



# VIP2VIP



Season 13, Volume 2

Big Bend National Park's Volunteer Newsletter

November 1, 2013

## **Current Volunteers**

### **Castolon**

- Bill & Patti Marvin—Camphosts (4th)
- Dave Conway—Camphost (3rd)
- Bob Douat—Visitor Center (8th)
- Ron & Jane Payne—Visitor Center (6th)
- Steve & Tina Ehrman—Backcountry (8th)
- Mark & Cora Schuler—Maintenance

### **Chisos Basin**

- Ed Davis—Camphost (9th)
- Doug & Kay Combs-Camphosts (9th)
- Dave England—Visitor Center (1st)
- John & Cyndee Perry—Visitor Center (1st)

### **Panther Junction**

- Elaine & John Jonker—VaRP River (7th)
- Joan Spalding- ScRM (1st)
- Bill & Mary Clark - (ScRM) (3rd)
- Riley & Karen Caton—EMS (3rd)
- Nick Lambert —Maintenance (1st)
- Larry & Julie Brabec—Maintenance (1st)
- Antonio Cantu—SCA ScRM
- Monica Oscuro—SCA ScRM

### **Persimmon Gap**

- Mark Kirtley—Visitor Center (17th)
- Leonard & Sally Timm-Visitor Center (1st)

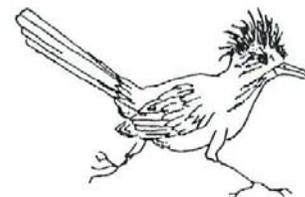
### **Rio Grande Village**

- Amy Gibson—Backcountry (2nd)
- Steve Blythe—Backcountry (2nd)
- Daisy Welch-Backcountry (3rd)
- Jep Robertson & Renae Clark-Camphosts (1st)
- Wayne & Claudia Nicholson-Camphosts (1st)
- Glenda & Robert Overfelt—Visitor Center (6th)
- Terry Brackeen—Visitor Center (3rd)

### **Resident and remote volunteers**

- Reine Wonite— Park Videographer (11th)
- Stacy Sirotnak—SCA ScRM
- Jim Bishop-BBNHA

## **El Campo Backcountry Permits in real time**



**Welcome back returning volunteers!** We are glad you are here for another great season at Big Bend. New volunteers...we hope that you have a great experience this fall! One of the new things this fall that everyone is excited about is our new El Campo Backcountry Permit system. This web-based software program was developed by volunteer Jim Bishop, who has traditionally provided volunteer services to BBNHA. He developed the software program that runs the BBNHA cash registers for the bookstores and over the course of a few years has donated 3000 hours of his time keeping them up and running and now in the development of El Campo for NPS.

El Campo Backcountry Permit System will allow all the outlying visitor centers to enter backcountry permit information and check availability of backcountry sites without making any phone calls. The permits will be in “real time”, so it should be just about impossible to double book a site. The visitor center volunteers will be able to just turn the laptop around on the counter and get the visitor to fill in much of his personal information, so you won't have to say, “How do you spell that?”.

Another feature of this software will allow visitors to plan their backcountry excursions on their own device and upload it to where the ranger will be able to access it. This feature should result in the visitors giving more thought ahead of time about exactly where they want to hike. We hope that it will reduce waiting time for Backcountry Permits upon arrival, however, **it is not a reservation system.** It is easy for anyone to see which campsites are available and for rangers and dispatch to access all permit information immediately. You can check out this web-based system at <http://75.41.144.100>

## New Faces at Big Bend this fall



**Jep Robertson** is camphosting at Rio Grande Village this fall. His wife Renae is still teaching at the college level and she will be joining him as much as possible during school breaks at Thanksgiving and Christmas. They live in Arkadelphia, Arkansas and have two dogs, who will be joining Jep at the campground very soon. Jep, a retired college professor, has spent a lot of vacations at Big Bend National Park and we are happy that he decided to join the volunteer team this season!

**John and Cyndee Perry** both grew up in the panhandle of Texas but have spent the last 29 years in Georgia. John was an engineer with a Belgium petroleum company and Cyndee was a preschool director. They recently volunteered at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, co-hosting with Mike and Nancy Coe at the campground there, which is a very busy place. John and Cyndee will be volunteering at Chisos Basin Visitor Center and residing at Panther Junction this year.



**Mark Schuler** and his wife **Cora** are currently volunteering at Castolon, working on an apartment rehab with Jason Fielder of the Maintenance Division. Mark is an employee of Texas Instruments, but spends every available vacation at Big Bend, often as a short-term volunteer. Cora is very musical and enjoys singing and playing the piano. Mark is a talented photographer and we are delighted to have them as volunteers.

**Dave England** is the guy that you see driving around with a boat on top of his car. He is from Brookline, Massachusetts and recently sold his 1683 house which he spent many years restoring. Dave grew up in Alamogordo, New Mexico and is glad to be back in the desert. He has volunteered at Fredrick Law Olmsted N.H.S., J.F.K. (AKA Washington-Longfellow) N.H.S., Capitol Reef N.M. and Acadia National Park (2005-2009). We are glad to have him at Chisos Basin Visitor Center this fall!



