

# Cherokeean

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## TEACHER APPRECIATION

Nancy Moore is named the Rusk teacher of the year during an awards luncheon on the final day of the school year. Coming next week: photos of all award recipients at the teacher appreciation luncheon.



A special parade in Rusk celebrates the 'dog' days of summer this Saturday. See pg. B1.



# Working on the railroad

By MICAH BATEMAN  
STAFF WRITER

At the height of an East Texas day in May, temperatures can reach somewhere around 90 degrees. Coupled with a sticky humidity index and not a drop of hope for rain, outdoor conditions are at least less than conducive to comfortable labor. But what some consider labor, Steve and Jan Mondl call leisure.

"If it feels like work, you shouldn't be doing it," Jan said, pulling a few more errant weeds from an informational sign along the nature trail of Rusk State Park. "We love this stuff. It's really all about perspective."

The Mondls have been working for Rusk State Park a little over one month now, which means for them, it's time to move on. Having retired in their early 40s in 1998, the couple doesn't exactly lead the life of average retirees.

"Well, really our intention when we retired was to learn how to play golf," Steve said. "We never got around to it. Instead, we headed west to the north rim of the Grand Canyon."

From there, they began their grand adventure. After an impromptu proposition from a park host at the Grand Canyon allowed the couple to stay an extra week in their Air Stream RV in exchange for their services as park hosts — they were, after all, both educators — Steve and Jan have been trying to satisfy a wanderlust, one park at a time. Ten months out of the year for the past eight years, they have been away from their home in Ohio working parks in all 48 states of the contiguous U.S.

Now on their third amenity packed RV, the dromomaniacal duo has landed right here in Rusk.



Steve and Jan Mondl, park-hoppers from Ohio, scan the nature trail at Rusk State Park for debris. The Mondls have served as park hosts in Rusk for over a month.