



VIP2VIP



Season 8, Volume 4

Big Bend National Park's Volunteer Newsletter

February 2, 2009

Current Volunteers

Persimmon Gap

Teresa & Gary Cowan—VC (New)

Carl & Arlene Redstone—VC (New)

Castolon

Ron & Jane Payne—VC (New)

Maryann & Ted Rowan—VC (3rd)

Barbara & Sam Tobias—(new)

Joan & Ray Kane—Camp Host (3rd)

Steve & Tina Ehrman—Backcountry (3rd)

Rio Grande Village

Robert & Glenda Overfelt—VC (3rd)

Roy & Mary Urban—VC—(new)

Pat & Marshall McCall—VC (2nd)

John Welsh & Diana Warner - Backcountry (new)

Jane & Bill Berry—Camp Host (new)

Roy & Aletha Ellis -Camp Host (3rd)

Kenn & Linda Sutton—Special Projects (3rd)

Chisos Basin

Steve & Toka Smith—Visitor Center (new)

Jim & Ginny Herrick—VC (11th)

Ed Davis -Camp Host (4th)

Tim Wolcott -Camp Host (new)

Panther Junction

John Kelling—Va RP—(2nd)

Bud Frankenberger—ScRM- (6th)

John & Elaine Jonker - River Patrol (2nd)

David Sheedy & Lori Dillon—ADA Survey (new)

Natalie Thompson (SCA)

Kellie Mattingly (SCA)

Part-time

Jim Bishop—BBNHA

Kim Cutler -Horses

David Ewing—RGV Backcountry

Steve Harper- Resource Management

Christiann Tillman-Administration

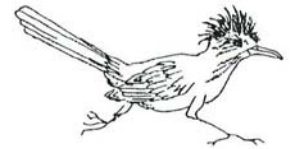
Steve Wick- Resource Management

Reine Wonite- Administration

*Number in () indicates years of service at BBNP



Age of Aquarius?



By Jane Brown

While compiling the birthdays of the volunteers, I began to notice an interesting phenomenon. I have a passing interest in astrology and character traits of the various signs of the zodiac. However I was surprised at the statistical abnormality of February birthdays among the volunteers....about 25%. This discovery sent me scurrying to the internet for information on the character traits of Aquarians. Here is what I found:

“The Aquarian symbol of the water bearer, which is a depiction of a man carrying two buckets of water, does not mean that those born under this sign are destined to serve others. On the contrary, the Aquarian carries water in order to cleanse and make new. The water is more symbolic than literal. Aquarians do not offer up water in order to quench a person’s physical thirst but rather to quench the thirst for knowledge as well as cleanse that person of negative behaviors and thoughts. Aquarians impart this wisdom, advice and knowledge freely to anyone who asks or demonstrates the need.” Sounds a lot like a Big Bend volunteer at the visitor’s center or a camp host!

“One of the most apparent Aquarius personality traits is that of a humanitarian, a giver. Whether someone is in need of knowledge and enlightenment or pep talk when feeling down, you can be sure that the Aquarian will be there to offer support. Aquarians are altruistic, unconventional and broad-minded. Friendship is very important and they enjoy the camaraderie of working in a team or with a group of people, especially if it’s towards a common aim. The Aquarian’s circle of friends encompasses people from different backgrounds and anyone is welcome, so long as they’ve got something interesting to say.” No wonder there are so many February birthdays around here!

“On the negative side, Aquarians do not like to be boxed in. (Do you think that Big Bend is big enough?) If an Aquarian feels like he or she is backed into a corner, the person committing this huge mistake will no doubt be on the receiving end of that Aquarian temper, which can be explosive. Also the typical Aquarius tends to hold on to bitter feelings and resentments, so don’t expect to be welcomed back with open arms!”

(“Age of Aquarius” continued)

“The Aquarian lifestyle is a little on the unconventional side because the Aquarius personality is naturally a bit rebellious and nonconformist. People born under this sign are less than thrilled with the rigidity of typical nine to five work schedules so they often hold less conventional jobs. Better yet they choose jobs that allow them the freedom to make their own schedules and march to their own drums. (I wonder how many Aquarians there are in Terlingua?)

Aquarians are extremely social people but they also like their personal space. Their need for personal time and space is a bit of a paradox, especially for their partners....is today a social or an anti-social day??? That should keep their ‘significant others’ on their toes!

