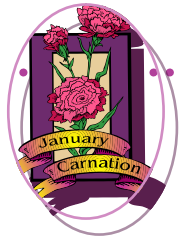




# TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST, ELM FORK CHAPTER

Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service

NEWSLETTER



## Rob's Ramblings – January 2012



Photo-V. Elliott

Rob Roy, President

**Y**ear 2012 is here and many of you already are working on Elm Fork Chapter projects and/or other chapter activities. This should be a great year to tell people in our communities who we are and what we do as Texas Master Naturalists. As we work on various projects and other activities we can show people what we are passionate about as they observe us at parks, in schools, and other venues.

**T**exas suffered exceptional drought, wildfires, and other natural calamities in 2011. Unfortunately, predictions are the drought will continue far into this year. One of the key things we can do individually and collectively as a chapter is educate our fellow citizens on how the natural world works and what they can do in the face of continued drought.



*"Rob's Ramblings" will be a periodic feature in upcoming newsletters.*

**R**eview the list of projects on our website to see which ones you might be interested in being part of this year. The variety is all over the place. Also consider volunteering for one of the committees. We need more members to get involved beyond projects. Committee work counts as service hours as well.

**W**e will have some very interesting speakers this year at chapter meetings and are planning several field trips during the year. Please send speaker/topic suggestions and field trips ideas to Peggy La Point, Programs Chairperson, at

[tnplapoint@msn.com](mailto:tnplapoint@msn.com)

**Let's strive to make 2012 the best year in our chapter's history.**



Volume 13, Issue 1

January 2012



### Special points of interest:

- *Case of the mutant mustard*
- *Log cabin Christmas*
- *Good fun, good fellowship, good eats*
- *Carpenters on the job*
- *Breakfast at the courthouse*
- *Green lynx spider*

### Inside this issue:

Announcements	2
Santa came to town	4
Christmas at LLELA	5
Breakfast at commissioners court	7
In profile	8
Extra trivia	9
Clear Creek kiosk	10
Field notes in focus	11
Who we are	12





If you have an idea for, or information about a speaker, please send your suggestions, with all contact information, to Peg La Point, programs chairperson.

[tnplapoint@msn.com](mailto:tnplapoint@msn.com) 891-4984



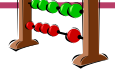
**CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGES**

If you have any changes in your contact information (name, address, telephone number or numbers, and/or email address) you want the chapter and members to know about please send the changes to:

**Monica Chaffin** [chaffincasa@gmail.com](mailto:chaffincasa@gmail.com); **Donna Wolfe** [donna.wolfe@dentoncounty.com](mailto:donna.wolfe@dentoncounty.com); & **Susan Pohlen** [spohlen@verizon.net](mailto:spohlen@verizon.net).

**DUES, DUE**

Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalist membership dues are payable at \$25 through January 31, 2012, and \$30 thereafter. Kay Crowe, treasurer, has made available a payment form that includes the Hold Harmless statement members are required to sign before participating in volunteer service. Make checks payable to Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalist and give to Kay or mail to her at: 3320 Dunes Street, Denton, TX 76209.

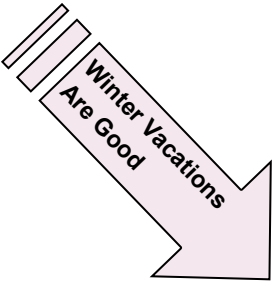


**Looking for an easy way to keep a record of accumulated hours?**

**Look no further!** The computer “calculating form” developed by Ron Fellows and Van Elliott simplifies it. If you have not received a copy, make your request to either of these innovative Master Naturalist.

It’s a snap — saves time for both yourself and the chapter record-keepers.

P.S. Donna & Susan will thank you for it!



**Peckerwood Garden Tours**

Peckerwood Garden is a 40-acre botanical garden about 50 miles northwest of Houston. It is a conservatory for native Texas plants and rare species from northern Mexico and their Asian counterparts. Next tour dates: Feb. 18-19 and March 3-4. [www.peckerwoodgarden.org](http://www.peckerwoodgarden.org) for reservations and information.



**Wednesdays** — Guided birdwatching on the boardwalk. Stroll the boardwalk at the Port Aransas birding center with a local guide. See what migratory birds winter brings. Good for novice or expert. Keep an eye peeled for the alligators, although they’re probably hibernating. 9 to 11 a.m. Leonabelle Thurnbull Birding Center at the trolley stop at the end of Ross Avenue. 361-749-4158; [www.cityofportaransas.org/OnGoing\\_Programs.cfm](http://www.cityofportaransas.org/OnGoing_Programs.cfm).





**TO ALL WHO SENT PICTURES FOR  
THE 2011 SCRAPBOOK.**

*Betty Zajac, Chapter Historian*

Send chapter messages to **Monica Chaffin** [chaffincasa@gmail.com](mailto:chaffincasa@gmail.com); web-site info to **Sharon Barr** [sharon-barr@charter.net](mailto:sharon-barr@charter.net); newsletter to **Wanda Odum** [wodum10043@aol.com](mailto:wodum10043@aol.com)

**CORRECTION** in December newsletter — Doug Chadwick was not identified as project manager at the Interpretive Center in the piece about the garden re-do at Ray Roberts Lake Isle du Bois.



