

**Inside this issue:**

**Welcome** 1

**Habitat Restoration Project** 1

**New Staff** 2, 3

**Dive around Texas** 2

**Underwater Archaeology** 3

**Hygrophila** 4

**Closing** 4

Prior to the Habitat Restoration Project, Aquarena Center will have an online auction. If you are interested in some of the special items at Aquarena or would like more information, please visit <https://www.slapsale.com/register/registration.aspx>.

**Welcome from Ron Coley, Director Aquarena Center**

“Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

—John F. Kennedy

So here we go. Things at Aquarena are going to change. It starts on September the 21<sup>st</sup> at 3 O’clock and it continues until we are done.

The idea that big equipment will be in operation removing large objects from over head and from underwater requires the Army Corps of Engineers to keep us out of the way. We will not be allowed in the water, we won’t be allowed on the peninsula and when they are done all of those topside places that we are so use to and comfortable with will be gone.



What will be gone? All of the buildings that are in the 100 years flood plain- the gift shop the old restaurant the offices and aquarium. All of the amusement attractions that were part of the Aquarena Springs Resort. The bow shaped submersible theater, the box shaped sunken submarine and the triangular steel stanchions that were the cornerstones for the old floating volcano.

When we return we will need to reinvent ourselves in a way that corresponds to the facilities and the situation that exists. What will be here? The training area that is flat, wide and mostly a level plain of gravel found under the water, (we use to call it the show area), the amazing springs themselves and a dedicated group of people who are bound and determined to share our love and appreciation for this natural phenomenon with the world.

How can you help? Stay in touch. Visit often, ride the boats when you can and we are allowed to operate them. Volunteer to help when it is time to set up the new systems and new areas of operation. Be patient while the project unfolds and be anxious to get back – back in the water, back to work and back to contributing to the effort to preserve and protect the San Marcos Springs. We will be forced to sit idly by while the Corps project unfolds and sometime in the not too distant future (right now I am told 6 months) we will need to race back into action – establish a new base camp and catch up on a lot of underwater habitat restoration.

Be one of those who make it happen,

Ron

“Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.” – Will Rogers



## New Staff

Volunteers,

In May, Justin Payne graduated with a MBA from Texas State University and has moved on. If you need a loan, I believe you can find Justin at Frost Bank. We thank Justin for his service and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

I, Luke Hudnall, am very excited to be your new volunteer coordinator. I look forward to meeting and working with each of you.

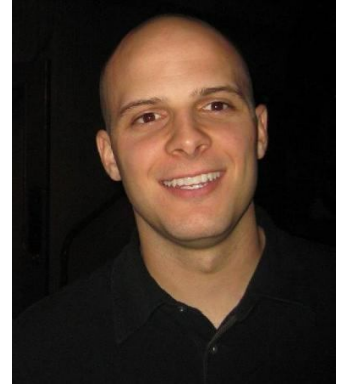
For those of you who I have not met yet, I would like to share a little bit about myself. I am a veteran of the U.S. Army and 2x veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In May, I was awarded a BBA in Finance from Texas State University. Currently, at Texas State University, I am working towards a MPA in Urban and Environmental Planning. Additionally, I am working towards the Divemaster certification in scuba diving.

As a native of Cincinnati, I have never seen a fresh body of water as pristine as Spring Lake. Diving Spring Lake and San Marcos River is an experience like no other. A true blessing. And I feel very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to work with many volunteers (3,000 plus) who share the same passion as I do. This passion, of course, is the conservation and preservation of the San Marcos Springs and related ecosystem.

Since beginning work at Aquarena Center, I have realized that one of my greatest challenges is disseminating information to volunteers in an accurate and timely manner. After all, volunteers play an enormous role in conserving and preserving the springs. In an effort to provide you with the most up-to-date information, I will do my best to be thorough in my correspondences with you via email, phone and in person. Having said that, I hope you enjoy this newsletter and learn about the Habitat Restoration Project and how it affects you.

Sincerely,

Luke Hudnall



## Dive around Texas

Dive around Texas is a program that encourages divers to explore the 30 plus dive sites in the state. The program rewards divers for getting out and trying as many of these locations as possible. It is simple to sign up, just visit any participating dive retailer.

The \$25.00 registration fee includes a free event T-Shirt. Upon completing the challenge (12 dives in four different locations) you will receive a free lunch ticket for the awards recognition day. Basically, on the awards recognition day, divers are entered into the raffle for prizes and trips for each logged dive. For more information on the Dive around Texas Challenge please visit [www.divearoundtexas.com](http://www.divearoundtexas.com). The third annual recognition day will be held on Sunday, October 2, 2011 at City Park in San Marcos.