So Happy Birthday to our many Aquarian volunteers!

Jan Allen
Jim Allen
Nancy Bump
Bud Frankenberger
Marshall McCall
Ed Navarro
Pam Rash
Mike Rash
Ed Rowan
Joan Kane
Mark Kirtley
Beth Bishop



Business matters

- The volunteer budget (along with everyone else’s budget) is under a certain amount of stress this year. The mileage reimbursement was raised in October 2008 to 40 cents a mile, however, I would appreciate all efforts toward combining trips and avoiding unnecessary journeys in personal vehicles. Any requests for mileage reimbursements need to include a description of the purpose of the journey. It is okay to attach an additional sheet with more information if that is easier.
- When you turn in reimbursement forms, please staple the original receipt to the form. Claudia or Jane will be happy to make a copy of the originals for your personal records.
- Any purchases that you make [for supplies, for instance] need to be approved **ahead of time** by Jane Brown (Volunteer account), Jim Hines (Reservation system account), or your supervisor (whatever account they operate out of).
- To save time, please submit your paperwork for reimbursement to Jane at least two weeks before you plan to leave the park. Once your paperwork has been submitted, please wait a week, then call Karen Gilmore at 477– 1101 to see if your check is ready. You will need to see Karen in person, in the Administration Office, Mon.-Friday., 8-5 to sign for your check. If you wait to submit on the day you leave or until after you leave, you may be waiting awhile for your reimbursement to catch up with you.



Go take a hike!

By Jane Brown

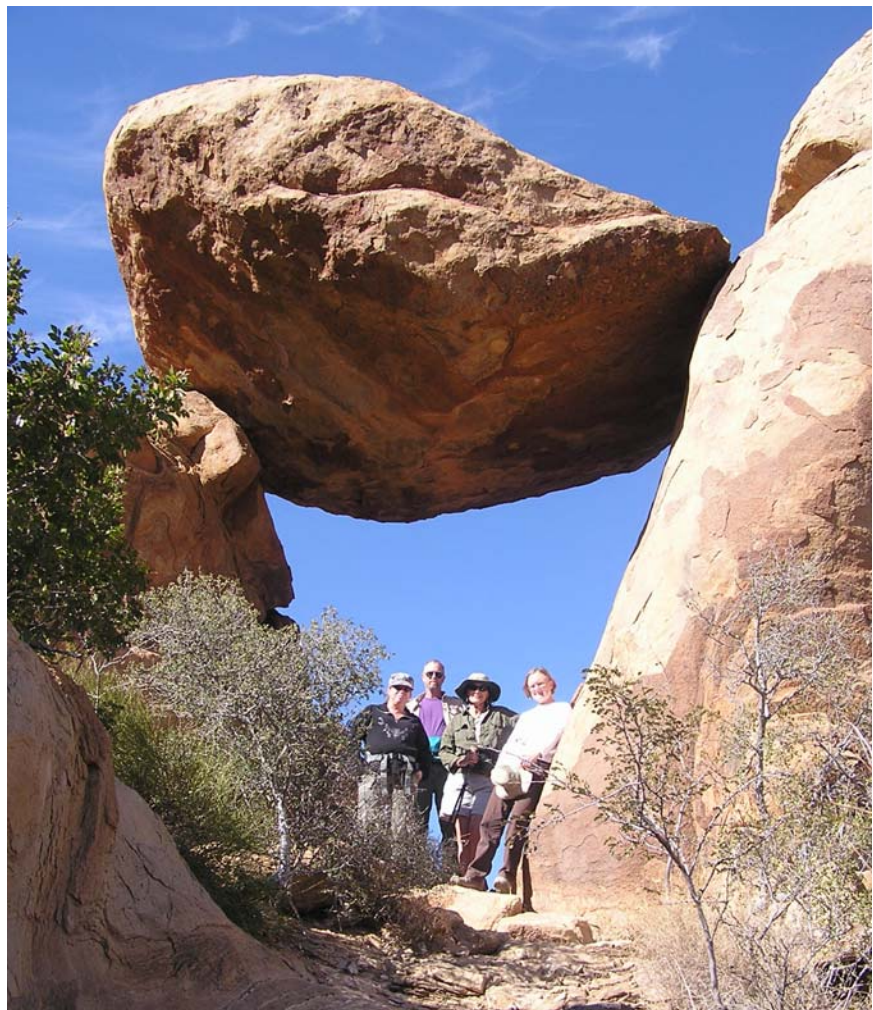
In the fall we started a "hiking club" here among the volunteers (and anyone else that wants to come along). When I was a volunteer in Spring of '08, I did a lot of solo hiking and it really is a lot more fun and safer to hike with others. Hopefully, these hikes will not be Olympic events, but rather moderate exercise with time to smell the flowers along the way. We will be taking a radio with us.

