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Banner Photo of Bluebonnet seedlings by Terrie Hahn. See story on page 4.

Calendar at a Glance	
February 5, hours due.	
February 14, 6 p.m. General Meeting, Belton Church of Christ	
February 18 & 19, Mother Earth News Fair. Belton Expo Center	
March 21, New Class Orientation	
April 8, Gault Site Tour	
See page 7 & 8 for more info	

Don't Bug Me

- Lynn Fleming

Harmonia axyridis. You've probably seen a lot of them around this year. Seems like they've been everywhere....on the walls, on your car, in your car, in the house. Little round, yellow to orange to red, with a varying number of spots. Yes folks, the Asian lady beetles have invaded central Texas.



Lady beetles feed on aphids and other soft-bodied insects that damage plants in crops, gardens and landscapes. They can be beneficial critters for farmers and gardeners, but the Asian variety has become troublesome.

Where did they come from? The multicolored Asian lady beetle is a native of eastern Asia. The U.S. Department of Agriculture in California released them in 1916 and in 1964-1965 for biological control of pecan

Continued on page 5...

Chapter Motto
**Earth Day,
 Every Day**



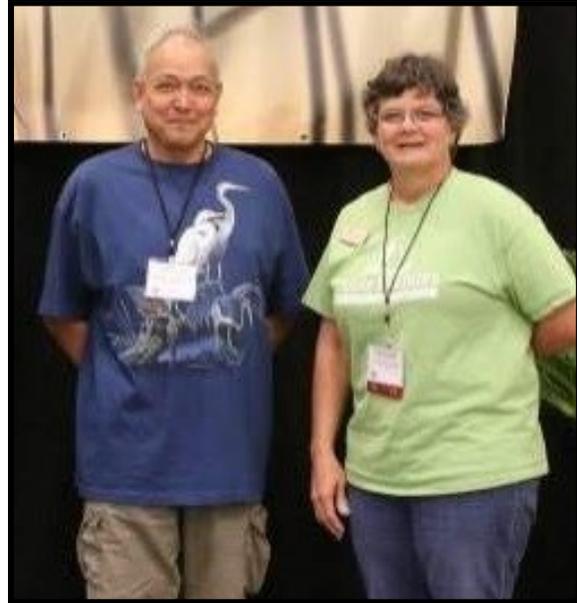
From the President's Pen

I cannot help but begin my first letter to *The Tracker* by thanking Lynn Fleming for her exceptional leadership and extraordinary dedication to our Chapter. Lynn has been at the helm as President now for four long and successful years and I feel somewhat humbled to follow in her footsteps as she concurrently held a full time job at USDA and ran a successful cattle ranching enterprise during her tenure. Lynn is also a prolific writer and has been able to convey her sense of time and space and the rhythm of nature all around us in a truly iconic way in her open forum letters to *The Tracker*.

Like Lynn I also held a position as a public servant, working in public land management in the U.S. Department of Interior. My last position was as Monument Manager of the 1.9 million acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. I also served as the Deputy State Director for the Bureau of Land Management in Santa Fe, New Mexico for a four state region that includes the State of Texas. I initially thought that all of Texas was like West Texas where we had an office, but came to find out that was not true.

I am now retired and moved to Central Texas about 2 ½ years ago. My wife, Elizabeth and I enjoy it quite a bit. For me, the Texas Master Naturalist program seemed like a good fit. Besides my time in DOI, I had previously worked for the State of New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department and enjoyed going out in the field quite a bit and had done some work with the New Mexico Museum of Natural History in Albuquerque. However, you won't see me out on field trips or work days with our Chapter, as I had a stroke a few years back which has compromised my mobility and stamina quite a bit. When I was first approached about becoming the new President, I had some reservations in that regard; but will try to do the best I can in moving the Chapter forward. In my next letter I will try to

talk less about me and more about falling leaves, (or maybe not). In any regard I am happy to be your new President and extend my heartfelt appreciation to Lynn for all she has done. - Rene



New President, Rene Berkhoudt with Past President Lynn Fleming.

Project SMART

- Richard McCarthy

SERVICE, MATH, ACTIVITIES REQUIRING THINKING (SMART) kids' day is an annual event at Saegert Elementary School in Killeen. This event provides students the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities throughout the day.

This year there were twenty-five (25) activities offered including, water, anatomy, nutrition, math, maps, robotics and other science related topics. Students were separated into groups by grade and each group could attend five presentations.

Marilyn and I had the pleasure of providing information and actual specimens of Macroinvertebrates to third graders. Each session was forty-five minutes and then students would rotate. There were two rotations before lunch and three in the afternoon. The school provided lunch for the presenters.

During each of our sessions the students would see a slide show of various macroinvertebrates,

then spend time looking at the actual preserved specimens. All students seemed interested, actively participated and asked pertinent questions.

The five rotations through our presentations provided information to a total of one-hundred fourteen (114) students, and five (5) adults.

