

**Bright Leaf T-Shirts, Caps, & Patches
in Vibrant Colors**



Caps \$20



Friends of Bright Leaf
Patches \$5



T-Shirts \$15

To order, contact Sally Scott at 453-2289

Calendar of Events

February Program Meeting, Cliff Shackelford
Tuesday, February 14th, 7:00 pm

February Event
Saturday, February 18th, 9:00am - 1:00 pm
Non-Native Plant Removal Work Day
(Rain Date: February 25th)

March Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 14th, 6:30 pm

April Program Meeting
Tuesday, April 11th, 7:00 pm

April Event - Austin Nature Day
Saturday, April 15th, 9:00am - 2:00 pm

May Board Meeting
Tuesday, May 9th, 6:30 pm

Monthly Interpretive Hikes

Interpretive Hikes are scheduled for the second Saturday and second Sunday of every month. Meet at the parking lot at the north entrance to the park.

February Interpretive Hikes
Saturday, February 11, 9:00 - 11:00 am
Sunday, February 12, 9:00 - 11:00 am

March Interpretive Hikes
Saturday, March 11, 9:00 - 11:00 am
Sunday, March 12, 9:00 - 11:00 am

April Interpretive Hikes
Saturday, April 8, 9:00 - 11:00 am
Sunday, April 9, 9:00 - 11:00 am

May Interpretive Hikes
Sunday, May 13, 8:30 - 10:30 am
Saturday, May 14, 8:30 - 10:30 am

Thanks to our 2005 Sponsors



Friends of Bright Leaf
P.O. Box 27921
Austin, Texas 78755-7921

Friends of Bright Leaf



Friends of Bright Leaf

Winter 2006

“Nostoc” (Nostoc sp.)

This ancient organism, classified either as a cyanobacterium or a blue-green alga, is bizarre any way you look at it. First of all, *Nostoc* is terrestrial, not marine like kelp and most other edible algae, or fresh-water like pond slime. And it's well adapted to Austin and westward (e.g., the flat, open top of trail 3). In wet weather it actively grows, as dark-green lumps of ropery goo [photo]. In dry weather it goes dormant, drying up black and curly, like dead lizards. Either way, it's a highly nutritious food for any lost, starving Texan who can ignore what it looks like. Indeed, in Mexico and northern Africa, other species of *Nostoc* are a regular part of people's diets. The most bizarre thing about cyanobacteria in general, however, is that we humans wouldn't have evolved without them. In primordial seas, they were primary producers of oxygen, creating an environment for complex organisms. (photo: R. Barker; info: B. Kirkland)



Georgia Lucas: The Lady of Bright Leaf

As April Passes

The hills are hung with buttercups
The meadows bright with silver grasses
And everything is new again
As April passes.

She skipped along the country roads
And waltzed beside the sun-lit lake
Then danced away but left my heart
And soul awake.
Georgia B. Lucas, 1946

Georgia Lucas was born in 1917 and grew up in the fourteen room family house on Academy Drive here in Austin, Texas. Her upbringing as an only child was that of a 'proper' southern lady. Her father, a pharmacist, was from South Carolina. His father, Georgia's grandfather, was an Oxford graduate. When he moved to Charleston from England, he imported the bricks to build a mansion there. Georgia's mother was from Alabama. So, it was in this world that Georgia started writing poetry as a child.

Georgia attended the University of Texas and studied journalism. While there she published some of her poems in a school anthology. In 1938, her junior year, her father passed away. Georgia left school to manage the real estate he left. Land in the Texas panhandle included oil and gas fields.

Ms. Lucas turned out to be well suited to this world of business while at the same time remaining a writer of poetry. She described herself as being a "ruffled sort of person".

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VALENTINE'S DAY PROGRAM

CLIFF SHACKELFORD, author of "Hummingbirds of Texas"

Tuesday, February 14th, 7:00p.m.

