

HAS Receives Kudos for Public Education and Outreach Program at Fritsche Cemetery and Kleb Woods

The Houston Archeological Society is known across the state of Texas for its education, public outreach and community service efforts. Recently, a team of HAS volunteers led by professional archeologists Ashley Jones and Kristi Miller Nichols of the archeological firm RabaKistner, Inc. added hugely to that reputation. And, as president of HAS, I can't help but brag about them!

As most of you know, Ashley is our PI on the Kleb Woods Public Archeology project in Tomball, Texas. This project was undertaken last year at the request of the staff at Kleb Woods Nature Center and Harris County Precinct 3. The proposed archaeological investigations are scheduled to have several components: first, a ground penetrating radar study to identify locations of foundations, middens, and other sub-surface archaeological features; second, sub-surface investigations of anomalies identified by GPR and of areas identified by the PI; and third, a public outreach component that includes sponsored excavations. HAS has already conducted several archeological digs at the site during which the public has been invited to participate.

Recently the first ground penetrating radar study was conducted on a portion of the site by volunteers from HAS supporting the professional archeologists (Jones, Nichols and Dan Warren of P & C Scientific, LLC) and several anomalies were found which will be further investigated in the coming months. However, the GPR survey that day did not stop there!



Ashley and Sharon Menegaz, the HAS volunteer coordinator for the project, had been contacted by a cemetery association from the nearby Neudorf-Fritsche Cemetery in Cypress asking for help in locating unmarked graves in this very historic German cemetery. The cemetery association had been trying for years to get a GPR survey done on the site without much luck. But fortunately for them the Raba Kistner team has a strong community service and public outreach component and quickly agreed to do the work. In a three-page handwritten letter Ashley received following the survey from Roland Dossman, President of the Fritsche Cemetery Association, the outpouring of gratitude was obvious. *“She (Ashley) is a project archeologist with a company called Raba Kistner who had GPR and often did community service work. They would help us locate unmarked graves at no cost to us. To date almost twenty unmarked graves have been located. In your prayers, give God thanks. Also thank him for Ashley Jones and the owner of Raba Kistner for his thinking that a company should give back to the community it serves and also to all those individuals who gave their time on a Saturday afternoon to help us including the GPR operator (Nichols) who drove from San Antonio to Houston and then back the same day.”*

Kudos to the whole team and especially to Ashley Jones and Kristi Nichols for a job well done! Watch for more information about our next project weekend at Kleb Woods.