



# Riverside Nature Notes

Riverside  
Nature Notes

Volume 27  
April 2007

## Golden Eagle Landscaping Celebrates 25 Years

by Barbara Staggs



The Golden Eagle Landscape Company was established by Hal and Janet Robinson in 1982. They had just moved from Arizona to Kerrville and knew that they wanted to own and operate their own business. Most of their lives they had been the kind of people who loved the outdoors and spent a lot of time working with plants in their yards. Thus, the idea for starting a landscaping business was born. They leased a place on the corner of Methodist Encampment Road and Junction Highway and opened for business with just the two of them, one other employee, and an old truck. Both Janet and Hal had grown up in families that ran their own businesses, so they knew how this kind of operation worked. Their children were all enlisted to help, just as Janet and Hal had done growing up. Janet states that her mother used to tell her that on Saturdays she could stay home and clean house or come help at work. Work sounded more fun than cleaning, and Janet learned valuable bookkeeping skills that would be very helpful with the new landscaping business.

Dr. Bob Dewers had just retired to Kerrville when Hal met him, and Bob became a mentor to both Hal and Janet, imparting knowledge he had gained over the years and giving

them good advice. This was most helpful in guiding them toward a philosophy they had lived by in Arizona--that of water-wise planting. They were used to the watering restrictions of only so much grass per yard in the subdivision where they lived. Things were very different here in Texas where most plant material came from California and Florida. However, due to drought and the population growth that was taking place in the Kerrville area, developers began to see the need to look at water conservation as well as using native plants that are better suited to this drought-prone ecosystem. This fit well with the mission of Golden Eagle Landscape Company--to strive to provide the highest quality service that is in harmony with the natural resources of the Hill Country.

After a number of years as their business continued to grow, the Robinsons were able to purchase the land at their present location, which is 3054 Junction Highway. Today their employees number seventeen. Janet and Hal have always set aside a portion of the budget each year for employee training. They have on-staff designers and a team of artisans with skills in masonry, carpentry, plumbing and electrical skills. They also have several Texas Certified Nurserymen on staff. Attention to professional development, knowledge of industrial trends, and involvement in their local community has helped them maintain an awareness of various innovations in the field of landscaping and having a well-trained staff is another essential element in their continued success.

One year for their anniversary

Janet asked Hal to take a trip together to the Bamberger Ranch in Johnson City. He wasn't sure at the time if this was a suitable gift, but once they went, they both fell in love with the place. Since that time, they have sent members of their management team from Golden Eagle to training seminars and numerous workshops there. They strongly believe in the work being done at the Bamberger Ranch as well as at the Riverside Nature Center so they are proud to sponsor a program and book signing at RNC on May 12<sup>th</sup>. This new book is a biography of David and Margaret Bamberger and their journey toward "Selah" (the name of their ranch). This sponsorship is being done to commemorate Golden Eagle's 25th year in business.

Janet, Hal and the Golden Eagle staff have increasingly developed their landscaping philosophy toward the following goals: 1. Developing integrated designs that make the best, most conservative use of natural resources via water-wise, native plants; 2. encouraging the use of passive and/or active rainwater harvesting systems; and 3. preserving the on-site resources of each homeowner's property.

The Robinsons have been very supportive of RNC. In fact, with their help along with the help of several other volunteers, they constructed the original berms next to Lemos Street (utilizing the bamboo that had covered the original property). The Riverside staff and Board wish the Robinsons many more years of continued success in their quest of this philosophy.



## Meet RNC'S Volunteer of the Month, Janet Robinson

Edited by Barbara Staggs



Janet was born and raised in suburban Kansas City by parents who were the first generation off the farm. Her older brother and younger sister and Janet all attended Kansas State University, the first of the family ever to graduate from college. After graduation Janet served in the United States Peace Corps in Panama after training in Puerto Rico. It was a life changing experience for her. She worked with women on school garden projects and distributed treadle sewing machines from CARE, teaching women to sew and sell their products. This allowed them to earn some of the first money they had ever had of their own. Upon her return to Kansas she worked for the YWCA and as an Assistant Dean of Women at the University of Kansas during the turbulent 70's. She worked primarily in the area of human sexuality counseling with women students and organizing women's groups for day care issues and other concerns of women students. Janet received a fellowship to do graduate work in counseling at the University of Arizona in Tucson. She was on a leave of absence from her job, but after seeing Arizona and the West and going to the Grand Canyon for the first time, she knew she wasn't going back to Kansas. Janet met her husband Hal at a professional conference, and they

married and combined their families. Their children were 3,5, and 7 at the time. For the next 7 years they lived in Phoenix where Hal was a Gestalt Therapist in private practice and Janet taught male/female communication classes in the Maricopa County Junior College system and yoga classes for the Scottsdale Recreation Department. They hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon seven times over the years with friends and family and camped and hiked all over Arizona.