Spring Schedule

February 25 Wednesday 9:00 am Upper Burro Mesa Pouroff

March 10 Tuesday 9:00 am Pine Canyon

Unfortunately, mileage for getting to and from these hikes is not reimbursable, as this is a recreational activity. I wasn't planning on having sign in sheets or any kind of pre-registration although I will send out an email several days prior to the event. If you would like to catch a ride to the trailhead from the back parking lot at Panther Junction, it would be a good idea to let me know either via email at Jane_Brown@nps.gov or by phone 477-1195.



Jane Brown, Tim Wolcott, Renee Williams and Diane Flynn at Grapevine Hills on January 20th hiking club get together, with Lynn Williams as photographer.

Where have you been since your last volunteer experience in Big Bend.....

Mike and Wanda Copeland are back at RGV as campground hosts. This is their fourth volunteer stint at Big Bend. Since their departure last spring, they travelled to Missouri and Virginia to visit friends. They also attended a retirement party for a former marine buddy. Mike's friend was in service longer than any Marine that is alive today. To top it off they went to a Marine Corp reunion in Las Vegas and got stuck in the snow-storm that hit there the first part of December. Welcome back, Mike and Wanda!



Roy and Aletha Ellis and their son **Kenny** have returned for another season in Big Bend. They were headed to Grand Canyon as volunteers on the north rim for the summer when they left big Bend last spring. Unfortunately, due to a family emergency, their plans changed and they returned home to Virginia. We are glad to have them back this spring. They are volunteering as Campground hosts at Rio Grande Village.

Tim Wolcott is a new volunteer at the Chisos Basin Campground. Hailing from Rochester, New York, he is retired after a 30 year career with New York State Division of Parole. He started out as a Parole Officer and retired as Regional Director with 200 staff and 6000 parolees under his supervision. Tim has volunteered, over the past seven years, with the US Forest Service in Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming as a mounted Back Country Ranger. He also worked in New Orleans doing housing rehab after Hurricane Katrina. Tim is a avid hiker and has already joined the hiking club for their jaunt on January 20th to Grapevine Hills. We are happy to have him with us this season and know that he and Ed Davis will do a good job holding down the fort up in the Basin Campground.

Spotlight on Teresa and Gary Cowan

by Jane Brown

Although they will be leaving us very soon, it has been a pleasure to have Gary and Teresa Cowan as volunteers this past fall. Not only have they been great sports, Teresa was the photographer for the river trip and she has emailed me little vignettes of life at Persimmon Gap from time to time. She is a talented writer and has kept me amused. Here are a couple of examples of her work.



The Good

On Saturday a couple with an adolescent son came by the VC, Gary helped them with their plans for the weekend...they left the building when suddenly the man reentered with a Wal-Mart plastic bag....he came up to Gary and said.....here.....I know it is a long way to Wal-Mart....and left us two Foster's beers.....I looked at Gary and said....well....we don't have to put THAT in the Gregory and Peccary donation box.....he he he.....We enjoyed them this evening.....We love this place!

The Bad

You know the day after Christmas and the day after that were bad but NOT as bad as Thanksgiving Day was.....whew.....the 2nd day after Christmas we had Dennis the Menace in the building.....Mark Kirtley put a puzzle on the table and it was about 3/4 of the way DONE.....a 5 yr old that they called Buddy....started scattering it all over the place....pieces were flying.....ayyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy.....ha ha ha....it was kind of nerve wrecking then but kinda funny now.....he then began putting his little hand prints all over the windows and doors, hanging on that front door that just got sorta fixed.....he he he.....when Gary was cleaning the windows and doors later....he said.....well at least we have his fingerprints.....ha ha ha. Oh...it really is fun though.....I did River Permits, Backcountry Permits.....I had to warn Miss Timmer because a man came in and wanted a backcountry permit and I asked if he would please go to the PJ Zoo....he wanted it for Pinnacles.....and he said in an insistent tone....why can't I get the permit HERE? I explained that the Entrance Station Officer was at lunch and I was busy doing the entrance fees (I had a roomful of people).....AND you have to go by PJ anyway.....ha ha ha.....then he huffed and puffed and went outside and a woman came in asking the same thing.....I suspected they were together.....so I told her the same thing.....I offered to sell her an entrance fee IF she needed it....she said yes and I did that....geeeeeezz.

