



Steve Radack, Commissioner

Harris County Precinct 3

**PRECINCT THREE THIRD QUARTER REPORT
2011**

Four miniature horses, once major tourist attractions at a Brenham monastery, are now on display at the popular wildlife sanctuary in Harris County Precinct Three's Bear Creek Pioneers Park.

Commissioners Court approved a request by Precinct Three Commissioner Steve Radack on Aug. 23 to accept the donation of the horses from the now-defunct Monastery of St. Clare Miniature Horse Farm. The unanimous court vote also authorized precinct park personnel to travel to Washington County to retrieve the two colts and two mares.

The miniature horses were once part of the herd bred by and tended to by cloistered nuns at the monastery. Visitors from around the world had visited the rural farm since the nuns set up shop there after moving from Corpus Christi in the mid-1980s. During busy years, more than 20,000 visitors would make the trek to the farm to pet the animals and buy souvenirs and horses.

As the nuns aged and their numbers diminished, it became tough for them to care for the herd. The decision was made to shut the miniature horse farm down, turn the property over to the Pax Christi Institute of Corpus Christi and convert the facility to a retreat. Only a small herd will be kept there now, but tours will still be given. The remaining horses will be cared for by the relatives of one of the nuns who had been assisting in tending the larger herd.

The decision to close down the farm meant new homes had to be found for many of the miniature horses. A sharp-eyed Precinct Three employee noticed media reports about the demise of the farm and alerted Commissioner Radack, who ordered park personnel to see if anything could be done to help the nuns and give some of the horses a new home.

As a result, the two mares – Carnival Glass and Mardi Gras – and the colts – Java and Pepperjack – now reside in Precinct Three. The mares are older. Carnival Glass was born in 1978 and Mardi Gras in 1982. The colts are younger. Java and Pepperjack were both born in 2009. The lifespan of miniature horses is 30 to 40 years. Each horse is anywhere from 200 to 250 pounds. Precinct Three accepted the older horses in the event that the monastery had a hard time finding them a new home.

The miniature horses will join the other animals at the sanctuary in the park, which is located at 3535 War Memorial Drive. Already featured there are more than 60 different species of wildlife – several kinds of tropical birds and birds of prey, an American Bison, deer, an emu, a rhea, pigs, goats, other swine, sheep and donkeys.

Beverly Kaufman to be honored

Pending the approval of Commissioners Court, Commissioner Radack will name a new dog park in west Harris County for former Harris County Clerk Beverly Kaufman. The longtime county official retired from office at the end of 2010 after opting not to seek a fifth term.

Kaufman began her public career working in the office of former Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay in the 1970s. Later, in 1994, she was appointed to fill the unexpired term as county clerk after the death of Molly Pryor, who had been appointed to the post only months before. Pryor was appointed after the death of longtime clerk Anita Rodeheaver.

In addition to traditional duties as the county's guardian of records, the county clerk is also the chief election officer. During her time in office, Kaufman won praise from both political parties for her evenhanded handling of political contests.

After the controversial election recount in Florida in the 2000 presidential election, she guided the county through its conversion from a paper ballot punch-card system to the electronic voting system used today. In 2010, as she was getting ready to run her last election, she also had to guide her office and voters through a catastrophic warehouse fire that destroyed much of the county's voting equipment.

The new facility named for Kaufman is located in Katy at Paul D. Rushing Park, 9114 Katy Hockley Road. It features two separate sections – a 2.5-acre area for dogs 20 pounds and under and a 5.5-acre area for larger dogs. The sections are in two different parts of the park complex. Large dogs are not allowed in the section for smaller canines, but patrons with smaller dogs can take their pets into the big dog section.

Construction on the new dog park – the fourth to be built by Commissioner Radack – began April 26 and was finished this summer. The handicapped-accessible facility features shade canopies, dog cooling stations, benches and drinking fountains.

The innovative Precinct Three dog parks were among the first built in the nation and have quickly become one of the more popular amenities in Commissioner Radack's inventory of parks and recreational facilities. The other three dog parks are the Millie Bush Dog Park, located in George Bush Park at 16756 Westheimer Parkway; the Danny Jackson Family Dog Park near U.S. 59 at the intersection of Loop 610 and Westpark Drive and the dog park in Congressman Bill Archer Park, 3201 State Highway 6 North.

With this facility, Commissioner Radack has increased the number of parks in the precinct to 69. Now, Precinct Three operates and maintains 28,656 acres of park land. There is also an environmentally-friendly network of hike-and-bike-trails that covers 112 miles. When Commissioner took office in January 1989, Precinct Three had 10 parks covering 18,612 acres and 3.9 miles of trail mileage.

Annual Hummingbird Festival

Commissioner Radack's office will host the annual Kleb Woods Hummingbird Festival on Saturday, Sept. 17 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. The event will be at the Kleb Woods Nature Center, 20303 Draper Road at Mueschke Road in Tomball.

Hummingbird experts will discuss banding the little creatures, their biology and how to best photograph them. There will also be an educational program on owls, planting a garden to attract hummingbirds and how to identify the birds and care for those wintering in the area. Games and activities for children will be provided. Admission is free and patrons are encouraged to bring their own refreshments. Drinks and snacks will not be sold.

For more information, call (281) 357-5324.

Halloween Safe Night scheduled

Commissioner Radack has scheduled his annual Harris County Precinct Three Halloween Safe Night at the Westside Service Center, 16635 Clay Road, on Friday, Oct. 28 from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Refreshments and popcorn will be provided. There will be games, prizes and candy for the kids. Admission is free and a costume contest is scheduled for 7:15 p.m. For more information, call (281) 463-6300.

Voting precinct suggestions sought

Also, if residents wish to make comments or suggestions regarding boundary lines of voting precincts, please contact Linda Townsend at Harris County Precinct Three via email at linda_townsend@hctx.net. She can also be reached by telephone at (713)755-6306.

Generally, boundary changes can be made by Commissioners Court in March or April of odd-numbered years. Those changes take effect in January of the following year. However, due to redistricting, the 2011 process has been delayed.

The process of changing voting precinct boundary lines is dictated by state law and contingent upon U.S. Department of Justice approval. Some of the general guidelines state that a voting precinct must include a suitable building for a polling place and that a precinct may not contain territory from more than one of each of the following types of territorial units – a commissioner’s precinct, a justice precinct, a congressional district, a state representative district, a state senatorial district, a city council district or ward in a city with a population of 10,000 or more or a State Board of Education district.

Where to find construction updates and how to reach us

Updates on Precinct Three road and construction projects previously featured in this report can now be seen on Commissioner Radack’s county website at www.pct3.hctx.net. That data will be updated monthly since this report is now generated quarterly.

As always, Precinct Three encourages comments and questions. You can mail them to Commissioner Radack’s office at 1001 Preston, 9th Floor, Houston, Texas 77002 or email us at pct3@hctx.net.