Itinerary:

9:00 am—12 pm Registration

11:30 am Free lunch if you completed the challenge (12 dives, four different locations) & \$10 if you did not complete the challenge

12:30 pm prizes start



## New Staff

Frederick “Fritz” Hanselmann is Research Faculty and the Chief Underwater Archaeologist and Dive Training Officer with the River Systems Institute and the Center for Archaeological Studies. He holds two master’s degrees and is a PhD candidate at Indiana University. Having worked on underwater sites from a wide variety of time periods, his research ranges from submerged Paleo-Indian and prehistoric deposits in lakes and caves to historic shipwrecks around the world. Fritz is the co-director of the underwater archaeological research at Spring Lake in San Marcos, which is funded this year by a National Geographic Society-Waitt Institute Grant. He also led the first-ever archaeological survey of the mouth of the Río Chagres in Panama in 2008 as the initial phase of the ongoing Río Chagres Maritime Cultural Landscape Study. As one aspect of the overall study, Fritz directs the Lost Ships of Henry Morgan Project and the search for the wrecks of Henry Morgan’s ships lost in 1671 en route to his sack of Panama City, which he continued in 2010 with the excavation of cannons that could possibly be from Morgan’s shipwrecks and in 2011 with a successful magnetometer survey yielding numerous potential shipwreck sites and the location of a 17<sup>th</sup> century shipwreck. Some of his research with Indiana University was also featured in the National Geographic Expedition Week 2008 program “Shipwreck! Captain Kidd”, which is a documentary of a shipwreck that the archaeological and historical records indicate to be Captain Kidd’s *Quedagh Merchant*, sunk off the coast of the Dominican Republic in 1699. Fritz also focuses on capacity building and training for archaeologists and heritage managers in less developed countries, as well as the development of marine protected areas and underwater preserves. He is an SSI Instructor, a Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) Tutor, and will be teaching Underwater Archaeology and one of the teachers for the Diving for Science Program at the Aquarena Center. He is also working on developing academic Scientific Diving courses. Fritz was formerly employed as the Field Archaeologist/Dive Safety Officer with the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University and as Lecturer/Field Research Director with the Indiana University Office of Underwater Science.



## Underwater Archaeology September 17 & 18

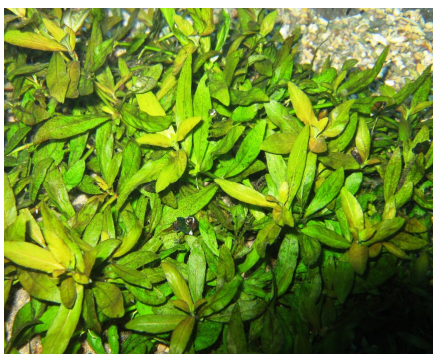


If your interests are in underwater archaeology, a great follow up to Diving for Science is the Underwater Archaeology Class. This class is taught by Fritz Hanselmann. Fritz teaches divers how to map an area, identify an artifact, use lift bag techniques, and actually work on the underwater ‘Shiner dig’ site.

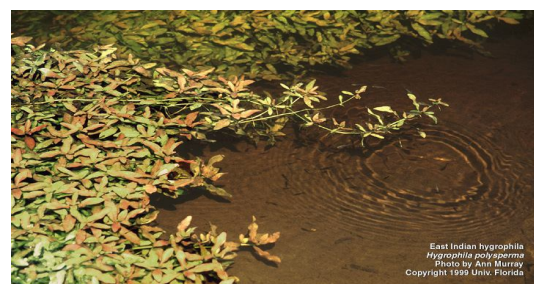
The next Underwater Archaeology class will be on September 17th & 18th. The cost is \$230. Sign up at an Aquarena host dive store.

## East Indian Hygrophila: *Hygrophila Polysperma*

*Hygrophila polysperma*, a member of the Acanthus family, is an aquatic plant native to Southeast Asia. The plant was intentionally introduced, in the 1940's, to the San Marcos River by aquatic plant nurseries to be propagated and sold as an aquarium plant. Its distribution in Texas is limited to San Marcos, Comal and San Felipe Springs.



While not widely distributed in Texas the species is a major pest in Florida where it is common in irrigation canals, drainage canals and small rivers. *Hygrophila* is a common introduced species in the spring arm of Spring Lake. It can be recognized by having elongated leaves growing opposite along the stem. New growth is noticeably tinged red on leaf top. Leaf bottoms are covered with fine hairs giving a white to gray tinge. Stems are square and roots along the stem are common. *Hygrophila* is commonly spread by fragmentation of stem segments which root readily. Detached leaves have also been known to form roots and produce viable fragments. In Florida, the plant has been known to out-compete *Hydrilla verticillata*.



Thanks to Casey Williams for the information on *Hygrophila*. Casey is a former Aquarena employee and currently works with the River Systems Institute while completing his thesis at Texas State University.



## Closing

The Habitat Restoration Project is happening. As a result, the last day for volunteer diving and open water diving will be Sunday, September 18. The Habitat Restoration Project is scheduled to begin shortly thereafter. There is as much unknown about this project as there is known. Please be patient with us during this exciting time. As things become known, we will share them with you. However, you can expect procedures to change when the park reopens. We are anticipating the project to be complete and all operations to continue early summer 2012. In the meantime, pray for rain because the aquifer desperately needs it. You can stay up-to-date on the flow rate of the San Marcos Springs at [http://www.edwardsaquifer.org/pages/waterlevels\\_sanmarcos.asp](http://www.edwardsaquifer.org/pages/waterlevels_sanmarcos.asp).