This is a season of first's for **Wayne and Claudia Nicholson** - their first volunteer experience with NPS and their first season as full-time RVers. They will be assisting at Rio Grande Village Campground this fall. Claudia is originally from Corpus Christie, TX but the couple has spent most of their time in northern Virginia. Wayne loves to travel and Claudia enjoys cooking.

## More New Faces at Big Bend this fall

**Joan Spalding** will be assisting Tom Alex in Science and Resource Management. She studied and worked briefly as a field archaeologist in her younger days and is anxious to get back into that work now that she has retired. Joan divides her year between Longboat Key, Florida and New Hampshire and is retired Assistant Dean of the School of Business at the University of Massachusetts.



**Larry and Julie Brabec** are full-time RVers and will be volunteering with the Maintenance Division, living at Panther Junction. Larry will be assisting Eric Stark, the park plumber for about 5 months. Julie still works part-time remotely, but plans on helping with some office work as time allows. They have volunteered previously at Lake Thompson Recreation Area in South Dakota, Little Missouri State Park in North Dakota and St. Catherine Creek NWR in Mississippi.

**Leonard and Sally Timm** are from Kansas originally, but most recently spent three years in Costa Rica, where they worked on their Spanish. Leonard is a retired publishing executive and Sally was the executive director of a global public health society. After their Costa Rica experience, they wanted to “do something to supplement operations of public lands in the United States for the next 3-5 years.” Prior to coming to Big Bend, they spent the summer volunteering at Mount Rogers National Recreation Area in Virginia. Leonard and Sally will be manning the Persimmon Gap Visitor Center and are travelling with their dog, Sprockett.



**Nick Lambert** from Howe, Oklahoma is volunteering with the Maintenance Division this fall assisting Oscar Gonzales, our park electrician. Nick works seasonally for the USFS at Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming, taking care of about 11 campgrounds and 5 Ranger Guard Stations.

**Ann Wildermuth, who volunteered last year at Chisos Basin Visitor Center** has joined the ranks of the employed and is now working at the Boquillas Port of Entry. Hopefully she will still come to the occasional potluck!



## Planned Community Room Gallery

The walls of the Community Room are soon to become an art gallery and your photo could be among the artwork shown. This will be an opportunity to show the beauty of Big Bend to staff, visitors and guests of the park. Submit your photographs for consideration by **Friday, November 8th** to Jennette Jurado. Include the artist's name and title of picture. Event contact: [Jennette\\_Jurado@nps.gov](mailto:Jennette_Jurado@nps.gov) or 432-477-1109

Submission Guidelines:

Submit up to 5 photos in each of two categories:

- 1) landscape (ex: Del Carmen sunset, Chisos Mountains, South Rim vista)
- 2) Single resource (ex: bear, bird, stars, flower, cactus spine, etc.)

Submissions should be 8x10 prints on photo paper. Consider the kiosks at TruValue, Walmart, home printer, or online (shutterfly, snapfish). Printing usually runs \$1-3 each.

Enter submissions **by Friday, November 8**, including artist's name and title of picture.

Community members (NPS, VIPS, CBP, Forever Resorts, SVISD and families) are welcome to submit.

Photo viewing will take place at the **Casa Grande Gallery Gala on November 13th**. Everyone will have a chance to vote for their favorite photos. Pictures will remain in the Community Room for a few days after, allowing additional time for voting. The Management Team will make final gallery selections.

## **Just Saw Something Cool?**

*Help Get It Into BIBE's Video Archives!*

Thanks to the Friends of Big Bend National Park, BIBE has some great professional-quality high-definition video equipment. But much as she loves the park, VIP videographer Reine Wonite is NOT omniscient. Too many times, she doesn't find out about flowers in bloom, foliage in fall colors, animals hanging out, etc., etc., etc., until waaay after the fact! She needs YOUR help. If you see something cool, try to get a message to her ASAP. First step is to leave a message on her home phone machine (477-2595). Then try contacting her via David (477-1107) and Jane (477-1106).



## Things to remember when you are at Big Bend National Park

by Jane Brown

Look at your feet when you are walking. Stop walking before you look around to admire the scenery. Tripping on rocks is an all too common occurrence here at Big Bend!

My little flashlight is very handy, but somehow at Big Bend at night, it seems like a tiny little flicker of light. This is one dark place; in fact, it really is one of the darkest places in the United States. Be prepared for the dark with a big flashlight and don't leave home without it!

All park employees, including volunteers, should always look professional, and therefore need to have neat, clean uniforms which meet the NPS uniform standards. The Volunteer Office can explain where to find the closest washer and dryer. Only wear your volunteer uniform when you are on duty. Do not wear your uniform out of the park unless you are driving a shuttle. Never wear your volunteer uniform in a park where you are not currently signed up as a volunteer. Do not wear bits and pieces of your uniform. It is an all or nothing situation.

If you decide to go hiking by yourself, let someone know where you are going.

Learn more about volunteering in the national parks at [www.npsvipnetwork.org](http://www.npsvipnetwork.org). You can read about other volunteer's experiences at various parks and even add your own.

