

volunteervoice

The mission of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is to increase the sustainable use and conservation of native wildflowers, plants and landscapes.



We're all really looking forward to the new gallery exhibits which should be here by the end of October. You'll be glad to know that we've found a new home for the current old exhibit. The Pineywoods Native Plant Center, a Wildflower Center affiliate, picked up the old exhibit in August for display in their new education center at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches.

While I'm thinking about the gallery I also just wanted to share a neat note we got in our gallery comments box: "Dear Volunteers, My granddaughter and I visited today, 8/16/09. Even tho' TX is HOT and DRY the gardens were a delight to see. Thank you for keeping the gardens so pretty so all the visitors can look at them and enjoy them. Signed Kasy and Judy (Oma)" Couldn't have said it better myself.

The Wildflower Center is learning to fly, well Tweet, thanks to our awesome volunteer Kelley Cunny who prodded us out of the nest this spring. She is creating a great online voice for the Center on Twitter and reaching all kinds of new people. For those of you who know about Twitter check us out @WildflowerCtr and or those of you who don't: it is free, you don't have to sign up for an account if you don't want to, you don't have to have a cell phone, or blackberry, or anything like that to see what we are twittering, just go to www.twitter.com/WildflowerCtr. Pretty cool.

GARRIE

September 2009

Appreciation Dinner & Awards

We're really looking forward to celebrating all your work over the past year. Mark your calendars for dinner and our recognition party: Thursday, October 29, 5 to 8 p.m.
RSVP to reception at 232.0200.

Lectures & Trips

Join us when Holly Ferguson, Education Coordinator with the American Botanical Council, speaks on native plants with medicinal value on Tuesday, September 8, 10 to 11 a.m., Wildflower Center Auditorium. We'll take a field trip to LCRA Redbud facility, limit 20, on Wednesday, September 23, 10 to 11:30 a.m. and a second one to Canyon Gorge with geologist Bill Ward, limit 20, Saturday, October 24.
RSVP to cmcdonald@wildflower.org or 232.0102 or sign up sheet in the Volunteer Room.

Volunteer Rep

I'd like to thank Camille Raycraft for representing you so ably on the Advisory Council for the last two years. In her final report, she said in part, "My own personal goals as the representative have been to encourage volunteers to become members and donate to the Center. I am a firm believer that you should put your treasure where your heart is. I know that each of you is a passionate supporter with your talent and

time, but especially in these hard economic time it is important to support those causes we believe in. Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to represent you at the council."

I'm very please to announce that Karen Hayward will be your next representative. She became a Wildflower Center volunteer in 2000 and docent the following spring after many years of working in pediatrics, public health, health and human services research and planning. She has retired from serving as Maternal and Child Health Coordinator for Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services. Karen has a passion for both literacy and native plant landscaping and was a founding member and past president of the Capitol Area Reach and Read early literacy program that recently merged with Reading is Fundamental of Austin to form BookSpring, where she currently serves as a board member. In addition, she has volunteered for Austin Recovery, Inc., RSVP and the League of Women Voters-Austin Area. She is a Hays County Master Naturalist and a member of the Austin Herb Society. Karen earned her Ph.D. from the University of Texas in Educational Psychology. She is an avid hiker, gardener, reader and novice bird-watcher and she'll be getting her 500-hour recognition along with several other of you this October. Congratulations Karen and thanks for volunteering for this really interesting job. Please pass along to her any thoughts you would like her to take to our Advisory Council. You can reach her by email at khayward@austin.rr.com.

Nature Nights

We need your help exploring nature themes during each event, 6 to 9 p.m. You can help with crafting stations or explore themes through discovery stations. September 18: Plants and People; October 16: Flight of the Monarch Butterfly; November 13: Astronomy. We'll also have decorating shift prior to each from 2 to 5 p.m. **Contact Stephen, sbrueggerhoff@wildflower.org or 232.0112.** Or maybe you'd like to help photographer Philip Hawkins (our webmaster by day) as he takes pictures? 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. **Contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org, 232.0102.**