Wanting a smaller community and a more rural area, they came to Kerrville in 1981. Her brother had gone to law school at SMU and loved the Texas hill country. Hal had ridden around the country on a motorcycle in his younger days and also loved this area. They sold out everything and came without jobs or friends or relatives in the area. They started Golden Eagle Landscape Company in 1982. It was a very different industry at the time with most of the plant material being grown in California and Florida and St. Augustine grass the predominantly planted grass. They met Dr. Bob Dewers and became involved in the movement to plant more native and adapted plant material better suited to the area. Texas A & M and the Texas Association of Nurserymen were leading efforts to encourage local growers, and it was a rewarding time to be part of all the changes in the industry. After their children left home, Janet became involved in many local organizations working on issues that interested her such as the Hill Country Youth Ranch Auxiliary, the Friends and Faculty of Ingram Tom Moore Scholarship Program, the Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Kerr County and Executive Women's Club. She served on the committee which drafted the first water restrictions for the City of Kerrville. Janet's work with local organizations led to her being appointed by the governor to serve on the

Authority, a term that lasted seven years, the last two years as Board President. During that time, she met Mary Ellen Summerlin from the Nature Center and Barbara Quinby from the Native Plant Society, and they worked together (it was too much fun to be really called work) to re-establish a local Earth Day Celebration at the Nature Center. Janet worked with that effort for five years and this year will be its 7<sup>th</sup> year. She also served on the board of RNC for several years and continues as an advisory board member. Last year she served on Barbara Quinby's committee for the SEED fundraiser focusing on securing corporate donations. Janet is a grandmother to five and continues to be interested in women's issues, water conservation, environmental stewardship, gardening, yoga and her family.

Janet and Hal are thrilled to be able to underwrite the visit of J.D. and Margaret Bamberger as they debut the book about their work at Selah Ranch. For them, this seems the perfect way to celebrate their 25 years in business. They have both been on tours of Selah ranch and have sent members of the management team at Golden Eagle to training and seminars there. The environmental education and demonstration of the efficacy of their techniques is very important work and their energy and enthusiasm have reached thousands, especially young people. Janet and Hal hope many of you will join us on May 12<sup>th</sup> to hear their inspiring message and buy "Water From Stone". Proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit RNC (and the reader!).

**A Special THANK YOU  
for the Gift goes to  
our March donors:**

**Camp Stewart for Boys  
Center Point Garden Club  
Wes Dorman  
Hill Country Master Gardeners  
Kerr county SWCD #217  
Andre Pesez**

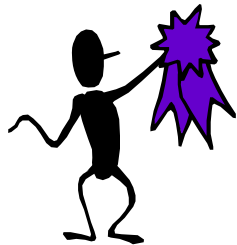
# Earth Day a BIG Success!!!



RNC's & NPSOT's Earth Day Celebration & Plant Sale was a roaring success this year! We sold nearly all of our plants—**BEFORE NOON** on Saturday! There were over 414 visitors (we counted the stickers handed out), and we had 83 kids participate in the kids' activities!

We also had 72 volunteers, and we certainly couldn't have had such a wonderful event without them! The following is a list of our fantastic volunteers to whom we extend a hearty **THANK YOU** (if you know of someone we have left out, please let us know):

Sonny Payne  
Bill Hausler  
Guy Harrison  
Stan Cobbs  
Jack Millikan  
Jean Bondy  
Jay Keen  
Jill Parker  
Barbara Staggs  
Corrina Fox  
Jim Dobie  
Wanda Dobie  
Peggy Robinson  
Linda Karst Stone  
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Stephanie Ertel  
Trudy Andrus  
Nancy Birdsall  
Anne Turner  
Alex Gathings  
Donna Falzarno  
Margaret Van Landingham  
Mary Ellen Summerlin  
Earth Day Planning Committee  
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Laurie Pesez  
Virgie McRae  
Otis Fox  
Barbara Noblin  
Maggie Tatum  
Elaine Payne  
Angelo Falzarano  
Chuck Smith  
Lloyd Hemmert  
Bill Perkison  
Pat Perkison  
John Huecksteadt  
Joyce Sandlin  
Mr. Gatti's Pizza  
Mark Stone  
Shannon Smith  
Karen Millikan  
Gwynn Jackson  
Katie Villareal  
Joy Bradford  
Susan Longacre  
Roger MacAskie  
Carolyn MacAskie

## Welcome, New Members To RNC!!

Museum of Western Art Foundation  
Anne Cassidy  
Jason Dorman  
Elizabeth Dorman  
Mr. & Mrs. Ernst H. Druebert, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. John Lewis  
Anna Rifici  
Kiyoko Takata  
Kim Thomason



**Riverside  
Nature Notes**

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**Office and Store Hours:**  
9AM– 4PM Monday—Friday;  
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TRAILS 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.



**COMING EVENTS  
MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

**Important Upcoming Events**

Fee, \$5.00 per adult, half price for  
members & children 12 & under.

**Thurs., May 10th, noon to 1pm**  
**Brown Bag Lunch Series—Hand-Made**  
**in America, A Glimpse Into Pre-Machine**  
**America—presented by Preston**  
**Weathered, experienced antiquer**

**Sat., May 12th, 10am-noon Basic**  
**Birding Skills, Part 2—presented by**  
**Bill Lindemann, expert birder**

**\*\*Sat., May 12th 3 pm Book Review**  
**of *Water from Stone*** (The story of the  
Bambergers. Sponsored by Golden Eagle Land-  
scaping in celebration of 25 Years) Admission—  
FREE! Call 257-4837 to reserve a seat!

**\*Sat., Sept 15 SEED**  
(Some Enchanted Evening Dinner)

**\*\*Sat., Oct. 13 Down By the Riverside**  
**Festival & Native Plant Sale**

**\*\*Sat., Oct. 20 Rendezvous By the River**  
(A Celebration of Archeology)

**Mark your calendars for May 5!!!** The Texas Hill Country Chapter of the Society of  
American Foresters are conducting a **workshop** on **TREE MANAGEMENT!** Topics will include:  
Identification & management of oak wilt; Tree Selection; Planting and Avoiding Construction Damage;  
Pruning Young & Mature Trees (with demonstration)! The workshop runs from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the RNC  
Visitor Center meeting room. The cost: \$30 per person.

For more information, contact Mark Duff at (830) 257-7744 or email him at [mduff@tfs.tamu.edu](mailto:mduff@tfs.tamu.edu).