The volunteer office has a set of hiking poles, binoculars, rain jackets, heavy coats, work gloves, work shirts, a good supply of brown slacks, two sleeping bags, two big backpacks, lots of daypacks, some household items and a bicycle that we are willing to loan to any volunteers for use during their stay at Big Bend.

**Hiking Club reconvenes on Wednesday, November 20!** If you are new to Big Bend, the hiking club is a chance for volunteers (and anyone else who wants to come!) to get together for a short hike, visit with one another and see something that you might not see on your own. These hikes are not Olympic events, but rather moderate exercise with time to "smell the flowers" along the way. We will be taking a radio with us.

**This month's hike will be in the East District.** More details will follow via email around Nov. 14.



**December 3—Holiday Auction—** Casa Grande is the employee organization that sponsors social event in the park. Every year they have a holiday auction which is the principal fund-raising event, and is always a lot of fun. Make a donation! Ideas for donations include jewelry, quilts, bread, dinners, photos, babysitting, dog sitting, shuttles, knife sharpening, yard work, car washing, paintings, town trips. Start sewing, baking, painting, thinking. If you can't get to the Interp Office to sign up, call Claudia [477-1108] or email, (Claudia\_Arnberger@nps.gov and she will put you on the list.

## Events in the Area

**Saturday November 2- Old Ore mountain bike ride** - The ride is for Big Bend employees (including VIPs). For those interested, we will meet at the gravel yard on Dagger Flat at 0900. The ride is about 3 hours down to the Route 12 junction. It's mostly downhill for about 27 miles. Casa Grande is helping with a refreshment/support truck that will be staged about half-way through. Park Volunteers will sweep the road behind us and pick up any riders that need a lift. The shuttle: If you want to ride, please contact Michael Ryan 477-2801 so that we can help arrange shuttle support to your vehicle. We'll need to know how many riders there will be. All riders will need to carry their own gear and water for the day.

**November 2—Day of the Dead**, Terlingua-held in the Terlingua Ghostown Cemetery around 6 pm.

**November 1-3—Chili Cookoff**—47th Annual Terlingua International Chili Championship Cookoff; for more information go to [www.chili.org/terlingua](http://www.chili.org/terlingua) or call 210-877-8827.

**Sunday, November 3**—Don't forget to "fall back"!

**Friday, November 8**—Last day to submit photographs for the "Gallery Gala" - See page 2.

**November 9-Rio Grande River Cleanup** sponsored by Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. Volunteer opportunities are available at both parks. Contact Jane Brown 477-1106 or [Jane\\_Brown@nps.gov](mailto:Jane_Brown@nps.gov) for more information.

**Saturday, November 9 1st Annual Big Bend Brew-Off 6:00 pm**, Panther Junction Ramada. Homebrewers make your best 5 gallon batch of homebrew. Judges/Tasters: you will be provided with sampling cup, score card and arm band. Cost is \$10.00 per person with 1/2 going to the 1st place brewer and 1/2 going to the Casa Grande Association/Ride for Trails Club. You will be invited to the open bar with all the entered brews after the competition.

**Wednesday, November 13— VIP Potluck Drop In at Superintendent Cindy Ott-Jones House 5:30-7 pm**, followed by the **Gallery Gala** (see page 4). Bring your favorite appetizer to share for a drop-in at the Superintendent's house. Drinks will be provided. At 7 pm we will migrate to the Community Room for the Gallery Gala and more appetizers (2nd course) and art show.

**Sunday, November 17—VIP Drop-in at David Elkowitz (Chief of Interpretation) and Reine's house** on Terlingua Ranch. **1–5 pm** This is a rare opportunity to visit a unique structure north of Terlingua. If you went a couple of years ago, David promises that the road is now much improved. Drinks, chips and dip will be provided; bring an appetizer to share if you want. Carpooling is highly recommended as it is a long drive. Jane will be taking her Subaru from Study Butte, if anyone wants to catch a ride with her.

**November 22-23, 2012 Art Walk and Gallery Night**, Alpine, Texas—art galleries will be open until late into the night and special events are scheduled. [www.artwalkalpine.com](http://www.artwalkalpine.com)

**Thursday, Nov. 28 (Thanksgiving Day) 5th Annual Turkey Trot 5K Walk/Run**-8 am Panther Junction. Contact information: Allen Etheridge 477-1185

**December 7—Big Bend's 3rd Annual Triathlon** - Hot Springs/Rio Grande Village area. Start training for this canoeing, biking, and running event. Entry fee of \$12 for Casa Grande members, and \$15 for non-members. Prizes awarded. Open only to Big Bend residents and employees - not the public. More information will be forthcoming. **Canoe:** *Hot Springs to Daniels Ranch (2.5 miles)* **Bike:** *Daniels Ranch to Boquillas Canyon and Return (11 miles)* **Run:** *Daniels Ranch to Hot Springs (3 miles)* **You can be part of a relay team . Race starts at 9:30 am at the Hot Springs.**

**Every Wednesday at 7 PM there is basketball at the court next to San Vicente School at Panther Junction.** Everyone is welcome and cheerleaders are needed.