



Riverside Nature Notes

The Riverside
Nature Center

Volume 28
May 2007

What Happened at the Bamberger Book Review?

The presentation on May 12, 2007 featuring the book *Water From Stone* by Jeffrey Green was a great success! We pre-registered 61 people and 72 attended. This event was sponsored by Golden Eagle Landscaping owned by Janet and Hal Robinson. Susan Sander introduced the award-winning author, Jeffrey Greene. He lives in Paris, France and is the author of the memoir "French Spirits" as well as three collections of poetry. Mr. Greene provides a portrait both lyrical and provocative, of J. David Bamberger's unlikely transformation from first, a vacuum cleaner salesman, then to co-founder and CEO of Church's Fried Chicken, to an internationally recognized conservationist.

Jeffrey Greene in turn introduced Margaret Bamberger, his sister-in-law and illustrator of the book. Her story of battling cancer while doing the illustrations for the book was very inspirational. She then introduced her husband, David Bamberger.

Mr. Bamberger is a dynamic presence and his message of taking care of the earth is delivered with evangelical zeal. His presentation included slides showing the transformation of "the sorriest piece of land in Blanco County" to the Texas Hill Country preserve today known as Selah, from the Old Testament term meaning "pause and reflect". The Bambergers entered upon this decades-long effort to restore the ecological balance of 5,500 acres that had been virtually destroyed by more than a century

of misuse. They use their resources to protect various species and educate school children as well as conservation groups, government officials, and anyone else who will listen to their central message which is, **"We must take care of the earth, and anyone can help."**

David and Margaret, have received many awards, and have been featured in several publications, but until the book, no one has told the entire story of how a man with vision transformed a place and in doing so, transformed himself.

NOTE: We still have copies of *Water From Stone* available for purchase in the Gift Shop.

Needed!

Scholarships for Summer Day Camps!!

If you would like to donate all or part of the cost to send a child to one of our summer day camps, please contact the RNC office at 257-4837. Camps include Photography & Nature Adventure at \$150 per camper, and 2 sessions of Wilderness Skills Camp at \$200 per camper. A tax deduction letter will be sent to you automatically. Please consider helping a child learn more about our wonderful world of nature!

Master Gardeners' State Conventioneers

Master Gardeners across the state of Texas descended on Kerrville last month, and RNC got to be involved in this very special event in 2 ways!

First, our Gift Shop was invited to bring items to sell to the MG's while they attended events at the Inn of the Hills. Ann Laughlin and Laurie Pesez got busy ordering extra items way in advance of the event, contacted other volunteers to help man our table, selected the items to sell. We set to sell on Thursday, and then there were specific hours designated for selling all day Friday and all day Saturday. We sold nearly \$1,000 worth of goods—a VERY successful effort!

Secondly, a group of MG's elected to come to RNC for a lunch and tour. Barbara Lowenthal volunteered to do cent, and she did a wonderful job teaching about the flora of the Texas Hill Country.

A great big thank you goes out to all who helped in this endeavor: Ann Laughlin,

Laurie Pesez, Barbara Lowenthal, Mary Ellen Summerlin, Margaret Van Landingham, Mary Hart Frost, Andy Pesez, and Jim Laughlin!



Meet RNC'S Volunteers of the Month, Jack & Karen Millikan

By Barbara Staggs



Jack R. Millikan was born in the western part of Oklahoma, but spent his early years in Tulsa. He attended Oklahoma Christian University and The University of Oklahoma where he received a BS in Electrical Engineering. While at OU, Jack was in the Navy ROTC and was the Battalion Commander. His tour in the U.S. Navy included 4 years as a Midshipman and 5 years as a Naval Aviator. He commanded a large Airborne Electronic Reconnaissance aircraft with a crew of more than 20 and at that time was the youngest EWAC (Electronic Warfare Aircraft Commander) in the Navy. Since Jack was stationed in Japan, most of his flying was in the Western Pacific, including Sea of Japan, China Sea, Tonkin Gulf, and Aleutian Islands of Alaska.

Karen was born in Houston, Texas. Her father was an Army Captain on his way to Germany but her mother was able to telegram him about her birth before he left the country. Karen did not see her father until WW II was over, but he sent photos and movies home so Karen's mother could introduce Karen to him. Karen spent her early years in Kilgore, TX as her father was employed by Gulf Oil when he came home from the service. Being part of an oil company

family, they moved around often. As a result Karen attended Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh, Pa. She graduated from Texas Women's University in Denton, TX in 1965 with a B.S. in Interior Design.

Karen's family moved back to Tulsa, Oklahoma where she had graduated from high school. She attended business school during this time and became a secretary at Skelly Oil Co. in the computer department.. It was during this time that Karen and Jack met. A friend introduced them. Jack was in Navy flight school at the time and on his way to Japan, stationed at Atsugi Naval Air Station, & flying reconnaissance missions out of Vietnam. Even though they corresponded for a year and a half during this time, Karen became engaged to another young man. When she enlightened Jack on this subject, he immediately got leave and flew back to Tulsa to change Karen's mind. They have been happily married for 39 years.

Jack took Karen to Japan with him for their first 2 years together. Upon his discharge from the Navy, he returned to the University of Oklahoma to get his MBA in finance. He went to work with Gulf Oil in Reston, Va., and was transferred to Reading, PA., and then Philadelphia before moving to Beaumont, TX and then to Houston.

