

The Docent News



For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents

November 1997

Service Awards Presented at Annual Banquet

On October 4, the Oklahoma Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve recognized the dedication of many of our 104 docents. The annual Docent Appreciation Banquet and Award Ceremony was held in Pawhuska at the new IGA dining room. A delicious buffet, featuring Cornish Game Hen and Roast Beef was catering by IGA. After dinner entertainment was provided by the Pawhuska Players, who presented scenes from the play "Dearly Departed." Most of the sixty-plus persons who attended received awards during this first-ever ceremony.

The first level of awards is attained by docents who serve four shifts at the preserve (about thirty to forty hours of donated time, including travel). Volunteers reaching this level received a unique lapel pin featuring the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

logo, and are entitled to a ten percent discount on shirts and t-shirts sold in the gift shop, beginning next March. Eighty-seven docents have attained this level.

The **second level** of awards is attained by serving ten shifts at the preserve. Those reaching this level receive all "four-shift" awards as well as a polished brass key ring featuring the logo medallion. Fifty-two docents have attained this level.

The **third level** of awards requires twenty service shifts. These volunteers received all previous awards, plus a polished brass and leather coaster/paperweight featuring the logo medallion. Ten docents attained this level. The name, hometown and training year of those award-winners are:

- Marilyn Keefer (B'ville) - 1995
- George Meyers (Pawhuska) - 1994
- Liz Medley (Tulsa) - 1994
- Sue Wheeler (Tulsa) - 1994
- Stuart Marshall (Barnsdall) - 1995
- Jo Brooks-Wilson (Skiatook) - 1994
- Iris McPherson (Perkins) - 1995
- Al Medley (Tulsa) - 1994

- Barbara Strahm (Pawhuska) - 1994
- Dave Dolcater (Tulsa) - 1995
- Dean Johnston (Owasso) - 1995
- Mary Ellen Johnston (Owasso) - 1995

This year, two docents reached the **fourth level**, thirty shifts served at the gift shop during regular calendar year. They received the awards for all previous levels, as well as a polished brass paperweight featuring the words "Thank You" and the logo medallion. A huge thanks to:

- George Meyers (Pawhuska) - 1994
- Sue Wheeler (Tulsa) - 1994

Coaster paper weights featuring the logo medallion were also awarded to members of the Docent Council who work many hours in addition to regular work shifts in order to accomplish the job duties which they have assumed. Names of these volunteers and their assigned jobs are:

- Sue Wheeler - gift shop mgr
- George Meyers - visitor rec'ds
- Shirley Miller - scheduling c.
- Tom Clark - speakers bureau
- Liz Medley - historian/registry
- Dick Baker - training c.

Service Awards - continued from page 1

Bill Rinehart - "Across the Fence" column

Doris Mayfield - nature exhibit c.

Marilyn Keefer - trail guide c.

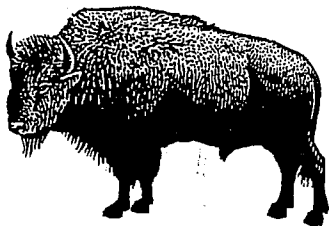
The Oklahoma Chapter thanks all of our docents for your donation of time and energy. Your help is crucial to the continued success of our conservation efforts at the Tallgrass Prairie!

Round-up Reminder

Remember, Docents may attend the bison round-up on Friday, October 31. We will meet at the Headquarters at 9 a.m. and go up to the corrals together. Please bring your own lunch, and we'll eat together at the Stucco house. Please let Mary, at the Tulsa office, know to expect you!

November Sale!!

Don't forget that you receive a 20 percent discount from Nov. 1 - Nov. 15 at the Gift Shop, our way of saying thanks to you for your time over this past year!



Docent Council Positions Open

Here's your chance to join the Docent Council, a volunteer group which oversees the docent program.

During the winter months, interested docents assess how the past year went, and think about things we'd like to see happen next year. Some Docent Council members hold coordinating positions, while others serve as at-large members. Meeting dates are Dec. 6, Jan. 10, and Feb. 7 from 9:30 until 12 noon. At this time, I am looking for people interested in serving on the Council as Scheduling Assistant and Gift Shop Bookkeeper. These positions include the following responsibilities:

Scheduling: Many docents fill out a monthly calendar or take a regular shift.

Sometimes there are days which haven't been taken, and this person makes phone calls to fill in the empty days. Some months there are only a few holes to fill, other times, there are more. The secretary at the Tulsa office is usually available to assist with out-of-town calls. If you enjoy talking to people on the phone, and don't mind making some evening calls, this job is for you!!

The Docent News

Council Position - cont'd.

Bookkeeper: This job requires some experience with general bookkeeping. A year end report is necessary to balance our expenses with sales and deposits. If you're a whiz at budgets and like numbers, we need your help here!

Remember, the docent council is not an exclusive group. You may serve as an at-large member, or simply attend the meetings. Comments, questions and concerns are welcome.

Gift Shop News

from Sue Wheeler

During the month of September, sales totaled a whopping \$5,161.79! This compares to \$2,799.10 during September 1996.