Marilyn and I had as much fun as the youngsters.

Third Grade Students, Saegert Elementary School,
Killeen



Spotlight on Invasives



Bluebonnets Not Just Blue Anymore

- Terrie Hahn

You've probably noticed last spring, many different colors of Bluebonnets coming up and for sale in the nurseries. Texas Superstars include your typical blue *Lupinus texensis* along with Texas Maroon and Lady Bird Johnson Royal Blue Bluebonnet. And, of course, you'll find white and pink Bluebonnets. Our State Flower is the Bluebonnet and legally includes 5 different varieties of these Lupines: *Lupinus subcarnosus*, *Lupinus texensis*, *Lupinus Havardii*, *Lupinus concin-nus* and *Lupinus plattensis*



According to an article called TEXAS BLUE-BONNETS -- TEXAS PRIDE by Jerry M. Parsons, Steve George and Greg Grant of the Texas Cooperative Extension, "the additional colors of the state flower were not genetically created by man; these colors have existed for as long as bluebonnets

have bloomed. The additional colors, which already existed in nature and have for hundreds of years, were simply isolated, purified and grown in large numbers. No plant breeding or genetic manipulation of bluebonnets has been done except by God. All of these colors have been developed to enhance the Texas state flower. ALL of these colors, by law, are legally the state flower. Now, for the first time in history, color patterns of the state flower can be planted and enjoyed. And, since these colors are all naturally occurring selections, they complement each other perfectly, making design and color selection almost fool-proof. There is nothing prettier than a mixed bed of pink, white and blue bluebonnets. Through working with Mother Nature, the Texas state flower can now be raised to new heights of beauty and enjoyment."

"Others hasten to add: 'If a bluebonnet flower is white, it shouldn't be called a bluebonnet, it's a whitebonnet.' The state flower is the bluebonnet, written as one word. A color variant of that flower would be properly described with the name of that color, PLUS the name of the flower. Consequently, the terms white bluebonnet, pink bluebonnet, and maroon bluebonnet are correct. Be advised that from all packets of seed or flats of transplants of bluebonnet color strains such as pink, white or 'Worthington Blue' there will be some plants which will bloom with the standard blue color. The new color strains are not 100 percent pure and thus will occasionally exhibit the ancestral blue and possibly other hues as well. Also, be advised that in bluebonnet stands which have been allowed to naturally reseed the mixing of blues with pinks or whites will, in several years, result in reversion to the blue color due to cross-pollination and the subsequent masking of the less dominant color strain."

When we moved to our 5 acres in 1998, we had Bluebonnets only in the backyard. They particularly liked to pop up in the vegetable garden. We've been moving them from the vegetable garden to the front yard for years and now have them all over the place! We had much more luck transplanting than using seeds. We started seeing little seedlings in August, but they're coming in really strong right now. If anyone would like some transplants, you're welcome to come dig some up.

Left: last year's Bluebonnets. Below: Bluebonnet seedlings coming in.



Don't Bug Me...continued

aphids. Since that time, the flying beetle has spread from California to Louisiana and all the way to Minnesota! Apparently, they like their new home in the United States.

Asian lady beetles are about 7 mm long and have a

blance to an aphid. Another annoyance to humans is the yellowish strong-smelling liquid secreted from the joints of their legs from a process called reflex bleeding. It can stain and is just kind of yucky in general.

By now, I would think most of the Asian lady beetles have tucked themselves in for winter. If they survive the winter, we may have less aphids next year...and more Asian lady beetles. Nature writes the rules.



Asian lady beetle



Ladybug

varying number of spots. A characteristic that assists in their identification is an "M" or "W" shaped mark located behind the head. The immature larvae are similar in appearance to other lady beetle larvae. They are blue to black with two orange stripes with spines.

In the fall, the beetles begin to gather in large numbers on the outside of light colored buildings and houses. They are looking for nice quiet places to hibernate through the winter until spring. I found a group in the wood pile right before one of the cold fronts that we had come through.

Here in central Texas, we are used to the cricket invasions that occur in the fall. The lady beetles are a little more uncommon. Lady beetles don't really do much damage to anything except aphids. They do, though, have somewhat of a bite that can penetrate skin. Some think that this is a way to look for food or moisture, but I don't think humans have much resem-

December Awards

- Zoe Rascoe



Top left, clockwise: Gift to our outgoing Commander in Chief for 4 years of leadership. Mary Ann Everett and her daughter made this beautiful quilt-zoom in on it on your computer screen! Burr attends the party; Marion Riegel and Wade Matthews receive their certification; Sue Valdez, Jerry Lewis, Gail Hughling, Rene Berkhoudt and Sarah Byrd receive their recertification pins for 2016.



Marion Riegel and Wade Matthews receive their certification; Sue Valdez, Jerry Lewis, Gail Hughling, Rene Berkhoudt and Sarah Byrd receive their recertification pins for 2016.



