

Docent News

October 26, 1995

Dear Docents,

Greetings! I hope you are all enjoying these beautiful autumn days as the leaves change colors and the winds blow!

THANK YOU'S

It is very rewarding to work with people who deserve Thank you's! There are a bunch of you out there!

Thank you, again, to Dick Baker for his organization of docents, activities, tours, etc., etc., during Fall 1995!

Thank you to Sue Wheeler for her continuing efforts with the Gift Shop, and for assisting Dick with the Docent program this fall!

Thank you to Jody Diehl and the Pawhuska Team Tourism group for the terrific, entertaining evening we spent at the Docent Appreciation Dinner, October 7. For those who were unable to attend, we were treated to an Indian feast with meat pies, baked squash (delicious!), grape dumplings and fry bread. Before dinner entertainment was provided by Leon Hawzipta, Jr., Kiowa storyteller. Leon made everyone laugh, and gave us an appreciation for oral history and the importance of myths in our culture.

Thank you to Jim and Jeanne Ronda. Jim talked about the Barnard Ranch, Osage and Western History: Jeanne explained her extensive bibliography of sources on the Oil industry in Osage County, which is now available for your Docent Manuals.

Thank you to all who served as crew leaders for workdays this fall.

Sept. 9 - Dick Baker

Oct. 14 - Jan Holsomback

Oct. 21 - (TU Law Students) Jan Holsomback

Oct. 28 - (OBU Students) Mark Andrews

Thank you to all volunteers who have worked at these workdays! We are all becoming experts at spreading that barn-red paint!

Thank you to Tom Clark, who is continuing work on TNC slide programs (read on for more info).

Thank you to Dave Dolcater, who is continuing his work editing videos at the Tulsa office.

Thank you to Anne Johnson, who is volunteering at the Tulsa office, and will be chairing our Office Volunteer Committee.

DATES TO REMEMBER

November 11 Workday - Jan Holsomback has agreed to be crew leader for this final workday. Painting of the bison corral continues as the primary project. We are making headway, but the job is far from over. The extra fall workdays with TU and OBU students have moved the project along. Harvey estimates that we have 37,000 feet of pipe to paint!

November 16, 1995 - Gift Shop Inventory. Sue Wheeler and myself will be at the Prairie on the 16th to inventory the gift shop and close it for the season. Remember, there are only 59 shopping days left before Christmas! Please make any purchases before November 16!

GIFT SHOP NEWS FROM SUE WHEELER

The Little Gift Shop on the Prairie has prospered this season! Sales through September are up \$5500 over last year! Your suggestions for new merchandise have been really helpful. We're now letting the inventory decrease in anticipation of closing for the winter.

DOCENT SURVEY RESULTS

Over fifty of you have completed the Docent Evaluation for 1995. Thank you for taking the time to do this. Your thoughts about the program are very important! Here are some of the results:

Both new and returning Docents rated the training they received as a 4 or 5, with 5 being an excellent rating.

Topics which have been used most in assisting visitors were (in order of frequency): Bison Information, Ranch History, Nature Information and Indian (Osage) history.

Favorite training opportunities were the interpretive training presented by Linda Fritts from Oxley Nature Center, the Pawhuska session, Osage Indian history and "trail" training.

Additional topics which Docents want emphasized in 1996 training include; bison information, plant and animal identification, Osage history, and Information on studies being performed at the Prairie.

Regarding ways that the program can be improved: nearly half of those responding wanted more training, 15 of you wanted more options for involvement, nine wanted more hours staffed at the Prairie, and four wanted monthly Docent meetings.

All those who returned the survey agreed to participate in the program in 1996! A dozen agreed to meet tour groups during the winter season, and 15 would like to serve on a Speakers Bureau. An even dozen (so far) have expressed an interest in serving on the Docent Council!

Thank you to all who responded to the survey and to all of you who will respond in the coming weeks (It's never too late - send it in and let us hear from you!) You will see these comments being incorporated into the 1996 program as planning gets underway in the next two to three months. Watch the Docent News for updates!

DOCENT COUNCIL

A little more about the Docent Council...This group of volunteers will organize your program. I will continue in a supporting role as your advocate and TNC supervisor. Communication and planning for the docent program will be easier, and more in tune with your needs. There will be more opportunities to interact and get to know other docents! There will be more opportunities to help TNC with educational programming at the Prairie and across the state!

Positions on the council will include: Activities Coordinator; Scheduling Coordinator; Gift Shop Manager; Gift Shop Bookkeeper; Workday Supervisor; Training Coordinator; Historian; Newsletter/Communications Editor; and Clerical Coordinator. These positions can be small committees, with a designated rep.

In early November, those of you who have expressed an interest in these positions will be contacted and provided with a "job description" of that position as well as the names of others who have expressed an interest in that position. A meeting time will be chosen, and we will all get together to discuss the Council and the positions. At that meeting, a regular meeting time will be decided and all positions will be filled. The Docent Council will be in place by December 1.

Initially, the group will decide goals for 1996, and outline steps to reach those goals. The training committee and activity committee will begin planning spring training almost immediately.

VOLUNTEER SURVEYS

The volunteer survey, mailed in October, is helping us to update our statewide volunteer file. Some of the information may seem redundant to those of you who are docents - but it is needed so that information is consistent from volunteer to volunteer. Data entry of the new information is now taking place, and will be an ongoing project!

OTHER WORKING COMMITTEES BEING ORGANIZED

In addition to the Docent Council, several other volunteer committees are being formed. Most would require a monthly time commitment of 4-5 hours or less, set to fit your schedule. These include:

Hospitality Committee - makes phone contacts welcoming new volunteers or members (no solicitation).

Office Services - works in the Tulsa office assisting with general clerical work, telephone answering, making copies, help with mailings.

Date Entry Committee - works in Tulsa office to input information into the volunteer database.

Speakers Bureau - makes presentations across the state as requested by organizations or schools. Tom Clark is chairing this effort, and is currently organizing slides for two programs; one is a Tallgrass Prairie Preserve program, the other a general statewide TNC program. During November, Tom or I will be contacting those of you who have expressed an interest in the Tallgrass Prairie Speakers Bureau. The slide shows should be completed by Dec. 31, so that training can be provided in January, with the Bureau functional by Feb. 1.

SYMPATHY TO DICK BAKER

The Nature Conservancy staff would like to offer sympathy to Dick Baker. Dick's mother died October 19, 1995.