

LEOH Trip

October 12, 2021

Shangri La Botanical Gardens, Orange, Texas

shangrilagardens.org





Beautiful landscaping greeted us immediately upon entering!
As a bonus, fall displays were everywhere!

Shangri La Gardens encompass 250 acres, situated along the waterways of Adams Bayou. The gardens are a program of the private Nelda C. and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation, whose goal is to encourage and assist education and to improve and enrich the quality of life in Southeast Texas.

The gardens provide significant resources for the study and enjoyment of art, history, nature and culture.





HUGE bottle trees
were mind-boggling!





Volunteers of all ages are welcome.
There are numerous educational programs
for both children and adults.





The Stark Foundation began revitalizing the existing gardens, beginning in 2002, intending that the gardens should be the “greenest project in Texas”.

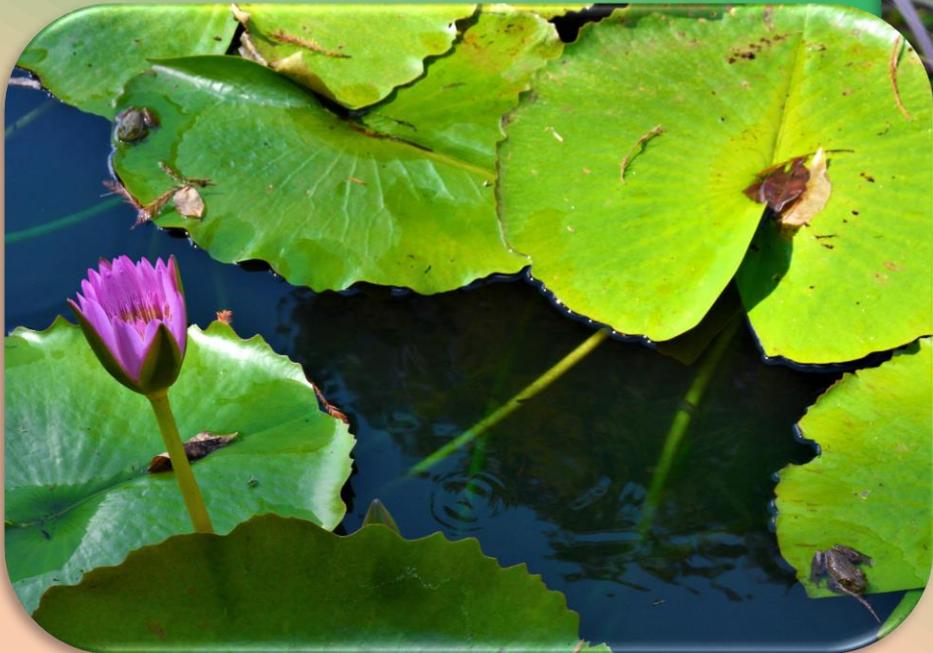
Hurricanes Rita and Ike caused significant damage and setbacks to the project; however, renovations were finally completed, and the Gardens reopened to the public in 2009.





**Can you spot the
wildlife?!**

There are 2 frogs,
2 snakes, a bee coming
in for a landing,
and a spider.





We were lucky enough to visit during their 11th annual Scarecrow Festival!

Scarecrow displays were fashioned from recycled materials. There were lots of plastic water bottles and gallon jugs, aluminum cans, and other recyclable items painted, cut, and assembled very creatively.

This scarecrow consisted of over 300 individual pieces, mostly faces, with no two alike.

Scarecrows, as well as colorful autumn decorations and other themes, were displayed throughout.

Talented folks from community organizations, businesses, schools, churches, and families, contributed.

As always, the Garden's theme focused on "environmentally friendly" scarecrows and other displays.

Our next stop – *Lunch!*



As we enjoyed our lunch,
the Astro game started.

We were seated on both sides of a
long table, so everyone could enjoy
a view of the game on
strategically placed TV's!

But why the tense, concerned look
on these faces???!!!

Because one of our players smashed
his hand on the wall in the outfield
as he was going up for a fly ball, and
ended up on the ground
in obvious pain.





Now for the surprise twist
to our trip!

Following lunch, we were
ready for our next adventure,
the **Swamp and River Boat
Tour**; however,
our county bus had other
ideas. It would not start!
We were stranded
at ***Spanky's!***

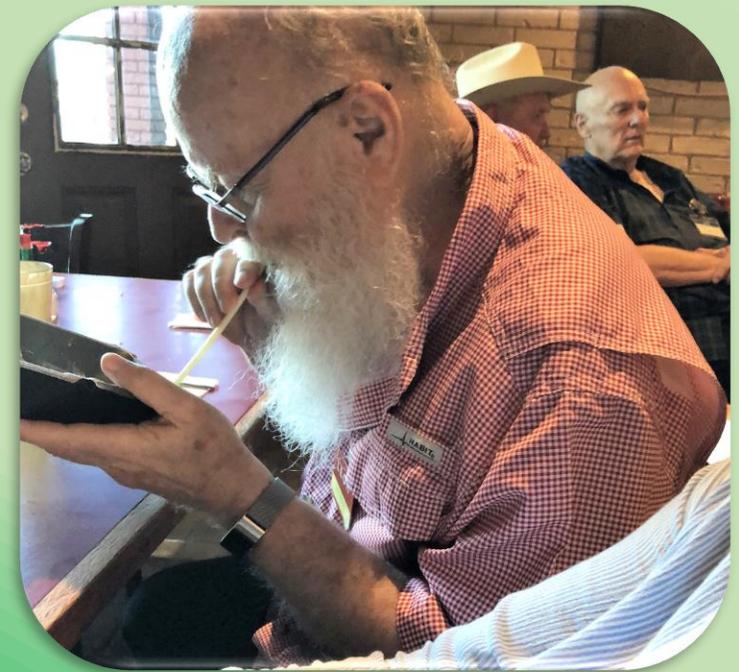
What to do when you're stranded?
Make the best of it, of course!

More conversation followed,
along with more food and drink for some.

Susan Graugnard had a great and generous idea – she
strolled down the parking lot to another restaurant and
brought back some baked goods with ice cream
for everyone to share.

It was delicious! Several
members partook of the
sweet treats.

In fact, Tim was particularly
enamored of the ice cream.
Jane seems to be looking on
in possibly a mix of horror
and amusement as Tim dives
in with a straw to get every
last drop of some melted
ice cream.





Trip leader Ann Fairchild looks on as the rescue plan unfolds. Yet another twist to the story is that Ann's car battery was dead on the morning of the trip!

One of our frequent bus drivers, Chris Martin (center) arrived with the bus that would transport us back to Houston. The wrecker driver who was called to haul the first bus back to Houston talked with her, as everyone began boarding the second bus with their belongings from the stranded bus.

The last twist to the story is that after the wrecker driver arrived, the first bus started. So... the wrecker driver went his merry way, Chris drove the first bus back to Houston, and we made it safely back to Houston on the second bus.



Bus driver
Demari Cook



On our way back, Ann kept us updated on the Astros game.

Naturally, we stopped at a Buc-ee's on our way home.

