



## ***No Other Place*** **Your Friends Newsletter**

Dear Friend,

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- Cabinet Oak Auction Huge Success
- News From the Park
- Park Opens Texas Oval Office Exhibit in Johnson City
- A Sweet Treat From Lady Bird

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### **A Report From the Board Chair of the Friends**

It is a time of change for the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park. Because the park is our partner and our reason for existing these changes naturally impact the Friends. In my experience change can be a catalyst for re-thinking prior assumptions and revealing new opportunities. That's the attitude of our Board of Trustees and I hope that you share this viewpoint as we evaluate where we are, where we are going, and in creating a new path forward.



#### Staff Changes at the Park

Park Superintendent, Justin Bates, has made the difficult decision to leave the National Park Service for other opportunities. This will reduce his travel and enable him to spend more time with his family in the Austin area. Fortunately Clint Herriman, who has long served as the park's Supervisory Range Specialist (the ranch foreman), has been appointed as Acting Superintendent. He will soon be replaced by an Acting Superintendent for a 120-day assignment. NPS is currently evaluating candidates to permanently fill the Superintendent position.

Prior to Justin's departure, Vanessa Torres, who served as Program Manager of Interpretation, Education, and Community Involvement, accepted a new NPS position to prepare for America 250 which will celebrate the 250th anniversary of American Independence. Her position is being temporarily filled by Nickolos (Nick) Myers during the search for her permanent replacement.

In addition to working closely with the Friends, Justin and Vanessa have become our personal friends and we wish them success in their new endeavors.

#### Restoration of the Texas White House

These departures occur at a challenging time for the park. We all know that the Texas White House (TWH) has been closed due to structural problems since 2019. Under the

watch of Justin and Vanessa a tremendous amount of work has occurred to prepare not only for restoration of the house but to also re-envision the experience of visiting the TWH and the park as a whole.

This is a complex and expensive project that is partially funded by about \$10M that comes from the Great American Outdoors Act. The primary areas targeted for restoration are the house including interior and infrastructure remediation, the LBJ Hangar orientation building, the Klein Shop, the Martin Barn, the Secret Service Command Post, and creation of a new Arrival Plaza. Completion of all these components will take several years and additional funding. We're all eager for the re-opening of the TWH and we'll keep you informed as public information is provided to us by NPS.

The Friends have been asked to provide additional funding to help create a re-imagined visitor experience that will showcase the restoration work and the history and legacy of LBJ, Lady Bird, and presidency. The NPS has developed a Big Idea as a guide to this work. Here is the preamble:

*The Texas White House Complex is the heart of the LBJ Ranch. Experience the complexities of the American presidency, examine the politics and personal life of President Johnson, and feel the tremendous impact this place had on the Johnson family.*

We expect the funds request from the Friends to be at least \$1M. Fundraising at this level is an unprecedented challenge for us and we will need the support of our members, former and new donors, and grants. In addition to this capital campaign, we have the ongoing necessity to raise funds to continue our operations. And yes, we will need your help with that too.

#### Fundraising to Meet the Challenge

The Friends exist for one purpose: to answer the call when the Park needs assistance. This is our national park – yours and mine – and where government funding is unavailable to achieve the spirit expressed by the Johnson's that "All the World is Welcome Here" it falls to the people to fill the gap. In a very real way the Friends organization is your surrogate but we cannot do it without a plan and without the thought, energy, and generosity of those who love the park as we do.

Here are the core elements of our fundraising strategy with designation of how the majority of funds will be used:

- Develop a capital campaign feasibility study with an outside consultant. We will use a portion of the proceeds raised from the Cabinet Oak Project art auction to assess the viability of a New Visitor Experience Capital Campaign. (Proceeds from a subsequent campaign will be used to fund a new visitor experience)
- Conduct Phase 2 of the Cabinet Oak Project. (Visitor Experience funding, a smaller portion for an Artist-in-Residence program)
- Develop special Visitor Experience fundraising events. (Visitor Experience)
- Host one major event per year. (Friends Operations funding with a portion allocated for other programs at the park)
- Grow the [Friends Sustaining Membership](#) program. (Friends Operations funding with a portion allocated for other programs at the park)

On behalf of the Board of Trustees thank you for all you've done for our park. With your continued support we eagerly look forward to re-opening the Texas White House and an exciting new visitor experience.