Gary has spent a lot of his time at Big Bend building up his hiking muscles and anticipating the day when he can do an overnight hike up into the Chisos. Last weekend he camped and hiked at Pine Canyon. He has been a real handyman around Persimmon Gap, installing a permit return box and replacing a cabinet door. Teresa and Gary have also assisted with river shuttles for the River Rangers.

Teresa has undertaken a project in the Interpretive Library for which she deserves special recognition. There are about 90 "silver boxes" which contain magazine and newspaper articles and pamphlets on various topics that have been collected since the beginning of time. She digitized this collection so that a computerized search is now possible. This has to be the SAR (Search and Rescue) Library Event of the last decade. Gwen Lanning, who was at Big Bend last summer with the Teachers in the Park program began this project and I know that she will be amazed that it has been brought to fruition.

We look forward to Teresa and Gary's return next year and thank them for all their help and positive karma this season.

Events in the Area

February 5, 6, 7 at 8:00 pm—Last weekend to catch “The Ballad of the Sad Café” presented by Last Minute Low Budget Productions. \$8.00 at the Theater Behind the Store in Terlingua (across the road from the entrance to the Ghost Town.

February 7—Pioneer Reunion sponsored by BBNHA. Reservations are a good idea. See the bulleting board by the back door at Panter Junction for details.

February 8 -The 8th Annual Terlingua Home Tour—Tours leave the Terlingua Ghosttown porch at Noon and 3:00. A wine and cheese reception will follow each tour at Espresso...Y Poco Mas. Tickets are \$20.00. Reservations are required. Call the library 371-2639 or in the evening, call Martha at 371-2399.

February 11—Community Dinner at the Ramada at Panther Junction Forever Resorts will furnish hot dogs and hamburgers with all the trimmings. Casa Grande will sell sodas and beer. Games... volleyball and more, music.

February 12-14 Mas o Meno 100K Mountain Bike Race. For more information go to www.desertsportstx.com

February 13 Roadrunner Chili Cookoff, Terlingua; For more information go to www.chili.org/cookoffs.html

February 25—Hiking Club Hike

February 27-March 1 Cowboy Texas Poetry Gathering,

Ongoing Activities

Yoga – Thurs. nights, 6-7:15 pm at San Vicente School Gym. Drop-in class \$10 or monthly \$30. Instructor: Cynthia Hood (432-371-2877 or cynthiahood1@hotmail.com).

Real Life Fellowship Telecast - 223 Bobcat Loop, Panther Junction, Sat. 7 pm.

NON-DENOMINATIONAL ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Every Sunday from 10:00-11:00 am
in the school meeting room

For more info please contact Rhonda Binion 477-2423



We are looking for a few good stories!

There is now a blog on the Volunteer Page of the BIBE website and we are looking for stories, reminiscences and personal narratives about your volunteer experience at Big Bend. Email any contributions to me at Jane_Brown@nps.gov and I will post your musings and a photo.

New Bulletin Board

Ever since my arrival in August, I have been eyeing the very unattractive, unused bulletin board across from the volunteer uniform cabinets at PJ Headquarters. I have received permission from Mike Boren to put it to use as an informational center for the volunteers. Some of the things that I want to display are:

- Special projects that have been undertaken by volunteers, including information about the status of the project, whether it is an ongoing project, degree of completion, photos of the work, requests for additional help, etc. This will give incoming volunteers an opportunity to connect with current volunteers and provide more continuity for ongoing projects.
- Uniform standards
- Requests from supervisors for help on a project
- Upcoming Volunteer Events
- Information that you might want to post that would be useful to incoming or current volunteers.

I will be asking for your suggestions and information about projects that you have been working on!