

# The Docent News



For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents

December 1999

## Gift Shop News

from Sue Wheeler

The shop was open every day in October. Sales for the month totaled \$11,310.75, \$4,800.05 over last year's total for the month. Sales for the year so far total \$52,448.54, \$10,439.25 more than this time last year.

## Calendar

### December

04 Docent Council Meeting  
13 Inventory Week

## Is This Your Last News?

Have you returned your docent evaluation and recommitment form? If you have not, please do so today! A red dot beside your name on the mailing label indicates that we have NOT received your survey yet (as of Nov. 30). All docents recommitting for 2000 should either return their survey or call the office by Dec. 30. Our files will be updated on Jan. 3! We hope you'll still be with us!

## Visitation

from George Meyers

"We had 1,549 sign-in visitors in October, up 36.7% from October 1998. 57 visitors were from 22 other countries: Austria, Malawi (Africa), Malaysia, Nigeria, Oman, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia as new countries on our list this year. 339 were from 40 other states with Texas, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri and Pennsylvania, the top states in attendance.

"1,153 Oklahomans visited the Preserve. So far this year, we have had visitors from 50 other countries and all 50 states."

"Thursday, Saturday and Sunday were the days of highest visitation, as 71% of our visitors came on those days. Wednesday and Friday visitors were 18.7% of our total. 87.2% of visitors came from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and 14.0% came between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m."

"The total of 9,821 visitors for the first 10 months of the year is up 5.4% over 1998. Visitation from other states is down 8.6%. The number of foreign visitors is up 35.7%."

The SHOP will be open these dates in December:

Dec. 4 – Jo Brooks and Marilyn Joplin

Dec. 5 – Mark and Marci Hendricks

Dec. 11 – Doris Mayfield

Dec. 12 – Mary Cummings and Carol Redford

Dec. 13 – **Inventory week.**  
(Let Sue or Mary Coley know if you're interested in helping.)

## You've Got MAIL

Do you have an email address? If you'd like it included on next year's Docent Roster, drop me an email at [mmcintyre@tnc.org](mailto:mmcintyre@tnc.org). This is my new email address and reaches me at the office. My old email address, [mmcint2415@aol.com](mailto:mmcint2415@aol.com), now reaches me only at home!

**Prairie News**

By Bob Hamilton

- Cowboys are working on the bison corral expansion.
- Last fall burn was completed on 11-29-99.
- The bison are scattered into several bands.
- We need volunteers for picking up trash.
- Some bald eagles are here. Likewise, rough-legged hawks and northern harriers.
- We are still working on the funding for the Tulsa University research project.

**Docent Council Meeting This Saturday**

The first of this year's Docent Council meetings will be Saturday (Dec. 4) from 10 a.m. until 12 noon. All docents are welcome to attend. If you plan to be there, please let the office know. The door to the building is locked on Saturdays, and a door keeper will be assigned to open it for you only from 9:30 until 10. If you plan to arrive earlier or later, please let Mary Coley know when you RSVP. Thanks!!

**Volunteer Buyers Needed**

Are you interested in volunteering as a buyer for the gift shop? As we restructure the management of the gift shop, Sue Wheeler will begin to serve in the capacity of "Book Buyer" We need others to help out in other areas of merchandise. If you are interested, please contact Mary Coley or Sue as soon as possible.

**Awards/Shift Totals Clarification**

The question has been raised about docent awards and why some did not receive awards even though they had worked several shifts. Awards are given at the 4 shift, 10 shift, 20 shift, 30-shift (and so forth) levels. If you received a 20-shift award last year, and worked eight times this year, you have a cumulative of 28 shifts, but not enough to receive the 30 shifts award. Your name would not have been listed as an award winner. Next year, if you work at least 2 shifts between Sept. 1, 1999 and Sept. 1, 2000, you will receive an award for 30 cumulative shifts! All shift records are based upon the docent logs that you fill out when you work a shift. Please remember to complete your docent log so that you will get credit for your work shift!

**New State Director Hired**

On November 29, our new state director began work at the Tulsa office. Mary Collins was the executive director of Tulsa Zoo Friends for nine years prior to leaving the zoo in late 1998. Brita will be assisting Mary in the transition period through Dec. 18.



### This 'N That

By Mary Coley

As another year comes to a close, I've been taking the opportunity to think on the past year and the changes it has brought! Surely we had no idea at this time last year how well the new shop/visitors center would turn out, and how much it would increase our sales (and thus the amount that we can contribute to the operation of the Preserve!)

A huge **thank you** to all of you who have had the time, and taken the time to help us in 1999! Your dedication has made all the difference!! I also appreciate those of you who have cheered us on in heart and spirit, although you may not (for various reasons), have been able to

help out at the preserve much this year. Your support and encouragement is important! Hopefully, next year you will be able to spend more time with us. We will need your help to continue the growth of the preserve's outreach program!

Remember, you are **MORE** than a gift shop clerk! Your presence provides the visitor with important information, as well as a human presence on the preserve. Visitors tell us how much they enjoy talking with the docents. On days we are closed, the visitors **ALWAYS** say, "we wish you had been open" – and we know that it isn't just for the opportunity to buy a postcard or book. They want the chance to

**TALK** with you and to learn about the Preserve and The Nature Conservancy!

The end of one year also signals the beginning of a new year – and that means **docent recruitment!** Be thinking of friends that might be interested in helping us at the preserve, either as docents or as trail guide docents. Send me their names and addresses, as well as email addresses, so that I can include them in the recruitment database. If you would like to help with our annual recruitment events (Bartlesville, Ponca City, Tulsa and Pawhuska) please let me know! These will be held in February.

### Winter Events

Life moves underground. Grasses store nutrition in underground stems.

Matted grass retards wind and water erosion, conserves soil moisture and evens temperature extremes.

Deer mice and hispid cotton rats skitter through tunnels in the matted grass and probably reproduce all year.

White-footed mice toil on, often nesting among tree branches.

Screech owls sit in roadways at night to catch rodents. They mate for life, and live at the Preserve year-around.

Pocket mice doze in burrows packed with seeds.

Bald eagles arrive in December.

Bison swing their massive heads, clearing snow from grasses. They stomp ice to drink from ponds.

Raccoons snooze in hollow trees or rocky crevices; badgers nap in holes. They come out now and then to eat.

Black-capped chickadees and yellow-shafted flickers stay through the winter and often remain the year around.

Rough-legged hawks, juncos, pine siskins, northern harriers and American tree sparrows winter at the Prairie, go north in the Spring.

A mountain lion is rarely seen.

White-tailed deer are at the peak of the rut in November. Bucks shed their antlers in winter or early spring.

An occasional snowy owl visits, probably because the lemming population has crashed up north.

Coyotes howl from sunset to sunrise in late February. It's the height of the mating season.

Historically, red and gray wolves may once have prowled the Prairie, along with black and grizzly bears, ring-tails, elk and river otters. Sadly, none have been sighted in a long, long time!