

ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

Editor: MaryKay Brady

James Bear

If you do not recognize this name you missed a great program at our October meeting. To some, James is the manager of our local Domino's Pizza, but to the Friends he is an expert on the snakes of the world including those we might find in Luna County.

He has 140 snakes at his home that consume 2,000 rodents every 3 months. He feeds his snakes every 4 days.

His presentation included LIVE specimens of the venomous snakes found here: black tail rattlesnake, banded rock rattlesnake, western diamondback rattlesnake and prairie rattlesnake.

He also brought non venomous snakes common to our Chihuahuan Desert: long nose snake, hog nose snake, desert king snake, Sonoran gopher snake, coach whip snake, and Painted Desert glassy snake.

As a survivor of a rattlesnake bite, he was able to share his experience with a venomous bite which was not for the squeamish.

Rattlesnakes prefer temperatures of 75 degrees, it takes 24 hours to restore venom after a strike, can live up to 25 years, shed their skin 6-7 times per year or if injured, hibernate from 60-90 days or as long as 4 ½ months. When night temperatures are in the low 40's they go into hibernation. Our recent rains have increased the food supply for rodents, so the snake population will increase also. Babies are born in July. They can have up to 58 at a time! We had a chance to

October, November, December, 2006

touch the non venomous snakes and dispelled many myths. They are not slimy, but rather smooth. Julie took some great pictures of each one. They are in the scrapbook.

Making Luminarias

22 people attended our regular November meeting. We broke our 2005 record-1,152 luminarias made in 1 hour! Thank you to all the bag folders, sand fillers, candle pokers and runners. It was a noisy, fun time. Sally has pictures of the event that will be added to our scrapbook.

Festival of Lights

This was the fifth year for this annual event. Our attendance was way up from earlier years—we started out with 400 hot cups and ran out! Hot cocoa was the beverage of choice. Irene Jacquez of Las Cruces made the special Mexican holiday cookies as usual. Our own Brenda and Pat brought their homemade cookies also. Greg provided holiday music. We had 37 4 H members to light the candles this year. Also, about 12 Girl Scouts attended to help along with singing carols. It was a nice addition to the evening. (Next year we will provide lights and microphones so we can all hear their sweet voices.) We received \$69 in donations which included a \$10 bill from a real supporter. Thank you to all of you who helped on this special night. Nancy donated another large coffee pot. Now if we could ever figure out the electricity needs, we would have it made. Jesus will be working with Santa Fe to increase our parking area. It is a critical issue when we have functions so well attended as this one.

BONES

The bones of every organization are made from four kinds of bones. There are the “Wishbones” who spend their time wishing someone else would do the work. Then there are the “Jawbones” who do all the talking but do very little else. Then there are the “Knucklebones” who knock everything and anybody else who tries to do something new.

Fortunately every organization has some “BACKBONES” who get under the load and do the work needed. Let’s all be the BACKBONES and support our group. You to could be a “backbone” and volunteer.

(Source: Golden Spike News-10/06)

GARDEN CARE

We shall continue our schedule of the third Wednesday of each month. In January we will meet on the 17th at 10:00 a m. In the summer we start at 8:00 a m as it gets to hot with a later start. Plan to spend about 2 hours each time. Bring your favorite tools and gloves. We hope to include a bit of time for plant identification along with the birds and butterflies of each season.

MEETINGS

Once again our meetings are the last Wednesday of each month. The Board meets at 9:00 a m and the General meeting follows at 10:00 a m. Everyone is invited to attend both meetings. We often have special guest speakers and/or presentations that start about 10:30 and run for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Coffee, water and donuts are provided.

Meetings are free and open to the public. We have a special guest speaker for our meeting January 31st. William “Bill” Anderson is a former mining engineer, prospector and thunder egg expert.

Please mark your calendar for an opportunity to learn about our area.

SUNSET magazine

Thanks to our grant from TDC (Tourist Development Committee), we should have a 4 color 1” ad in the February travel section. Friends will also be included on the Reader Response card as well as the Sunset Marketplace. With these two features we will be able to count the responses received! We were able to get a great rate of \$450 for what is called “remnant” space with a circulation of 1.1 million.

