

# NATURES TALES

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## *The History of Natures Resort.*

Last year AANR requested that clubs and resorts send them a written account of their history. Mary Sue – Site 19 – volunteered to undertake this daunting task and, after interviews and research, has compiled a very professional article “From Nature to Natures Resort – A History”.

We have taken the liberty of breaking the article into three chapters, and during the summer months Natures Tales will run the series.....

## *From Nature to Natures Resort – A History. by Mary Sue H. Rosenberger*

### *Chapter One*

It was raw nature in its undeveloped and rugged form that greeted Rich and Sharon Stalcup in September of 2000 when they returned to the Rio Grande Valley. Five months earlier, in April, they and Frank Stanley had bought 17 ½ acres of land in southern Hidalgo County, Texas with the goal of developing a new nudist resort. It was 100 degrees as they surveyed the acreage, overgrown with waist-high grass, cactus, thorn-scrub and mesquite trees. The name they had chosen for their new project seemed painfully appropriate: Natures Resort.

Originally they had been part of a group that investigated the purchase of Sandpipers, a near-by nudist resort where they all lived, when it came up for sale. That proved unworkable

so Stalcups and Stanley decided a new community for nudists was needed in the area. They would not, however, borrow money for the venture. Frank Stanley would serve as “silent partner,” involved in all decisions about development but not in day-to-day operations.



*The Start of the Clubhouse*

While Stalcups summered at Avatan Park in Minnesota, they began to draw up plans for their dream resort. Their eight years of RVing experience guided them in designing a park with spacious lots, no overhead wires or exposed poles, a large multi-use clubhouse, separate pools for swimming and water

volleyball, a hot tub, open space for outdoor activities and adequate electrical power and water pressure. They also hired a professional south Texas engineering firm to assist them in securing the necessary approvals for construction.

So, when they returned to the Rio Grande Valley in August, Rich immediately set to work on the property. He burned up a new push mower searching out the boundary lines. Temporary electric power was installed and the couple moved onto the site. Within a month, old friends Bob and Jean Mauk joined them at the future Natures Resort to help with the labor of bringing it to reality.



*The Big Pool*

While the men completed building the privacy fence, the women crawled through the waist-high grass to mark off the boundaries of future RV sites. All worked without clothes because of the extreme heat. Each day's end

found them hot, tired, dirty, scratched bloody by their thorny adversaries and without water for showers! Friends soon took pity on the foursome and began to bring in five-gallon jugs of water for their use! Each couple tried to limit themselves to no more than twelve gallons a day!

It soon became obvious that the work of clearing the land would require more than lawn mowers and chain saws because they were being burned up regularly. In October of that first year, Rich bought a used backhoe. Bob drove it from the point of purchase back to Natures Resort at seven miles per hour. The trip took an hour and forty-five minutes! The new purchase speeded up the process of clearing the land. It was also helpful in the removal of barbed wire fences discovered hidden in the tall grass and grown into the trunks of mesquite trees. Wildlife that had long lived in the underbrush were displaced by the work of the backhoe. Several black snakes, roadrunners, chachalacas and many kangaroo rats had to scurry elsewhere to find shelter.

In mid-November of that first year, running water finally reached the park. Unfortunately, Rich and Bob had been given incorrect instructions on how to install the PVC pipe to carry it. After laboriously digging a trench 475 feet from the road to the park and laying in the water line, the water was turned on. Only then did they discover that they had a 475 foot long sprinkler system! The entire length of the line had to be dug up and re-laid correctly!

About a week later, 10 ½ truckloads of ready-mix concrete were poured for the clubhouse floor on the day after Thanksgiving. At times the concrete crew had to wait while Rich and Bob installed the bolts for the upright building supports. But the entire pour and finishing were completed in just twelve hours!

The rest of the huge building was erected by a professional crew in only seven days.

Throughout the fall and winter of that first season, a professional crew installed the septic systems, the resident men installed electrical boxes and laid out roads. The women began finishing and furnishing the four guest rooms on the second floor of the clubhouse. Their work was only slightly delayed by the discovery of a large bull snake that had taken up residence in the extra electrical conduit stored on the main floor of the unfinished clubhouse!

Even in its incomplete state, Natures Resort hosted three Winter Texans that first winter season. Two of them developed a walking trail across the tops of the irrigation drainage canal berms on the east and south property lines.



*The Volley Ball Pool*

In the spring of 2001, five more couples and three single men moved into Natures Resort as permanent residents and reservations were being accepted for the coming Winter Texan season. By winter that year, construction of the three pools had been completed by a professional crew, forty RV sites were ready for occupancy and twenty-five were rented to Winter Texans. Phase I of the triumph of Natures Resort over nature had been completed.

### ***Tidbits from Speckles, Natures Proud Cat!***

It is so sad. All my Winter Texan family are gone. I hope they are having a nice summer up north.

- It was like threading the eye of a needle getting Larry and Ed's new house on to their lot, but it fit in perfectly and looks great! Check it out!
- Sharon and Rosaire also got a new house with an addition and a porch.
- It was the best tasting ham ever! Ed and Larry spent hours smoking six hams for our Easter dinner. I hope they volunteer to do it again next year!
- We had two inches of rain in one hour, and then almost another inch during the afternoon. There was lots of lake front property, but it all drained away in a couple of hours.
- Connie loves her wheels so much that she may be fined for wearing out the blacktop!
- It is good to see Ellis up and about after his accident.

- Jan & Dan bought a new house. They sold their 5<sup>th</sup> wheel before the house arrived, so they had to live in a tent for a couple of weeks! Their house looks really nice.
- Bill S has been learning how to take care of the pools. He did such a good job that he received a diploma from the Pool Police! (You know who that is!)
- Denny, Raqualla and Richard have been working on the guest room balcony. It is going to look awesome when it is finished.

hours to keeping the Memorial Garden and other areas around the park pretty. Our volunteers are awesome!

***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual AANR World Record Skinny-Dip across North America.***

Join us for this fun event on July 10<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. (sign in at 1:30) Ice cream and root beer floats after the count has been taken.

That's all from me! Have a purrrfect summer!



***The Memorial Garden***

“Many hands make light work!” After the freeze that killed so many of the beautiful plants in the Memorial Garden, a work crew helped Carolann clean out, dig out and cut off all the dead plants so that she will be able to nurture those that survived, and replant those that did not, and have it pretty for next season. Thanks to all for their hard work.

Carolann wishes to thank Joyce, Denny & Raquella, Bill S, Art, Jack & Jane, Rita, Pam, Petra, Dave, Marie, Al, Richard and Bill T for their help in the Memorial Garden as well as with the plants around the pool and the trees in the common area.

Thanks also to Maribel, Laurent & Carmen, Kat, Ed & Larry, Ken & Irene, Bob & Nancy, Bernie, Joann, Art & Terry, Velta, Randy & Cindy and Steve & Paula for donating plants to the Memorial Garden.

A special thank you to Carolann who organized the clean-up and who devotes many