

Around the Bayou



WHAT DO THE ALLIGATORS DO WHEN JACK FROST NIPS AT THEIR NOSES?

Winter brings cold weather, and the gators spend some quality time doing - NOTHING!! That's right. Alligators are reptiles, and since we are only semi-tropical here in Louisiana, they hibernate from November until April. They will shut down all but essential body functions. One of four chambers of their heart will pump blood, they won't eat during the cold months, and they will only come out of the water if the sun is out to warm them. They will spend their time in a burrow they dig in the mud or they will simply sink down to the bottom of the water

where the temperature is more constant, coming up only to breathe. They can stay down as long as two hours (depending on size)!!

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

We will run tours year-round, depending on demand. Obviously, we don't run as often during the colder weather, but the swamp is beautiful any time of year. Call or email us for our schedule.



THANK YOU 855th



In October, Alligator Bayou was the scene of relaxation and fun for a group of men and women who had come to the aid of their fellow Americans as a result of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

We are all familiar with the disastrous impact of Hurricane Katrina in August on the Gulf Coast region of the United States and how in a matter of hours hundreds of thousands of lives were changed forever and the eyes of the nation and the world came to focus on a particular area known as New Orleans.

One of the many military groups that came to the aid of Hurricane Katrina victims was the 855th Military Police Company based in Alabama.



For several weeks, these men and women worked to bring aid to an area that seemed lost and brought comfort and security to people who had none.

These soldiers worked tirelessly with the local law enforcement personnel, and because of their professional and dedicated assistance in our area, we at Alligator Bayou treated them to a tour of the alligator exhibit and aboard the Alligator Queen.

These men and women were just a few of the people from around the world to respond to our pleas for help here in Louisiana, and we wanted to show them a good time in gratitude for their service here.



We enjoyed watching their reaction to lunging gators and candy-eating nutrias, along with the "brave" ones who "volunteered" to feed gators with us!!! We had such a great time with these fine soldiers and we hope they took home a fond memory of Louisiana.

Thanks again, 855th!!!



From The Bayou



First, thanks to all of you who have called and sent emails against turning Alligator Bayou into a flood basin. Our fight is only beginning. Please keep us in your thoughts and, above all, please offer support when you can. We're trying to put together a contact list of those associated with this project, and will let you know when it is available in hopes you will contact them when the time is right.

Can you believe it? The year is almost gone. We all look back at life this past year, and what a year! Our first thought was how fortunate we were to have been only brushed by not one, but two major hurricanes. Katrina and Rita reminded us to count our blessings and to make our blessings count. Both Jim and I spend more quality time with our family, hugging the dogs and watching the swamp breathe everyday.

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ADDITIONAL ONLINE E-NEWSLETTER FEATURES:

- ALLIGATOR COLORING PAGE
- GATOR WALLPAPER
- PET ADOPTION
- AND MUCH MORE!

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(CONTINUED, FROM THE BAYOU) We made new friends with a family who lost many of their possessions, but still had each other. We've seen so many of the volunteers and supporters who came down to Louisiana to do what they could to help - beautiful people who gave up their lives for awhile to assist those who needed it most. Jim, Jamie and I recently went to New Orleans to spend the day. Everywhere we went, people looked us in the eye and smiled, seemingly appreciative of what they did still have.

We also look back into a year filled with thrills and adventures. This was our first year with the new gator pit, and WOW!! We have had quite a time running from dinosaurs, much to the amusement of our visitors!! We also look back to the construction of the covered walkway in the pit. David did a really nice job putting those sketches I threw around into reality!! We also got to listen to the gators bellow and roar during the breeding season - what a thrill. Ya'll need to come out one spring evening and experience this primordial ritual for yourselves. Maybe we should have a gator soiree' next year - cocktails on the gator observation deck after dark while the owls hoot, the bullfrogs call, the gators bellow and the fireflies flash through the trees!!! Hmm, sounds like an event!! And of course we also had gator babies again this year! All 26 that hatched are thriving. It's also quite a sight to watch Jamie call the babies and feed them (especially when one performs the death roll on her finger!)

We welcomed some new family members in the furry family, too. First off, we hired Derrie Falcon to work with us here. She really fits in here (which can be quite scary, considering the motley crew she has joined). We've got two new opossums, Marzipan and Tank. We also picked up a new nutria, too. Some of you probably met him on our tour since July. His name is Abe, and it looks like he might like dum-dums, too. The last couple of months have also brought 8 new dogs and 1 really amazing kitten. We've found homes for 5 of the dogs so far, but we still have Sasha (shepherd mix), LaWanda (dachhund mix), and Schnitzel (a really tiny dachhund). The kitten is Domino, and she is so cute! She was running on the road next to her dead sibling. She is litter-trained, sweet as sugar, and a real darling - amazing that someone would actually throw her away. Oh, well, their loss - our gain.

Thanks to Dezins for the Gator Gazette idea! It is so nice to be able to talk to all of you on a regular (ok, semi-regular) basis. We hope you enjoy it as much as we all do here!

Other noteworthy events include reworking the turtle exhibit, getting wiring run to all of the exhibits to put in electricity, cleaning around the old-growth trees along the levee, David and Erica's first baby boy due this December, the bowling congress visitors, Miss Teen USA, the honor of being named a Capital City Asset by the Baton Rouge Business Report, the installation of a new pier to act as a landing to walk to the old-growth trees, and the start of our new bobcat habitat.

Some of our plans for 2006 is to put the finishing details on the bobcat habitat. We currently have the posts driven, but we still need to install the fence and build the environment. We're working on plans for housing, a playground, and a pond. We currently have a non-releasable bobcat that has been offered to us, and we can't wait to get her into her new home. We're also looking at two or three flights for some non-releasable raptors. Jamie will get a new home of her own, too, if the plans work out. We're hoping to build an office at the pavilion for her to be closer to the tour!

We are so blessed and fortunate - what a wonderful life (no pun intended). I look forward to waking up every morning - love, happiness and opportunity - you can't ask for more!! Have a wonderful, blessed and safe holiday season - see you in 2006!!!

Later, gator!
Frank and Jim