Lucas Conference Center

Come hear Cliff talk about his new book and enjoy a Valentine's Day party at the same time. Cliff will have copies of his book available and will also bring us up to date on how to attract hummers and owls. Cliff is the statewide non-game ornithologist at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and runs the Partners in Flight program. He wrote the book with Madge Lindsay and C. Mark Klym, and the proceeds go to the Hummingbird Roundup held each year in Rockport-Fulton. I have taken several classes from Cliff and can vouch for his ability to speak fluently and for his awesome knowledge. For information, call Sally Scott, 453-2289.

Letter from the Board President

Dear Friends of Bright Leaf,

As we welcome another year here at Bright Leaf, change will soon be upon us. Officially, as I write this, Bright Leaf is still a part of Texas Parks and Wildlife. But that will be changing very soon when we go under the wing of the Austin Community Foundation. Some things have continued on without interruption, like the fall open house and the monthly hikes. Other things, like the use of the conference center, have been put on hold until new use policies can be put into place. The Bright Leaf phone number, 459-7269, will remain the same. If you ever have any questions, about the transition, about hikes, or about the Friends group, feel free to give us a call.

At the fall open house, we had 115 visitors who hiked the preserve and 17 volunteers who guided hikes, welcomed visitors, and helped out in all sorts of ways. Funding for refreshments was provided by HEB. We held our annual election for new board members, honored those stepping down, and adopted revisions to our by-laws. Stepping down were Tom Delaney, Bonnie Mills, David Preister, and Barbara Ruud. Joining us on the board are Joe Beach, Kurt Hill, and Marshall Johnston. They 'hit the ground running' and we look forward to working with them in 2006.

We need to send out a special thank you to many people. Cleigh Nease once again hosted our donor/volunteer appreciation party. He is a host without compare! And thank you to our donors and volunteers. Bright Leaf would be silent without the people who bring it to life. Boy Scouts worked to get a start at removing some of the invasive Vinca up by the Lucas house in October. In December, an Eagle Scout, Harrison Key, and his dad worked closely with John Mahan to restore the 'Kitty Condo' that is beside the main house. The Friends group provided the funding and the Scout provided the know-how and labor. In December Ralph and Patricia Ladd donated a generous \$1,000 to the Friends of Bright Leaf. We also want to thank the Laurel Foundation and their board members for their donation of \$1,500 at the end of 2005. A very happy way to end last year!

This year, 2006, starts off with an invasive plant workday scheduled the third Saturday of February. Please join us in this ongoing project to improve Bright Leaf for native flora and fauna. Also, don't overlook our monthly hikes, they continue year round.

Sincerely,

Nancy Woolley

Letter From the Park Manager

I would like to share some news of Bright Leaf. Winter season is often slower than summer but this year the warm weather has allowed more winter hikes and projects.

Eagle Scout candidate Harrison Key has completed the restoration of the Kitty Condo. He did excellent work replacing the roof, replacing rotted siding and painting the entire structure inside and out. There were three generations of Keys on the project. Both father and grandfather Keys helped Harrison and other scouts with the work. Thanks to FOBL for underwriting the materials costs of this building restoration project.

Jeff Hershey will be leaving us soon. I would like to express my personal appreciation for Jeff's outstanding work at Brightleaf. We will miss him.

We look forward to our February workday. This project will focus on removal of non-native plants. Many thanks to you who coordinate these efforts.

We are planning a visit from students and teachers of Odem Elementary School as a part of our School Hikes Program. This hike is scheduled for March.

Thanks to all our Friends and Volunteers for the gracious donation of time to keep Brightleaf a beautiful place to hike and enjoy nature.

THINK RAIN! John Mahan 512-459-7269

Membership Application

New Member Renewal

Annual memberships to **Friends of Bright Leaf** provide funds to help preserve, protect and make accessible this treasure. Become a member and help assure that Georgia Lucas' dream will last many lifetimes.

