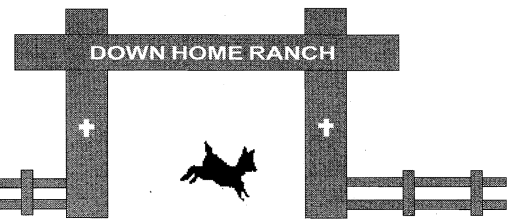


# THE SPIRIT OF DOWN HOME RANCH



March 2002

Vol. XII No. 1

## Work Begins on Gabriel House!

The plan for construction of three permanent residence homes was approved by the Board of Directors, at its meeting Feb. 3.

Grants from the Meadows and Justin Paul Foundations are providing funds to for the homes. The first house is framed up and almost "dried in" with exterior siding, and windows in place.

The second slab has been poured, with the third soon to follow. Framing begins shortly on a second home. Volunteers will be asked to help work on all three houses and vendors are being asked for discounts and donations in order to help get all three homes completed.

E.C. Smith of Construction Internet is the general contractor and will help supervise volunteers who come on weekends to help build the homes.



*Gabriel House, under construction, will be home to Robert, Mike and one other Rancher, as well as to Amy (Resident Assistant) and husband Eric, the Horticultural Assistant in the greenhouses. Currently, they all live in the smaller Camp Center.*

## Residents At Last!

Now that they've been here for three months, it's hard to imagine the Ranch without them.

Robert and Michael became our first two Ranchers in November of



*Mike and Robert, the first two Ranchers, moved to the Ranch in November and immediately began to help out. Here they are learning to sort and plant acorns.*

last year. They moved in just in time to help with a beautiful crop of poinsettias, over 6,000, most of which were sold and delivered to Austin area churches.

Mike and Robert quickly became a part of our family, just as we expected. We've gotten to know these two fine young men over the years and we never doubted that they would adjust to getting up early, feeding the pig and donkeys, and reporting to work in the greenhouses, or heading to the Food Bank with Amy. Or something else. Not much slack time.

They are learning to pinch back hanging baskets, to plant Texas live oak acorns and to stuff mail (including this newsletter). All in a days work.

We're proud of these two fine young men, and look forward to our community continuing to grow.

## How Long is Six Years?

As they say, the "ink was hardly dry" on the Master Plan when it underwent a major revision.

What has emerged is a new, tighter, "Six-Year-Plan." The goals are simple: (a) over the next three year raise all the capital needed for the total build-out and population of Down Home Ranch; (b) over the following three years continue the building process and raise the money needed to create the Permanent Endowment Fund.

The original master plan captures the essence of who we are and what we are doing. It

(cont. page 2)

### Wish List

- Volunteers to help build homes for Down Home Ranchers!
- Construction materials:
  - Studs, framing materials, air conditioners, plumbing, electrical insulation, dry wall and more
- Dump truck

## director's chair

by Jerry Horton

We try to be neither pushy nor shy when it comes to fundraising. On the one hand, both Judy and I dislike aggressive tactics in trying to raise money. Personally, I don't even like the Sheriff's department or Special Olympics calling me at home and asking for support.

On the other hand, we must ask in order to receive. So we do.

Many times I have heard folks suggest that we should be asking Michael Dell or Bill Gates for money. Maybe that's true.

However, it is also true that even the rich have their own charitable interests and cannot give to every charity that asks.

We do ask. Paul Newman is probably a pretty rich guy and a few years ago we got a \$1,000 grant from his foundation, a gift we were thankful to have.

But in 12 years of labor we have learned that very, very few non-profits are built and sustained by huge gifts from the super wealthy.

Most—Down Home Ranch included—are built with prayers, blood, sweat and tears. Major gifts come in occasionally, but they are few and far between. It is the multitude of small donations that establishes and sustains a non-profit over the long haul.

We can always use major gifts, of course.

But we depend upon a lot of folks giving what they can to sustain us. So don't ever think that your small donation doesn't count. It's the lifeblood of the organization. If you are among this group, thank you. And if you aren't, we invite you to join us.



*Gorgeous spring flowers fill the greenhouses. View this picture (and the entire newsletter) in color at [downhomeranch.com](http://downhomeranch.com).*

Six Years (cont. from p. 1)

clearly lays out the history and the founding philosophy of the Ranch.

However, as 2001 unfolded, it became obvious that changes were necessary. The economy slowed, and then September 11 stunned us all. Charitable income fell, for us and most other charities as well.

Faced with reduced income and the prospects of starting up two major new programs—the Tree Farm and the Residency Program—we hesitated. But then we decided to go ahead with both.

At the same time, we took a long, hard look at the Master Plan and decided it was time to recast the goals of the next six years into a clear and achievable plan.