In gratitude,  
Terry

[Click here to become a supporter today!](#)

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## Cabinet Oak Auction Huge Success

What started more than two years ago as a fallen limb of the 300-year-old Cabinet Oak on

the LBJ Ranch led to inspiration and planning for a unique fundraiser and art auction, the Cabinet Oak Project. Months of hard work by the Friends board culminated in a celebration and auction on a beautiful May evening atop a wildflower covered hill. More than 200 people, including members of the Johnson family, attended the May 6 Cabinet Oak Project celebration and live auction at Garrison Brothers Distillery in Hye. Proceeds from both online and live art auctions exceeded \$75,000.

The event served as a kickoff for a campaign to restore the Texas White House at the LBJ Ranch and establish an artist in residence program at the park.

More than 120 artists from across the country responded to a call for entries, and more than 50 were selected for participation in the exhibition/auction by juror Katie Robinson Edwards, Ph.D., Executive Director and Curator of the UMLAUF Sculpture Garden and Museum. The artists used a wide range of artistic techniques and media, from sculpture to painting to collage to photography to digital art—all crafted from or inspired by the Cabinet Oak. If you missed the opportunity to see the art, you can see it here:

<https://cabinetoak.art/gallery>

Seven pieces receiving special juror's awards, and one voted "People's Choice", were auctioned at the May 6 event by Gayle Stallings. The Best in Show award went to Harold Greene, whose Cabinet Oak Project submission "Voting Box" was inspired by his recollection of President Johnson's signing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Additional juror's awards were given to Rusty Yates, for the submission "Quercus Concilium Johnsonii"; Tom Garrett, for "History's Witness"; Mariko Jesse, for "Conversations I"; Katy Nail, for "Storyteller"; DorRae Stevens and Marti Corn, for "Our Natural Splendor"; and Pecos Pryor, for "Cone". Cindee Klement's submission "Contemplation" won the People's Choice award.

Prior to the auction, guests were entertained with the music of Trace of Gold while enjoying a Hill Country-inspired buffet created by Garrison Brothers Chef Jack MacDonald. Libations included Garrison cocktails and beer and wine donated by generous supporting sponsors.

As the sun began to slip below the horizon, Friends Operations Director Sam Childers introduced Nancy Garrison who was joined onstage by Dan Garrison and Luci Baines Johnson. Luci was presented with a bottle of Garrison Brothers' Lady Bird bourbon which was released that day. Catherine Robb accepted a bottle on behalf of her mother, Lynda Johnson Robb. Friends Board Chair Terry Casparis thanked the attendees and the sponsors for their support. Park Superintendent Justin Bates gave a brief description of restoration efforts at the Texas White House and described plans for the artist-in-residence program. Dr. Katie Robinson Edwards then spoke briefly about the incredible array of submitted art and how difficult it was narrowing down the winning entries.

Auctioneer Stallings took the stage and proceeded to take the assembled guests on an exciting, hour-long roller coaster of spirited bidding. Patrons Nancy and Dan Garrison generously donated an additional bottle of Lady Bird bourbon when the bidding for the first bottle went well over four figures.

It was a memorable evening and the perfect way to kick off fundraising efforts for the restoration of the Texas White House and the establishment of an artist in residence program.

Pictures tell the story better than words, so enjoy this photo essay of the auction.



*DorRae Stevens and Marti Corn's Our Natural Splendor*



*Cindee Clements's Contemplation*



*Guests preview the winning art prior to the live auction.*



*Nancy Garrison laughs as she joins in the spirited bidding.*



*Auctioneer Gayle Stallings keeps the bidding lively.*



*Dr. Katie Robinson Edwards describes the tough task of selecting the winning pieces.*



*Catherine Robb, bid number in hand.*



*Dan Garrison welcomes guests to Garrison Brothers.*



*Luci Johnson and Harold Greene, winner of "Best in Show," share a laugh.*



*Trace of Gold entertained guests before and after the live auction.*



*Spring flowers, courtesy of Arnosky Farms graced the tables.*



*Guests enjoy libations before the auction.*



*Friends board member Amy MacDonald and board member emeritus Shirley James.*



*A smiling Catherine Robb.*

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## **News From The Park**

The National Park staff, like everyone else in Texas, is trying to stay cool this summer. Fortunately, last month's "Park After Dark," event took place on May 27th, before the temperatures soared. Supported by the Friends, the event was attended by visitors who packed picnics and enjoyed games and music by Cody Freeman. Speaking of the heat, the Hangar Visitor Center has closed as Park staff prepares for the restoration of the Texas White House and the surrounding complex. Although the closure was originally scheduled for the fall, the HVAC

system failed in the unrelenting heat. New HVAC systems will be replaced in the upcoming restoration construction.

