mary Ellen loved her years of political service and learned a great deal about public administration.

In Tennessee, Mary Ellen decided to apply to work with social services. She had worked with this group in Port Arthur where she discovered they did a lot to help their local communities. She saw how valuable their services can be to a city's population,. Subsequently when she learned the City government of Chattanooga was very progressive, working with their social service system became something Mary Ellen felt strongly about doing. She worked to receive her Masters Degree in Public Administration, but within a month of receiving her degree, they found themselves moving to Kerrville because Tim had been offered the job of Provost at Schreiner University. He became President just 1 1/2 years later.

Being the active lady that she is, Mary Ellen became very involved in the City of Kerrville. She joined First Presbyterian Church where she met Jean West. Jean encouraged her to apply for the part time job of General Manager of RNC. She had enjoyed working in Public Administration, so she felt this job would be a good fit. Her experience at RNC was a very positive one. She saw her four years as a period of transition, healing and growth. The facilities were great, and there was no debt. She feels she learned a great deal about many things, but especially about native plants. She took classes in accounting and learned Excel. Her thoughts now are that during her 4 years, RNC became a stronger organization. Although she's not

been employed at RNC for the past 2 years, she did continue her work at RNC by being a Board Member. As of October, ME is no longer an RNC Board Member. However, she still promised to be a volunteer.

Luckily, Mary Ellen continues to be very involved in our community. At the First Presbyterian Church she is an elder, a Sunday school teacher, and a choir member. She also works with the Home Opportunity Board which is an organization that works with low to moderate income families in new single family housing projects. She was elected to the Headwaters Board in 2005, and she has become very active with mentoring in the Learning Support Services (LSS) Program at Schreiner University. This program provides paid tutors to help students with learning disabilities. Mary Ellen works about 20 hours a week teaching Philosophy and Religion. She says students in this program know they have to work harder, and she has found that they generally have a very strong desire to learn. She feels she has expanded her knowledge just by reading and studying information for the students she mentors. She encourages others to join this rewarding program that helps college students as well as helping yourself to learn new things of interest.

Along the diverse path that the Summerlin family has traversed, they have been graced with three wonderful children. Sam lives in Austin and works for Apple Computers. Sarah lives in Asheville, North Carolina and is a special education teacher. Beth is going to start working on her Masters Degree soon in counseling. They also have one amazing granddaughter named Karly.

Mary Ellen has had a great positive influence on RNC and has been an insightful guide to Riverside's growth. Her sound judgment and amazing talents have helped take RNC closer to its vision—that is, "to be the recognized center for public education about Hill Country natural resources". THANK YOU, ME!



**Special thanks to the following for our wonderful DBTR Event!**

### **ORGANIZERS**

**Jim & Priscilla Stanley**  
**Andy Pesez**

### **VOLUNTEERS**

First Presbyterian Church Youth Group

Rob Lohmeyer

Jim Stanley

Barbara Lowenthal

Betty Gardner

Susan Longacre

Lyda Slayton

Linda Riner

Nancy Vaughan

Marguerite Belec

Leanne Beauxbeannes

Nina Wagner

Phyllis Muska

Priscilla Stanley

Dorothy Akers

Pat Perkison

Guy Harrison

Gary Akers

Jim Laughlin

Julia Russell

Karen Millikan

Mary Ellen Terrell

Kim Mascaritola

Zell Hawkins

Megan Gooden

Diane McMahan

Debra Parmley

Norma Bruns

Lloyd Hemmert

Sharon Corley

Melinda Wasson

Walter Workman

Kay White

Dusty Gilliam

Otis Fox

Priscilla Bailey

Roger MacAskie

Ann Stock

Crystal Peterson

Jennifer Bone

John Pardue

John Quinby

Bob Dewers

Angelo Falzarano

Peggy Robinson

Melinda Kilpatrick

Barbara Noblin

Elsa Cepeda

Liz Boulware

**Welcome, New  
Members To RNC!!**

**Mr. William Gayle**

**Mr. & Mrs. Jack Hampton**

**Dr. & Mrs. Byron L. Howard**

**Mr. & Mrs. Richard Johnson**

**Mr. Stanley Neuse**

**Barbara Noblin**

**Debra Parmley**

**Barbara Robbins**

**Susan Tefft**

**Barbara Wilhelm**

**A Very Special THANK YOU  
for the Gift goes to...  
our October donors:**

**Mrs. Edith Bettinger**

**Elaine Boyer**

**Doris Bozarth**

**Jim Burton**

**Jim Criswell**

**Peggy R. Grosser**

**Kerrville Junior Service Guild**

**Stewart McMillen**

**Moyer Tree Farm**

**Irving Munn**

**Mr. & Mrs. John Quinby**

**Malcolm Sparks**

**Stuart-Griffin-Perlitz Foundation**

**Anonymous Donor through US Bank**

**THANK  
YOU**

### **DBRT Volunteers continued...**

Jack Millikan

Karen Millikan

Laurie Pesez

Sandy Peña

Gwynn Jackson

Scott Magee

Cynthia Johnson

Julia Campbell

Sandra Magee

Joyce Sandlin

Andy Pesez

Bill Hausler

Polly Brooks



**The Riverside Nature Center**

**Riverside Nature Center**  
150 Francisco Lemos Street  
Kerrville, Texas 78028

**Phone:** 830-257-4837  
**Fax:** 830-257-4837  
**Email:** rnca@ktc.com

**Website:** www.riversidenaturecenter.org

**Office and Store Hours:**  
9AM– 4PM Monday— Friday;  
10AM-3PM Saturday and Sunday  
TREE TRAIL open daily DAWN to DUSK  
**FREE ADMISSION !!!**

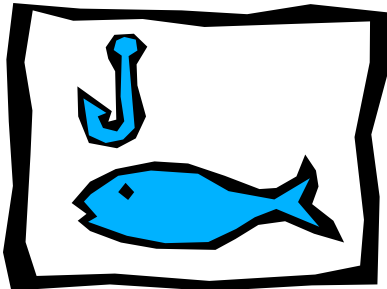
RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER'S MISSION IS  
TO FOSTER GREATER PUBLIC AWARENESS  
AND APPRECIATION OF THE HILL  
COUNTRY'S NATURAL RESOURCES  
THROUGH EDUCATION, INFORMATION,  
AND BY EXAMPLE.

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 15  
Kerrville, Texas

## COMING EVENTS MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### New Adult Learning for Living Series

Sat., Dec. 9, 10—11 a.m.  
The World of Fly Fishers,  
by Dr. Guy Harrison



### Brown Bag Lunch & Learn Series

Thurs., Jan. 11th—noon to 1 p.m.  
What You Need to Learn  
About Your Computer Printer,  
by Ray Curtis,  
Manager of Cartridge World



**Entry fee for both programs is  
\$3.00 non-members (1/2 price for  
members)!**

**Bring your lunch, & we'll provide you  
with a drink & desert!!!**