So by the end of 2008, the The Village will be complete with a minimum of 24 Ranchers with disabilities in residence.

*Ranch Camp* will be built-out, serving a few hundred each year. DHR Gardens, the Elgin Store, and the Retreats and Facilities programs will be established and producing, we hope, two-thirds of the income for general operations.

During this time we will be cultivating new leadership, so that we as founders can step back and let others carry the Ranch into the future.

It's a plan that will work.

## calendar

March 9	Second Saturday
March 9-10	Orientation & Training
March 10-15	Spring Break Camp
April 13	Second Saturday
May 11	Second Saturday
May 11	Berry Picking Day
May 31-June 2	Orientation/Training I
June 2-7	Summer Camp I
June 8	Second Saturday
June 9-14	Summer Camp II
June 14-16	Orientation/Training II
June 16-21	Summer Camp III
June 23-28	Summer Camp IV
June 30-July 5	Summer Camp V
July 13	Second Saturday
August 10	Second Saturday
Sept. 14	Second Saturday
October 12	Yam Bake

## E-Mail Addresses Please

If you have an e-mail address please send it to us on the reply card. And indicate if you'd prefer to get this newsletter by e-mail. It will be faster, less expensive for us and you'll see it in living color!



*Gabi is our surprise Christmas baby. She's also our first foal with real spots.*

## A Determined (Donkey) Dude

We really didn't want any more baby donkeys for a while. So we kept our jack, Jack, in a pasture next to but apart from the jennies.

Imagine our surprise when Marie presented us with a lovely little Christmas foal, Gabi.

How did it happen? We don't know, they were separated by barbed wire fence (ouch!). But, he is a resourceful jack-Jack, and a couple more ladies are looking plump. Talk about determined!

## Dynamic New Board Led

### By Mike Paulsen

Michael Paulsen was elected President of the Board of Down Home Ranch in October of 2001.

Mike joined the board in 1993, and holds the all-time record for volunteer hours. He has also been instrumental in creating support for the Ranch in the Taylor community, and played a key role in securing United Way funds for the Ranch.

The Board also welcomed three new members at its Feb. 3 meeting.

Robert Wenske, Elgin, works for Thermo Finnigin, is very active in church and community, and has done volunteer work at the Ranch.

Ashley Sanchez of Austin is the mother of three, a free lance journalist and a strong Ranch supporter.

Frank Martinez owns and runs an accounting firm in Elgin and is the current President of the Elgin Chamber of Commerce.

These three will help provide a dynamic Board for the next three years and we are proud to have them serve. Welcome ABoard!

### Second Saturday

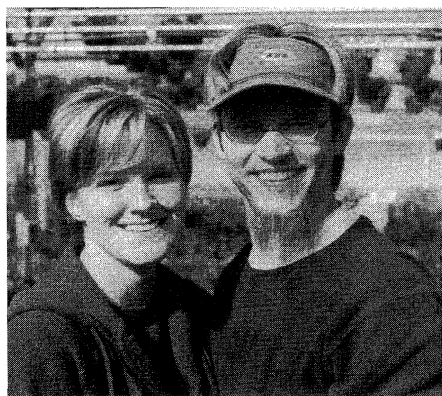
The second Saturday of every month is—you guessed it—"Second Saturday."

This will be the day every month when volunteers and others can plan to come out and work at the Ranch and know for sure something will be going on—8:00 am to 5:00 and later.

### We're Looking for Two Good Resident Volunteers

A little known fact is we've had a resident volunteer here at the Ranch for a total of seven years out of the last twelve, living in the old mobile home set up behind the greenhouses.

And we are now looking for someone (or two) that would like to live and work at the Ranch for a



*Eric and Amy Hartley in the greenhouse*

### Hartleys Join DHR Staff

Eric and Amy have been *Ranch Camp* volunteers since 1998.

"I'm going to live here and help residents some day," Amy began saying within a few months of her first stint as a counselor.

Frankly, Amy was young, and we expected her enthusiasm to wane. After she and Eric married, however, they spent most of their honeymoon as camp counselors, and we began to see she was dead serious. *That's* dedication!

Amy was firm in her conviction that she was the right one for the job of Resident Assistant, and when the time came to hire an RA, there was also a tree farm to start and a position for Eric in the greenhouse as Horticultural Assistant.

Amy and Eric are proving that they have the right stuff for DHR. Robert, Michael, Kelly and we are glad to have them here.



*Cedar volunteer cabin under construction.*

year or so. We're building two cedar cabins in The Village, and will provide housing and other support in return for helping with residents, camps, greenhouses or whatever the need of the day is.

We will soon start a national search for volunteers, and will send an info packet to interested parties.