Total sales for the year now total \$37,628.96!!! This is really incredible! This compares to last year's sales-to-date figures of \$29,464.75! Congratulations!

At the Docent Awards Dinner, Harvey Payne shared that \$15,000 of our proceeds this year will go towards the purchase of bison cows to further the growth and genetic diversity of our herd!

Visitation

from George Meyers

During the month of September, 1032 visitors came to the Prairie; 348 from 30 other states, 24 from 9 foreign countries and 659 from Oklahoma. 67 percent were first time visitors. Through August, the total of 9732 visitors is 188 less than last year, though foreign visitors are up (331 to 185, up 78.9%) and other-state visitors are also up (3225 to 2968, +8.7%).

To date we've had visitors from all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico and 46 other countries. Texas, Kansas, California, Arkansas, Missouri are still the top five states with England, Germany, Canada, Japan and Switzerland as the top five foreign countries. New countries this month were Bahamas, Guatemala, Poland and Venezuela.

Trail Guide Program

The Trail Guide program will be offered to school children again next spring during May and June, and again in October and November. If you are available to help with these groups during the week, or are interested in working with adults on a weekend, please call Mary at the Tulsa office.

Several "former" docents have indicated an interest in rejoining our program to be involved in the trail guide section. If you know someone who might fit this description, please pass their name on to Mary or tell them about this program addition. Note: training will be held in April.

Notes from the Prairie (repeat)

from Harvey Payne and Bob Hamilton

*The cowboys are currently working on the East side of the new bison holding trap, in preparation for the upcoming roundup. Other cowboy work includes work on the corrals, and spraying herbicides to control the growth of the invasive lespedeza species.

*Controlled burns were made on the preserve September 16 and 17.

*The bison are grazing all over the bison area in many groups. They are all fat! Some young ones, still burnt orange in color, can be seen.

*Rainfall amounts were smaller in September!

*The tallgrasses are glorious!! Eyewitnesses report big bluestem ten feet tall on the east leg of the long hiking trail, with Indian grass growing six feet and taller! It's an incredible sight! The seedheads (flowers of the grasses) are blooming!

*Wildflowers now blooming include several species of goldenrod, sunflowers and blazing star as well as blue sage and Snow on the Mountain.

*Recent trail work on the final leg of the hiking trails was completed by an Eagle Scout Troop last month. Troop 507 out of Sapulpa worked with Bob Hamilton to eliminate the rutted trail, regravell the path and insert some new landscaping timbers. The steps are now less steep, and the path more stable. Thanks!

The Docent News

Calendar

November	
15	Gift Shop Closes
December	
6	Docent Council Meeting
January	
10	Docent Council Meeting
24	Speakers Bureau Training
February	
17	Docent Council Meeting
tba	Bartlesville Recruitment
tba	Ponca City Recruitment
tba	Tulsa Recruitment
March	
14	Re-orientationn - Pawhuska
28	New Docent Training - 1
April	
4	New Docent Training - 2
tba	Trail Guide Training



This 'N That

by Mary McIntyre
Education and Outreach Coord

It's been another successful year at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve! Our program continues to grow and your work continues to help so much in getting the message out about the Conservancy's work here. We're so glad you're a part of our group!

With this issue of the Docent News, you have received the Annual Evaluation and Intent to Participate in 1998. Please take a minute to fill this out and send it in. We are interested in your thoughts, and also your availability as we plan for the future. We know that sometimes priorities change, and health or circumstances require a break from volunteering. We'll miss you, but please be honest with us about your level of commitment to the Tallgrass Docent program.

A letter will be sent to those who do not respond to the survey by Nov. 30. The letter will be followed by a phone call, and then your name will be taken off the docent list if you do not respond. I hope that doesn't happen! Each of you have contributed to making this program successful and

allowing TNC to continue statewide efforts.

Now, the future...it's here! If you missed the Docent Banquet I need to fill you in on some changes to the program. As you have read, our award program begins after you have served **four** shifts at the Preserve. Once you've reached that level, you are entitled to receive the Docent Pin at the awards banquet, and you also become eligible to receive a 10 percent discount, all year, on shirts available through the gift shop. You also may spend the night at the Stucco house (bringing all of your own supplies) if you are working a double shift (two days in a row.) This fall, the invitation is open to anyone who is working, on the night before or after their shift. Next Spring, depending on how many people take advantage of this, and also how many researchers are staying in the Stucco house, we may or may not be able to continue offering the overnight option to single shift docents. It will definitely be available to those working double shifts.

Although we do not require a certain number of shifts to be worked by each docent, invitations to next year's docent dinner will only be sent to those who have

The Docent News

worked two or more shifts during the current calendar year (excluding training shifts). This is considered the minimum number of shifts to be considered an "active" docent.

We continue to plan for the future -- I will be spending five days in Arizona this month, visiting three preserves there that have either a volunteer program or an educational component. As we continue to formulate a five-year plan for the preserve, we need to address educational and visitor needs. Hopefully, visiting these other preserves will provide answers to some of the questions we have about where we should be going. I'll have much to share when I return!

Mary