During this time, Karen began her volunteer career. She joined the Reading Junior League became a docent at the Reading Historical Society, and began giving tours to school children twice a week. She also gave her time one evening at week at the local hospital working with patients in the Psychiatric Ward. She and Jack worked together with the youth in their church taking them on retreats. When they moved to Houston,

Karen was once again a very busy volunteer working with children's theater, involved with youth programs in their church, and producing and editing a cookbook for Women for Eastern European Mission.

Jacks' work with Gulf Oil was in Marketing and then Refining, His work experiences with Gulf included marketing, planning, and refining, coordinating, and finance. In 1994 after Chevron purchased Gulf Oil, Jack & Karen moved to Walnut Creek, California. Karen once again volunteered, this time at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. Her career as "the Snake Lady " was now beginning! As a reptile team member she cared weekly for the collection of snakes, turtles, tortoises, lizards, frogs, newts and salamanders. Karen ended up volunteering at the museum for 10 years, and during this time she became convinced that stewardship for the earth God created was a personal responsibility that cannot be ignored.

Jack worked for Chevron in the Marketing Division and at Chevron Headquarters. Work experiences with Chevron were in Special Projects, Operations, Transportation and Purchasing. He retired from Chevron in 1999. After retiring, cruising became a favorite mode of travel for both of the Millikans. However, in 2004 Karen and her mother were on an excursion in the Texas Hill Country, and both of them fell in love with Kerrville. Within a month they had found a new home and sold their home in California.

Karen got involved at RNC because she wanted to continue her community service and wanted to learn more about the new environment in which she now lived. She met Cass Keen at the monthly Rim Rock Ladies luncheon (a neighborhood group), and as luck would have it, Cass and she were seated next to each other. Cass invited Karen to visit RNC, and immediately Karen knew she had found a good fit for her desire to volunteer. The Millikans became members of RNC, and in a subsequent newsletter, Cass made a plea for someone to help take care
(continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 2)

of two red-eared slider turtles that had been donated to the nature center. Karen knew this was something she could do very well given her previous training, so she began the "Turtle Team". Each week the turtle enclosure is cleaned thoroughly, and the boys are taken outside to exercise. Light features were added to their indoor habit., and a marked improvement was noticed in their shell health. A kiddie pool was requested, and RNC members came forward to meet that need as well. The pools offered the turtles a longer period of time outdoors and more exposure to sunlight. Karen's commitment to RNC is, consequently, well-established. As part of Earth Day celebrations last year, it was decided to feature snakes. Karen installed her personal snake, Chunker, as RNC's Snake Ambassador, and he was quite a hit! As part of the RNC's summer day camp program last year, a tarantula was added into RNC's "collection of live critters". Last fall a family from Dallas donated a female Texas Alligator Lizard named Lizzie, and she has become another very useful educational tool. Nearly all of the live critters have been in captivity most of their lives and consequently require human care for a good quality of life. Wild animals do not make good pets, so visitors are encouraged to LOOK, LEARN and LEAVE ALONE when finding living things in the wild. Cass once gifted Karen with a plaque that reads, "There are many things in life that will catch your eye, but only a few will catch your heart—pursue those!" Karen feels that being a volunteer at Riverside allow s her to fulfill her "heart" pursuits, and being called "the Snake Lady " is her most prized title!

Jack's activities over time found him teaching Bible classes wherever they lived. He is now President of the Board of Eastern European Mission, President of the Board for Center for Church Growth, Chairman of the Finance Committee at the Kerrville Church of Christ, a member of the Kerr County Cactus & Succulent Society, and a board member at RNC. He has completed training as a Texas Master Naturalist and is working toward his certification. Jack was co-chairman for the most recent RNC Earth Day Celebration.

In his spare time Jack enjoys reading, golf, tennis, travel and landscaping. He says he finds landscaping and gardening in the limestone hills of Kerrville much more of a challenge than the loamy soils of Northern California where he grew artichokes, grapes, oranges, grapefruit, peaches, plums, apricots and tomatoes nearly year-round. He plans to try his hand with cactus gardening in the coming year.

RNC is blessed to have two such dedicated volunteers with such a variety of talents and knowledge and who are so giving of their time. Thank you Karen and Jack!!



With so many wonderful volunteers for Earth Day some people were inadvertently left off the "Thank You" list. We would like to add:

Priscilla Bailey
Shay Tindall
Trudy Andrus

MORE THANK YOU'S to our April Donors:

Julia and William Campbell
Cathy Downs
Hill Country Master Gardeners
Robert Howell
Jay Keen
Madrone Nursery
Scott and Sandra Magee
William Matthews
Moyer Tree Farm
Sonny Payne
Andy and Laurie Pesez
Richard E. Redmond
Schumacher's Hill Country Gardens
Kathrine Seale
Jim Stanley

Welcome, New Members To RNC!!



**Dr. and Mrs. Chris Avery
Beth Cooley
Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Firkins
Alan and Grant Hodel
Wanda Kirkpatrick
Mr. and Mrs. Jason Perry
Kay and Curtis Talley-Foos
Stone Ridge Estates Association**



The Riverside Nature Center

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Office and Store Hours:
9AM- 4PM Monday—Friday;
10AM-3PM Saturday and Sunday
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.

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**COMING EVENTS
MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**



Sunday, June 3rd from 3 —5 p.m.
Reception at the Riverside Nature Center
For long-time member and supporter,
Edith Bettinger

Important Upcoming Events

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



Sat., May 12th, 10 am-noon
'Reducing the Fire in Fire Ant
Control'" presented by Molly Keck,
Program Specialist with the IPM TX
Coop Extension

****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 Texas
and Hill Country Archeology)

