

volunteer voice

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

Volunteer: It's Good For You

People who volunteer have lower rates of heart disease and live longer than peers who don't volunteer, according to the January issue of *Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource*.

"Volunteering can boost mental health; it's a great way to stay connected socially; and those social connections help buffer stress and get a person through hard times. Women tend to be more adept at maintaining social ties, and volunteer activities can further strengthen a woman's social network. Also, volunteering can provide a sense of purpose and vitality, key elements in helping stave off the depression that sometimes accompanies aging and isolation.

"To realize the health benefits of volunteering, a commitment of 40 to 100 hours a year is needed, studies have shown. That equates to a couple of hours a week."

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Sale & Spring Preview

We appreciate you in so many ways! Our Wildflower Center Store sale begins Saturday, March 7 through Friday, March 13. Wildflower Center volunteers save a total of 20% on any purchase all week.



Volunteers Esther Burnett, Esther Wilson, Martha Boswell, Charyl Rojas, Lynn League and Jean Davison with Expedition School Ornithologist Jeff Brown on a recent birding trip to Port Aransas and Corpus Christi.

Field Trip Notes

Several of you have enjoyed going on the field trips that our partners at the Expedition School have put together for the Wildflower Center. There are more details about upcoming trips under Partners at Expeditionschool.com. Here's a note from Kimery about the birding trip. "Jeff (Expedition School Ornithologist) and I were thrilled to spend two entire days sharing our favorite sanctuaries in Port Aransas and Corpus Christi with you. With 87 species of birds identified; 6 unidentified plants for the press; eye rolling good food; and, a you!

"Thanks a million for your intrepid spirits and your shared passion for field study. We are truly honored to be a part of the WFC team of volunteers."

—Kimery Duda,
The Expedition School, Founder
and Executive Director

Advisory Council Volunteer Rep

Once again it's time to identify volunteers interested in representing your entire group at the Center's Advisory Council meetings. The meetings are held three times a year at the Wildflower Center in September, January and May, with the upcoming term beginning October 2009. Each year or two, a volunteer is selected to serve in this important role. The current representative, Camille Raycraft has represented you well during her term, giving reports and passing along your concerns and ideas to our Council. It's a fun way to learn more about the plans and goals of the Center, and to share your experience and insights as a volunteer. Look for nomination forms in the mail and on site. They will be due Wednesday, April 1.

volunteer opportunities

Youth Tours

Stephen B. would like to meet with folks interested in supporting guided tours for school and youth groups. It's time to get reacquainted with you wonderful folks that are interested and those of you that have a hankerin' to help. If you have a knack with the kiddos, please **Contact Stephen, sbrueggerhoff@wildflower.org; 232-0112.**

Wildflower walks

Volunteer enrichments are a great way to continue adding to your knowledge and share in various topics. Please come to any or all of the following volunteer enrichments for the Spring:

Tuesday, April 7. Wildflower walk with Stephen B. & friends; 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, April 22. Wildflower walk with Stephen B. & friends; 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, May 5. Wildflower walk with Stephen B. & friends; 10 to 11:30 a.m. **Contact Stephen, sbrueggerhoff@wildflower.org; 232-0112.**

Youth Projects

Stephen B. needs help with self-guiding activities and interpretation development in the Little House. He has seasonal themes and materials for development and would like your collaboration in getting them ready for the public experience. **Contact Stephen, sbrueggerhoff@wildflower.org; 232-0112.**

Family & Outreach Programs

Wanted: help with family and outreach programs. We have a few off-site outreach and on-site programs in the Spring dedicated to children and families that will need your

expertise, gumption and passion. There are sign-up sheets in the Volunteer Room. Outreach events: Explore U.T., Saturday, March 7; *Dia De Los Ninos/De Los Libros*, Saturday, April 25.

Onsite programs: Nature Nights at the Wildflower Center: Astronomy, Friday, March 6; Wildflowers, Thursday, April 16; Animal Tracking, Friday, May 29. **Contact Stephen, sbrueggerhoff@wildflower.org; 232-0112.**

Gift Store Help

We need help 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 technical training (cash register etc.) as well as product training. The Wildflower Center store is a great place to meet interesting people and support a wonderful cause. If you know anyone (friends, family) who might be interested in working in the store, please ask him/her to give me a call or send me an email so we can set a time to meet. **Contact Alice, achoate@wildflower.org; 232-0142.**

Garden Tour

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 9 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's Mother's Day Weekend and if you volunteer to help in the morning for example, you can visit the selected gardens in the afternoon for free, as our thank you. Passes are normally \$25. **Contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org; 232-0102.**

Pictured here, an excerpt from the Mary Gardener work, chosen to represent Wildflower Days™ in 2009. T-shirts and prints in our store



Plant Sale & Gardening Festival Friday, Saturday & Sunday, Apr. 10–12 ~on Easter weekend this year~

Because of the holiday weekend, the sale will begin later on Sunday this year. The shifts will be Friday 12:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 4 to 7:30 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 1 to 5:30 p.m.; Sunday 12 to 3 p.m. and 2:30 to 5 p.m. 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 board in the volunteer room or email me at cmcdonald@wildflower.org.**

Spring Vegetation Surveys

Want a fun way to learn the native grasses and wildflowers of Central Texas? This spring and fall we are training volunteers to help in our on-site research area studies, where plots are burned or mowed at different times of the year to examine the effects on plant communities.