### judy's views

At last it's here—*Residency!* We have worked for years toward this goal, and wondered if it would be as great as we anticipated.

The answer is a resounding yes! After a short while at Gabriel House (the Camp Center), Michael and Robert were very much at home. Of course, both had come to camp for years, and Robert and our daughter Kelly are school chums from way back.

We were even blessed with Izzie (aka *Fuzzy Mut*) a dog of dubious provenance but boundless enthusiasm. He showed up shortly after the guys moved in.

As usual, Kelly summed it up the best one evening when I ventured that *maybe* she could stay with Eric, Amy, and the guys instead of going to a fund-raising banquet with us.

She raised a hand to stay further speculation, "Oh, Mom," she assured me, "I am *always* welcome at Gabriel House."

And so she is.

It's a comfort to Kelly having Michael and Robert, Eric and Amy, on the Ranch. Part of it is just that sense of feeling welcome, of having buddies around to do things with.

Needless to say, it's a big comfort to us, too. We always knew we could provide for Kelly's physical needs, but worried that she would fail to find a community of friends and confidants as she grew older.

In truth, what we wanted for Kelly was a continuing sense of the community we had found in our little church in Austin, St. George's.

Those were people who cared, and were likely to continue to care when we were gone.

So we began the Ranch, and those people and others helped. Now we begin to see the reality we've labored for for years.

From all of us, thank you.



*The road into The Village is a rough right now, but it will be a beautiful drive one day.*

### Thanks to...

- Don Bizzell, for clearing unwanted trees and brush, and for the washer and dryer
- E.C. Smith, for the desk and for helping supervise volunteers
- K of C Brothers Thomas, Joseph, Louis, and Joe, for working on the bunkhouses
- St. Stephens Episcopal High School seniors for a great Volunteer Day
- Randy and Lamerle Morrison, Chris and Trevor, for helping out with the Pancake Supper
- Texas A & M St. Mary's Student Center Confirmation Class, for a great volunteer day
- Terry and Adrienne for many extra mile volunteer efforts
- The Lexington Home Schoolers for a good work day
- Our Board of Directors, Mickey and Gay, Jackie, and Eric and Amy, for going the extra mile and being our companions on the journey

## DHR Gardens: Five Greenhouses and Growing

The "Atrium" is the front greenhouse with the blue metal roof. It's done everything from store machinery to house male campers during camp.

Soon, we hope, the Atrium will be converted into more growing space for the Ranch.

We've asked a major foundation that has helped us in the past to fund a large Garden/Training Center to be located between the hoop houses and the greenhouses.

The "Head House," as we're calling it, will provide a point-of-sale storefront for the public, with classrooms, potting room, work-room, office and storage areas.

We're working to be more and more self-supporting—although charitable contributions will always be vital to the Ranch.



*A variety of bricks and stones will be engraved and installed at the Ranch—a beautiful and permanent way to honor or remember a friend, loved-one or yourself!*

## Bricks and Stones

Years ago 17 families bought 8" X "8 red brick pavers, which were engraved and placed next to pecan trees as a part of "Angel's Grove."

Soon those same pavers, and more, will grace a limestone column being erected on the drive into the Ranch. They are a part of the **Bricks and Stones** program, an ongoing fundraising effort that will help beautify the Ranch and

provide a permanent way to honor or remember a loved one.

Bricks or stones are \$150 and up, and will be engraved with a name, verse or other inscription. They will also be placed along *Ranch Camp* walkways, in Sara's Garden and in front of the Pavilion.

Call for a brochure or look on our website for more details. Bricks and Stones are a great way to give a gift that lasts a lifetime.

## Board of Directors

Mike Paulsen, President .....	Austin
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Carroll Fultz .....	San Antonio
Judy Horton, Secretary .....	Elgin
Frank Martinez .....	Elgin
Ashley Sanchez .....	Austin
Madeline Sutherland .....	Austin
Robert Wenske .....	Elgin

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Fr. Jim Evans .....	Austin
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The Rev. Don Legge, AIA ...	Salado
Col. Don Rettberg .....	Austin
The Rev. Al Rodriguez .....	Austin
Kevin Tracy .....	Austin
Joanna Redfield Vaughn .....	Austin

## Staff

Jerry W. Horton, Ph.D.	Director
Judy Horton	Program Director
Mickey Harris	Greenhouse Mgr.
Jackie Chellberg	Office Manager
Amy Hartley	Resident Assistant
Eric Hartley	Horticultural Assistant

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*Volunteers from the Texas A&M University Catholic Student Center spent a Saturday doing a variety of labor on the hoop houses, getting us ready for 50,000 seedling trees. This was the third time TAMUCSC students have done volunteer work at the Ranch. Thanks!*