On the Horizon

Gault Field Trip

Greetings; We are being afforded an opportunity to participate in a tour of the famous Gault site located just outside of Florence, Texas this Spring. Lynn Fleming has arranged our CTMN chapter tour through the Bell County Museum. The tour is scheduled for **Saturday, April 8th**.

The Gault School of Archaeological Resources will be hosting the tour. The Gault site continues to draw a great deal of both national and international archaeological interest because of the wealth of information on Clovis culture which flourished in the area 13,000 years ago. The tour is generally about 3 hours long and will traverse a walking route of about a mile and a half. Topics will include an overview of the geology and cultural history of the region with a focus on Clovis culture, important finds from the Gault site and a tour of the archaeological excavation. At the end of the tour there is a small picnic area.

The tour will cost \$10 per person, but children 10 years of age and under are free. We will be meeting at the Bell County Museum with payment due on the day of the tour. Travel to the site will be by personal vehicle. There is requirement for all participants to sign a waiver for liability issues.

We are hoping to have at least 15 people participate. If you are considering attending please let me know.

- Rene

Mother Earth News Fair Coming to Expo Center!

Feb. 18-19, 2017

Bell County Expo Center
301 W Loop 121
Belton, Texas 76513

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

With more than 150 workshops, there is no shortage of informative demonstrations and lectures to educate and entertain you over the weekend. Fun, Informative workshops and demo's! Go to: <http://www.motherearthnewsfair.com/texas/>

2017 Class Registration Open

Registration is open for the 2017 trainee class of our Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapter. Let friends and family know! Tentative training schedule and registration forms are available on our website <http://txmn.org/centraltexas/new-class>. Orientation is **March 21, 2017 6pm – 8pm** at the AgriLife Building 1605 N Main St, Belton. Classes will be on **Tuesdays 9am – 4pm through June 6**.

On the Horizon

February Fun

Sunday, February 5

Enter your hours into VMS within 45 days of an event.

Thursday, February 9 (V) Miller Springs Workday

8am – 12pm @ Miller Springs Nature Preserve

Contact Maryann: everett.maryann4@gmail.com

Tuesday, February 14 (AT) General Membership Meeting, Bruce Polikoff on CoCoRAHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network) will speak.

6pm – 7:30pm @ Belton Church of Christ

Chapter business & an Advanced Training topic.

Contact Rene: rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com

Wednesday, February 15 (V) Mother Neff Workday

10am – 12pm @ Mother Neff State Park

Saturday & Sunday, February 18-19 (V) Mother Earth News Fair

Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 9am-5pm @ Bell County Expo Center

Contact Gail about volunteering: GailHughling@aol.com

Thursday February 23 (V) Bell County Museum Workday

7am – 11am @ Bell County Museum

Come out and help us take care of the gardens.

Contact Lynn: lynn.fleming99@gmail.com

Friday - Sunday February 24 - 26 (V) Home and Garden Show

Fri 6pm-9pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12pm-5pm @ Bell County Expo Center

Contact Gail about volunteering: GailHughling@aol.com

Marching into March:

Sunday, March 5 Enter your hours into VMS

Tuesday, March 7 CTMN Board Meeting 3pm-5pm

Thursday, March 9 (V) Miller Springs Workday 8am-12pm

Tuesday March 14 CTMN PACE Meeting 6pm-8pm

Wednesday March 15 (V) Mother Neff Workday 10am-12pm

Tuesday, March 21 CTMN Trainee Orientation 6pm

Thursday, March 23 (V) Bell County Museum Workday 7am-11am

Thursday, March 30 (V) Nolan Creek Hike & Bike Cleanup 8am-11am

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!

<https://www.facebook.com/Central-Texas-Chapter-Texas-Master-Naturalists-116648718373317/timeline/>

(V) Approved for Volunteer Hours
(AT) Approved for Advanced Training
(MA) Must Apply for approval of hours

Newsletter Mission Statement

"Our mission is to inform and educate Master Naturalist members and the general public about our local environment and resources, and what we, as caretakers, can do to protect them."

Board of Directors

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Newsletter Staff

Editor: Terrie Hahn

Proofreader: Werner Hahn

Contributing Writers and Photographers: Rene Berkhoudt, Lynn Fleming, Richard McCarthy, Zoe Rascoe, Terrie Hahn

Please send any news of events, articles or photos of what you're doing or what's going on in your yard or area to:

Terrie Hahn at moompie45@hotmail.com

White Winter Honeysuckle in bloom now.



The Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapter:

Holds member meetings the 2nd Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October and December at 6 p.m. at the Belton Church of Christ at 3003 N. Main. Location exceptions are in December and June.

PACE meetings are at the Church location at 6 p.m. the 2nd Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November. **THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME AT ALL OF OUR MEETINGS.**

Programs Activities Committees Everything else

The Board of Directors meet the 1st Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November at 3 p.m. in the Board Room at the Agrilife Extension Center at 1605 Main in Belton.