Every experience level is welcome, so do not be timid. The surveys will be conducted in small teams, with staff members nearby at all times. New participants in the surveys will attend one four-hour training class and commit to work at least two four-hour field sessions. Training is optional for those of you who have volunteered in the past.

Training is available on any day between Wednesday, April 15 and Saturday April 18. Training on Wednesday or Friday will be 2 to 6 p.m., on Thursday or Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Surveys will begin on Tuesday, April 21 and continue Tuesdays through Saturdays until completed, usually about three weeks.

This will be the first opportunity for volunteers to work on spring surveys since 2006. We are looking forward to examining the ecological condition resulting from the latest round of burning and mowing, coupled with an extreme drought.

Contact Holly Zafian,
hzafian@wildflower.org; 232-0109.

Filing Help

You can still volunteer when the weather is bad. Our accounting department could sure use some help with filing and boxing up old accounting paperwork, etc. Help us run a little more smoothly, no special skills needed. **Contact Tina,**
tramirez@wildflower.org; 232-0149.

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. We will be cleaning seeds and eating pizza from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the following Saturdays: February 28, March 14, April 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, August 15, September 26, October 17, and November 21.

Sign up in the Volunteer Room or contact Carrie, cmcdonald@wildflower.org; 232-0102.

Learn about Butterflies

In the insectary, we raise butterflies and moths from eggs and caterpillars that we collect in the gardens. Our insectary volunteers spend 1 to 2 hours volunteering a week. They help by collecting eggs and caterpillars from the garden, getting fresh food to the caterpillars in the insectary, keeping the insectary tidy and releasing butterflies that have eclosed. It is a great opportunity to learn about butterflies and moths, which plants attract them and to identify different species of caterpillars and butterflies. We need volunteers in the morning on weekdays and weekend days.

(Also, we like to adopt caterpillars. We can't take them all, but give me a call or email a photo if you think you've found something interesting.) **Contact Samantha,**
selkinton@wildflower.org; 232-0111.



Horticulture volunteer Guy Thompson taking a break during a recent Millennium Seed Bank seed collecting trip in the Davis Mountains.

New Gallery Exhibits

In May 2006, the Wildflower Center received a generous memorial tribute gift from Charles Kolodzey to honor his late wife and Wildflower Center docent, Claire Kolodzey. Mr. Kolodzey passed away Tuesday, February 2, 2009 at 95. His gift has provided much of the funding to update our exhibit space in the Visitors Gallery where she spent so much of her time as a volunteer.

As you know, we have contracted with a national firm, Xibitz, who has been busy talking to volunteers



Lady Bird Johnson

Wildflower center

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"GALLERY" CONTINUED FROM INSIDE

and staff to develop the new exhibit that will present updated information on the Wildflower Center and enhance the experience of each visitor to our facility. The design is nearly finalized, and we are now trying to raise the last \$60,000 needed to complete the project by next September.

We are excited to announce that we have received a challenge gift toward our goal and ask each of our volunteers to consider making a gift to this special project that will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$10,000. Though we know you all give us so many valuable hours of hard work, we hope you will participate in this special memorial project. A gift of any amount will get us closer to fully funding this project that will have a terrific impact on the visitor experience at the

Wildflower Center. **Contact our development office at 232-0121.**

In memory

Minnette Marr, Wildflower Center Plant Conservationist worked closely with volunteer **Ella Hetherly** who died Tuesday, December 16 at 71. Minnette writes, "Ella starred in the role of Mother Nature on the Hays County Master Naturalist float during the 2007 Independence Day Parade in Wimberley. After Ella's diagnosis of terminal lung cancer, she requested that friends honor her memory with donations to the Wildflower Center.

"Ella shared skills honed as a book store owner (Watson & Company Books) with our fledgling, but ambitious, seed conservation program. Ella's literary background and conversation skills

could turn even the most tedious of seed batches into a memorable occasion. I will miss her much and think of her often."

Virginia Howard passed away Monday, January 12 at the age of 82. She was fortunate enough to enjoy a long retirement, during which she began a second career of volunteering. In 1993 she began volunteering at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, where she cultivated many friendships and a love of native plants and gardening. She also served as Volunteer Representative on the Wildflower Center Board.

Volunteer **Virginia Jaacks** passed away Saturday, January 24 at 75. She had been a horticulture volunteer at the Center since 1994, contributing over 500 hours of service.