As we await restoration, programs will be affected but not halted. Interpretive rangers are roving the areas around the Junction School, Birthplace, Show Barn, and the Texas White House to greet visitors. More formal programming begins in July. In the meantime, History Walk, by noted American sculptor James Surls, is on display at the Johnson City Visitor Center. The Western National Parks Association bookstore has moved temporarily there as well.

The Park is working on plans for next year's total eclipse on April 8, 2024. Representatives from the Goddard Space Flight Center will be presenting programs around the eclipse. In related news, a new "Dark Sky Park" designation sign is being installed on the Ranch's entrance sign.



In education notes, the Park is partnering with the Science Mill and recently had their first educational program. Park staff have also been working with the YMCA in Austin and San Antonio this summer to deliver education programs at the YMCA's Camp Moody, Robert's Ranch, Carpenter Hill, and Southwest locations.

Finally, congratulations to the Park staff! Their float took second place in the Peach JAMBoree in Stonewall on June 16.

We hope to see you at the park this summer!

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## Park Opens Texas Oval Office Exhibit in Johnson City

Park staff, Friends members and local officials attended a ribbon cutting for *The Texas Oval Office* exhibit on April 5 in the park's visitor center in Johnson City. The exhibit enables visitors to feel as though they are stepping inside the home office of President Johnson located at the Texas White House.

In preparation for the Texas White House Rehabilitation Project, funded by the [Great American Outdoors Act](#) (GAOA), park museum staff carefully packed and stored the Texas White House furnishings. During the restoration, select objects will be on display in Johnson City, re-creating President Johnson's home office. President Johnson's desk is the exhibit's centerpiece, complete with work papers and his favorite piece of technology – a rotary dial telephone. It is said that he spent eighteen hours each day making phone calls. Visitors to the exhibit can eavesdrop on a conversation between President Johnson and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Head of state gifts to the President round out the exhibit just as they adorned the walls of the President's office.

President Johnson spent 25% of his time as president at the ranch. Thanks to advances in technology, he was able to create a fully functioning version of the White House away from Washington, DC. His home office served as a rustic Texas equivalent of the Oval Office where he governed the nation, phoned political leaders, and hosted foreign dignitaries.

The Johnson City Visitor Center is open 9:00 am to 5:00 pm seven days a week.



## Lady Bird's Ice Cream

Need to cool off this summer? Try Lady Bird Johnson's recipe for peach ice cream, a summertime favorite at the LBJ Ranch. *(Courtesy Texas Highways)*

Mrs. Johnson's Peach Ice Cream

- 3 eggs
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 pt. milk
- 1 qt. whipping cream
- 1/2 gallon soft peaches, mashed and sweetened to taste



Beat eggs in a heavy saucepan until thick. Gradually add sugar, beating well. Add milk and whipping cream; mix well.

Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low; continue cooking and stirring until mixture thickens and coats a metal spoon. Let cool.

Stir in peaches and pour into freezer can of a 1-gal. ice cream freezer. Freeze according to manufacturer's instructions.

(Note: To peel the peaches, bring a pot of water to a boil, add peaches, and leave for 1 minute. Rinse fruit under cold water; skins should slip off easily.)

## Your Support and Donations Make Hill Country Preservation Possible

The park needs our support now more than ever! Make a gift, join the Friends for yourself, or give the gift of a sustaining membership. Your generosity supports educational programs, historic preservation, and conservation initiatives throughout the Texas Hill Country! Thank you for helping to preserve the Johnson legacy.

[Click Here to Make a Donation and Become a Member!](#)

Follow the Friends on social media for more!



Visit our website

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**Education. Preservation. Restoration.**

*The Friends of LBJNHP is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*