KEEP NEW MEXICO BEAUTIFUL

Rather than applying for grant funds this year, we are teaming up with KNMB for our Desert Alive! program to be held Saturday, April 14th. Dusty Roadrunner will be attending to provide education about recycling and to promote civic pride. This along with our **native plant sale**, educational activities, guided plant and butterfly walks should make a full day of events.

THANK YOU; THANK YOU

Because of you: our members, sponsors, Park staff, and Park volunteers we have made exceptional progress this year. You should take pride in making this our best year ever! It takes people like you to make things happen.

Our mission is to promote, preserve and protect Rockhound/Spring Canyon State parks.

The broadest and maybe the most meaningful definition of volunteering: Doing more than you have to because you want to, in a cause you consider good.

RENEWAL TIME

Enclosed with this newsletter, is a self addressed postage paid envelope. Your response is appreciated.

Active voting members:

Willing to be an officer, board member or committee member

\$15 Individual

\$20 Family

\$10 Senior (single or couple)

\$500 Lifetime member

We have committee's for membership, garden care, fundraising, event planning, and newsletter.

You will receive free day admittance to parks, postcards, newsletters and **native plant sale discounts**.

Sponsor non voting members:

\$25 Friend

\$50 Good Friend

\$ 75 Very Good Friend

\$100 Best Friend

Over \$100 Special Friend

You will receive postcards, newsletters and **native plant sale discounts**.

We are a 501C3 tax exempt group. Your donations are tax deductible. Receipts are provided for your records.

Your financial assistance goes towards helping preserve and protect some of the most beautiful places on the planet.

Encounters of the Horse Kind

Submitted by Greg & Sandy Scarpella

The property that we purchased one year ago near Deming was set up for horse boarding with 30 pipe stalls and a circle corral so we decided to continue providing the service to travelers along Interstate 10. Even though Sandy and I

had grown up with parents who were horse people we never in our wildest dreams expected what was to come our way. Now for the most part people who own horses are pretty friendly grassroots kind of folks. They are generally practical and can work with any situation but some of the horse people we encountered were either from a different planet or in a stratosphere above our own. In late summer an owner came through and was concerned that our uncovered stalls would give her horses sunburn and refused to stay. We were totally confused since any horse I've ever had never got sunburned no matter how long they were left out. We were just about ready to build shelters when we learned that a few "show horses" are kept under blankets so long they loose almost all their hair for the purpose of competition. We didn't build shelters. Another encounter was with an owner who could only house their horses in a barn that had wooden stalls with a rubber mat on a concrete floor and the metal pens were unacceptable. Needless to say they didn't stay. The ultimate experience was when an owner arrived during our Monsoon, dropped off the horses, and then went into town for a meal. The sky was cloudy when they arrived but by dark a thunderstorm developed with the typical high winds and lightening. While we were out watching the show in the sky these folks came rushing back into the yard, loaded up their horses, and began to pull out. When I stopped them to ask if there was any problem the owner informed me that their horses were not accustomed to severe weather and since we had no protection they had to move on. Now I believe that I'm an astute business person and I know the value of customer oriented service, but to build a Horse

Holiday Inn with all the amenities that only a few horse owners desire would either drive up the cost of overnight stabling to a point most folks transporting could not afford or stick out like the abandoned Casa Grande in Arizona. For now and into the New Year we'll stay as we are living among the nice, practical, homey folks of New Mexico.

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Brady, Derek & Katha

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Williams, Diane
Peterson, Gene & Joyce

SPONSORS

FRIEND (\$25)

Nelson, Jean
Turner, Jack (JT's Auto)

BEST FRIENDS (\$100)

Howard & Patty Roth
Jerry Owens

SPECIAL FRIENDS (over \$100)

Mountain Equipment
Larry Ceranski & Nora Devlin
Country Club Estates
Jim & Barbara Reedy

HONORARY MEMBERS

All the Park volunteers
Charles & Veronika Barnes

NEW FOR 2007!

SPECIAL FRIENDS (Over \$100)

Howard & Patty Roth

Thank you so very much for being our first 2007 Special Friend!!!!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Friends of Rockhound State Park, Inc.
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Let's recycle our cans! Bring them on Wednesday's