Individual \$25 Family \$35 Supporter \$50+ Sponsor \$100+
Patron \$250+ Corporate \$500+ Life Member \$1,000+

I would like to help with the following activities: [Please circle all that apply].

Trail/Brush Work	Clean ups	Lead Hikes	Train Docents
Membership Recruitment	Bookkeeping	Publicity	Event Planning
Fund-Raising	Desktop Publishing	Educate Children	Educate Adults
Educate on Plants	Educate on Birds	Educate on Geology	Scientific Studies
Other: _____			

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

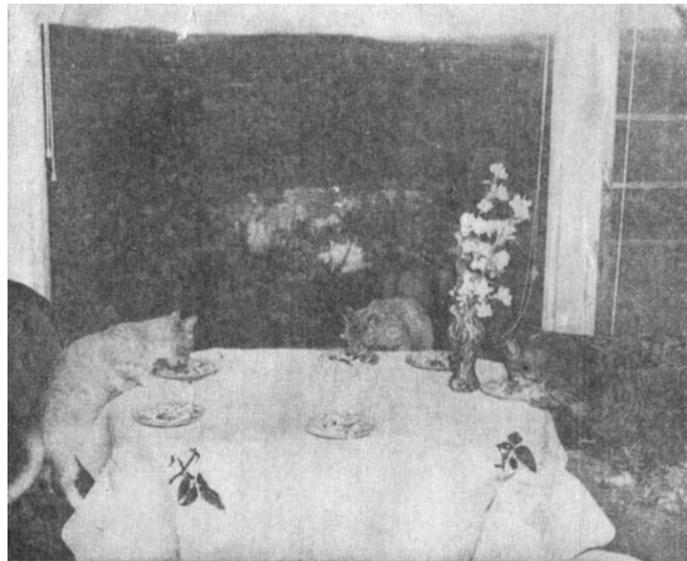
E-MAIL: _____ (for reminders of hikes and other events)

CHECK #: _____

As a member of the Friends of Bright Leaf, I will support the decisions of the management of the park. My signature releases Friends of Bright Leaf and its members from any responsibility for accidents or death as a result of use of the Bright Leaf property. I understand that the Friends of Bright Leaf will not sell or loan my membership information to any other entity.

SIGNATURE: _____ Date _____

Friends of Bright Leaf
P.O. Box 27921
Austin, Texas 78755-7921
(512) 459-7269



of Texas, setting up several scholarship funds. Other money was left to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the Austin Humane Society, her church, and other causes and groups that were meaningful to her. The bulk of her money went to establish the Lucas Foundation which is under the Austin Community Foundation umbrella. That foundation awards money to specific groups she named and to grant applicants.

Today, twelve years after her death, we can whisper a 'thank you' to her as we walk the trails through her very special piece of Austin.

My Chapel

At times I pass among the branches of three giant, clustering firs where only I may come to feel the pulsing of this mystic solitude, to glimpse the sky, and be with God.

This chapel floor is carpeted with needles sweet and soft and deep, and for a roof the sky has given me a square of blue and though aloof it shelters me.

The chapel walls, that shut away the world, are made of dark'n-ing boughs; no windows gleam, but all eternity is in my hands from thence to stream into my heart.

Georgia B. Lucas, 1946

Thanks to the TPWD Magazine, May, 2000 issue article on Georgia Lucas, the Austin American Statesman's 1966 article on the party with cats, and to John Mahan for loaning me books of Georgia's poetry.

- Nancy Woolley

The Friends of Bright Leaf congratulates our neighbor, HPWBANA

Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood Association For winning the Keep Austin Beautiful "Beautification" award.

Keep Austin Beautiful is a nonprofit group that supports the community in beautification, education, and clean up.

Keep Austin Beautiful: <http://www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org>

HPWBANA: <http://www.main.org/hpwbana/>



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often chose to wear frilly dresses and she liked to wear hats.