Museum Day

Enjoy Sunday, September 20, a free city-wide celebration of Austin's museums. We'll be free to the public and offering the Women in Science program in the Visitors Gallery, from 12 to 3:30 p.m. along with drop-in tours throughout the day. Can you help with the drop in tours from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m? Thanks so much in advance. **Please see Carrie for sign-up for this program, or contact Stephen, sbrueggerhoff@wildflower.org if you have any programming questions.**

Seed Cleaning Parties

The Wildflower Center is the first non-governmental organization to be invited to participate in the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB) Project, a global plant conservation effort developed by the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, United Kingdom. The MSB Project coordinates work by more than 30 organizations in 20 countries worldwide. With a project budget of about

Fall Plant Sale and Gardening Festival Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 9-11

Tables and tents to set up, plants to be moved and tagged, tickets to be written, plant advice to be given, plants to be sold, volunteers to be fed, visitors to be greeted, children to help with crafts and ecopots to be made. SO much to do and I know you all have your favorite job and shift. **Sign up on the sheet in the volunteer room or email me at cmcdonald@wildflower.org.**

\$120 million, it is one of the most ambitious plant conservation initiatives ever, aiming to conserve seeds from about 10 percent of the world's plant species by the year 2010. We will be clean seeds and eat pizza on Saturdays throughout the year. Next one up is Saturday, September 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Followed by Saturday, October 17, and Saturday, November 21. **Sign up in the Volunteer Room or contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org, 232.0102.**

Gift Store Help

We need more volunteers to work in the store on a regular basis, preferably once a week or once every other week. Because our volunteers really run the show we provide product and technical training (cash register etc.). **Contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org, 232.0102.**

Donate a CD or DVD player

After 15 years in our Store, our CD player is finally on its last legs. Our only requirement is that it works without any glitches and that it plays at least three CDs. If we had a DVD player would also be able to play our Lady Bird Johnson DVDs. **Contact Alice, achote@wildflower.org, 232.0102.**

New Developments

Hello all! I've had the great pleasure of meeting some of you since arriving this March, but I thought I'd take a moment to make an official introduction. My name is Justin Michalka, and I am so happy to be serving as the new Director of Development at the Wildflower Center. We are all so fortunate to be involved with a place that absolutely makes a difference to the health and sustainability of our region, nation, and planet.

We are serving at an important time in the history of the Wildflower Center—working to sustain our annual operations, increase our endowment and secure funds to construct the Texas Arboretum and the Children's Garden. Needless to say, we are busy! But our work is made easier and more rewarding because of people like you. We are deeply privileged and honored to benefit from the generous time, service and support of our volunteers, members and donors. Please never doubt how grateful we are for all that you do. And please don't hesitate to let us know how we can help. Our mission in development is service – to the Center, to its staff, and of course to our volunteers, members, and donors. I look forward to seeing you around and hope to meet many more of you! Thanks again, Justin **I hope you won't hesitate to contact me anytime at jmichalka@wildflower.org or 232.0140.**

Vegetation Survey

If you've ever wondered what's going on out on our research plots, here's an opportunity to learn about managing habitat through burning or mowing in different seasons, and learn to identify lots of different native plants. First-timers should attend one 4-hour training session between Wednesday, October 14, and Saturday, October 17. The survey will start on Tuesday, October 20. We will work from Tuesdays through Saturdays, for 2 to 3 weeks. You may choose a morning shift (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) or an afternoon shift (2 to 6 p.m.), or both if you'd like. **Contact Dick Davis at ddavis@wildflower.org or 232.0251.**

Goblins in the Garden (and scarecrows!)

Sunday, October 25, is a great way to celebrate Halloween the Wildflower Center way. Stephen B. will need your help working with families during the event, as well as a little bit of preparation prior to the event. Attention: putting out a call for pumpkin carvers! If you have pumpkin carving skills, I would love to have your help with demonstrations during the event. We also encourage you to make lots of scarecrows, to be on view before Goblins in the Garden and extending through Halloween weekend. **For scarecrow details and dates, contact Stephen at sbrueggerhoff@wildflower.org, 232.0112. Contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org, 232.0102 for Goblins.**



Share your Story

We're collecting stories of how your experiences as volunteers and/or members have had an impact on your lives or the lives of others. placeholder. We'd like to share these stories to inspire others. You are welcome to submit anonymously. **Contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org, 232.0102.**

Luminations

Mark your calendars for December 11 to 13, we'll need lots of help. Join Stephen B. for youth and adult crafting activities each of the three glorious nights. A wonderful time to celebrate the holidays and support our local communities.

We're also looking for a volunteer duo to coordinate the Tree Display during Luminations. This team would be responsible for updating and sending out existing request letters to various non-profit groups, businesses and schools in the area asking them to decorate a tree to be on display in the MLC during Luminations. This team would then receive the replies and pass the information on to Wade Bohanon who will schedule the installation of the trees. It's a great, easy, fun way to play an important part in our holiday celebration. **Sign up in the Volunteer room or contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org; 232.0102.**

Docent Training

It only comes around every other year these days, so make a note for yourselves or those you think would either enjoy working in our spiffed-up gallery or leading tours. Training begins Thursday, January 21, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. meeting weekly on Thursdays to Thursday March 11.

In memory

Grandmother Was a Hooker by Flo Oxley

"You know, my grandmother was a hooker."

"Excuse me?" I replied as I turned to look at the elegant woman sitting next to me.

"Oh, yes! It's true! My grandmother was a hooker."

Virginia Ehrler's grandmother WAS a hooker; a Hooker with a capital H, that is. Her grandmother was a direct descendent of Sir William Jackson Hooker, the first director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and his son, Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, who succeeded him as the second director of garden. Of course, that made Virginia a Hooker, too!

Virginia loved to tell that story to unsuspecting strangers and she always laughed hysterically at their reactions. She had quite the sense of humor and it could get a little bawdy at times. Her sense of humor was one of the reasons we became such good friends.

There were other reasons, of course. She loved music and was an accomplished pianist and banjo player. That's right, banjo! She was quite the picker. She always got to pick the music we listened to as we drove up to the Wildflower Center every Tuesday. She didn't like the current crop of musicians; she really hated the Black-eyed Peas, one of my favorite groups and actually forbid me to play their CDs. "That's just crap!" she would declare. "Put something good on!" Something good was usually music from the 60s or 70s. She'd actually sing along with some of the songs and she KNEW the lyrics!

Virginia loved her family: husband, Leonard, her son, Mark, his wife, Lisa, and their two children, Kathryn and Marshall. We always spent the first 30 minutes or so talking about what they had been

The mission of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is to increase the sustainable use and conservation of native wildflowers, plants and landscapes.

 PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

"IN MEMORY" CONTINUED FROM INSIDE

up to and how proud she was of them. She adored Leonard, her husband of 25 years and always said he was the sweetest and sexiest man she had ever met. She loved to talk about babysitting her two grandchildren. Their time together always included playing games together, watching their favorite TV shows and trips to Sonic for lunch.

She loved Sonic, too. We always had to stop for Happy Hour on our way home every Tuesday. She always ordered a medium Cranberry Slush, while I always had had a large diet Cherry Limeade. It was the perfect end to a perfect day at the Wildflower Center.

And, Virginia loved Mrs. Johnson and the Wildflower Center. She was a longtime volunteer having started in February 1983. I always thought that, when the Center first opened, a box labeled

"Volunteer" was delivered and, when it was opened, Virginia stepped out. She worked at the Center in one capacity or another for 26 years. For the last ten years or so, she worked with me in the herbarium. Virginia actually helped establish the herbarium. Working with Pam Jones, the Center's first botanist, she began collecting, pressing and mounting plant specimens for us in the mid-1980s. She continued to do herbarium work sporadically over the years, in between work in the gift store.

She began to focus exclusively on herbarium work during the last five or six years and was instrumental in curating the voucher specimens for the Millennium Seed Bank Project. She loved the challenge of getting the pressed specimens mounted to the right advantage. She wanted to be sure that the floral characters necessary for correct identification were presented and

that the mount was artistic, as well. Not an easy task given some of the specimens we brought in for her curation. Yet, she was always able to make them beautiful.

Virginia passed away July 22. She was 78 years old. She was my friend and I will miss her. While this is sad for me on many levels, it helps to remember that she has been reunited with the love of her life, Leonard; she's hanging out with Mrs. Johnson; and, they're both bossing God around. Heaven just got a little more interesting.