Georgia and her mother lived at the Driskell, but also held onto the family house at 303 Academy Drive. That house still stands, today with a historic marker. When the weather was right, Georgia and her mother would go out to the "country" home, Bright Leaf. Georgia appreciated rare books and antiques and she and her mother also appreciated cats. Eight cats became seventeen became many more. One year, while planning a party in honor of her mother's birthday, they decided to include the cats along with the human guests. Before the two legged participants arrived, the cats dined on Puss in Boots cat food served on tables set with fine linen, china, and flowers. Georgia revealed her eccentric sense of humor when she told a reporter that the guest list included Fluffy, Brownie, Rainbow, Buttercup, and many others. "Sometimes it's hard to remember their names. We used to have one named MacArthur, but he just faded away." As the cats multiplied and took over the house, the Kitty Condo and Catzeebo were built to accommodate them.

Bright Leaf also grew in size. It took thirty four pieces of land to form Bright Leaf. Georgia defended it against the ever increasing attempts to purchase pieces of the land she loved. At the end of her life, when she was in her eighties, Georgia met with Andy Sansom of Texas Parks and Wildlife to designate Bright Leaf a State Natural Area. Her will listed very specific instructions regarding the land. In her will, she even made a contingency plan in case TPWD could not keep the land. She named the Austin Community Foundation to look after the land in that case. She also left money to the University

Special Thanks to:

- Harrison Key and his team for the work they did repairing and cleaning up the Kitty Condo.

February Event

Non-Native Plant Removal Work Day at Bright Leaf

Saturday February 18th from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm

(Rain date is the following Saturday, February 25th)

Food: Sandwiches will be provided at 1:00 pm. Water and snacks will be provided throughout the day, sponsored by: Friends of Bright Leaf

Notes: Wear hiking boots or sturdy shoes. No special training is required beyond what will be given that morning when we gather in the parking lot.

What to bring (if you have them): water bottle, shovels, loppers, tree saws.

Directions:

Take RR2222 west from Mopac.

Go one block west of the traffic light at Mesa.

Go left (south) onto Creek Mountain.

When it dead-ends in two short blocks, turn right onto Old Bull Creek.

The parking lot is on the left.

Life Members (>\$1000)

Greg & Mary Crouch

Ben & Joan Bentzin

Kent Hickson

Laurel Foundation

Jane Smoot

Barbara Ruud

HEB

Ralph & Patricia Ladd

Patrons (\$250 to \$500)

Beck Runte

Michele Morrison

Roger W. & Cindy Borgelt

Sponsors (\$100 to \$250)

Mary & David Pharis

Sally Scott

Jo Wilson & Carol Bennett

Ann Syptak

Anne & John C. Donovan

Blake Tollett & Karen Kelly

Elaine Kant

Carol & Jonathan Sessler

Contributions

Supporter (\$50 to \$100)

Linda Ford

James Thatcher & Diana Seidel

Michael Chitty & Marilyn Doyle

Janet Delaney & Jack Morrison

Susan Kleinman

Tom Delaney & Kim Patterson

Margaret Menicucci & Michael

Whellan

Clay Fuller

Bob & Jean Warneke

Friends of Bright Leaf

2005-2006 Board of Directors

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Steve Gerson Vice President 452-9887

Philip Russell Secretary 458-4518

Beck Runte Treasurer 894-0182

Joseph Beach 342-0588

Marshall Johnston 335-9525

Kurt Hill 343-5550

Sally Scott 453-2289

Park Managers

Jeff Hershey John Mahan

Newsletter Editors

Steve Gerson Beck Runte

Special Thanks to:

- The **docents** who lead hikes for the public every month.
- Contributors to **Friends of Bright Leaf**

The mission of the **Friends of Bright Leaf** is to conserve and enhance Bright Leaf and promote the public's enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of this urban jewel.

Our budget is posted on the Friends of Bright Leaf e-group web site --

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fobl/>