**Being** very appreciative of everyone who contributed to the Chapter Newsletter this past year with articles, photos, information, proofing, and encouragement, I sincerely **thank you.**

**Wanda Odum — Newsletter**



**T**he success of the Chapter Newsletter depends on each of you. The newsletter “goes to press” every month, so we are in continual need of materials—articles, photos, announcements—on a regular basis. Articles may be short or somewhat longer depending on the number of photos. Members are particularly interested in updates on projects. It could be your project or another project about which you have information; and there is always positive feedback when we include articles on animals, butterflies, birds, plants, etc. Research, writing, and photographing are “countable” volunteer hours. February deadline for submissions will be Wednesday, February 8 unless you advise me that you need more time.

**Please keep my “mailbox” full this coming year!**

[wodum10043@aol.com](mailto:wodum10043@aol.com)





# Santa did, indeed, come to town . . .



One of the good little guys — **Dave Ford**



Santa aka **Owen Richards**



Good little reindeer — **Jan Thompson and Cheryl Kesterson**

Bringing his most valuable reindeer down,  
Ensuring that good cheer was shared all 'round.

One of the good little ladies— **Janet Laminack**



"Goodies"



Thank all of you good little Master Naturalists who made this occasion so enjoyable—too numerous to name everyone. However, special thanks to **Jeri Marold** and **Linda Cox** who organized the decorations and food; **Jan Hodson** who coordinated the gift exchange; all the helpers who set up and cleaned up; those who prepared and brought the food for the shared lunch; and, of course, Santa and the reindeer.

All photos courtesy **Laurie Hemming**







**Christmas at the Log Cabin—the Minor-Porter Cabin at LLELA—was held on December 10, 2011. A number of master naturalists were there, including members of the 2011 class.**

*Photos & article courtesy J. Elliott*

Ruth Ann Morrison hosted a very attractive refreshments table offering unique old-time treats like orange peel candy, muffins served up in adorable baskets, sugar cookies, gingerbread cookies and bread pudding—just to name a few!



Ruth Ann at the refreshments table



Thetford and McCormack - Chuck Thetford, wife Susan, son Michael, Paula McCormick and husband Patrick. Chuck is from the class of 2011 and Paula, his sister, was class of 2010.



Zach Owens - showing the pine cone feeders

Zach Owens worked the table at which one could make hanging pine cone bird feeders using peanut butter and sunflower seeds.



Thetfords and Chaka - Michael, Chuck and Susan delivering the butter press to Jean Chaka.

Michaelanne Cangelosi was all dressed up in one of Sherrill Campbell's hand made dresses. She worked at the table showing the folks how to make some really nice Christmas cards all covered with pine cone petals and cranberries.





Diane Wetherbee was in charge of the open fire and cooked several pans of gingerbread in the Dutch oven. Make that DELICIOUS gingerbread! She served it up with homemade butter which was formed in a butter press made by Chuck Thetford. It was a hand-made press with finger joints (like dove-tailing). He cut every joint and filed it by hand. Quite an effort - well done, looked great and shaped some perfect butter. You can see Diane here removing the butter from Chuck's press.



Deborah Estes was running the candle making table.



Deborah Meyer, standing in for husband Dale, surveys the activities with Owen Richards. Of course, where Owen goes so goes his camera.



Archive photo-w.odum





## The Commissioners' Court Interpretation Event

*Report from Extension Agent, Janet Laminack, with photos and captions courtesy Van Elliott*

Every year, Denton County Texas AgriLife Extension conducts a formal interpretation event; interpreting the value and relevance of our programs to our county leaders. We do this with a breakfast and a presentation at the commissioners' court every year in December.



*Judge, Mary Horn County Commissioners Court and MNVP Rob Roy exchanging pleasantries*



*MN and 4-H members enjoying the breakfast festivities*

Following the breakfast, we attend commissioners' court and all the agents give a short presentation on highlights of the past year. We also ran a slideshow in a loop with photos of Extension in action, including some nice photos of the Master Naturalists!



*Janet Laminack making her presentation to the court about the wonderful things we volunteers do*

The breakfast is provided by 4-H youth as a part of their community service. The invitees include the county judge, the commissioners, county department heads and members of the various program area committees of Extension. The breakfast is an informal time for Extension volunteers to mingle with the county judge and commissioners. These leaders enjoy talking with volunteers and the 4-H youth.



*Beautifully decorated table and food provided by members of 4-H and other AgriLife divisions*

Part of the court portion includes the presentation of a giant (fake) check representing the contribution to the county of volunteer service. This is a compilation of the service hours of the over 400 Extension volunteers with the estimated dollar value of volunteer time at \$21.36 per hour. This year, there was a 60% increase in the amount of volunteer hours with over 51,000 hours reported and for the first time, the check represented over a million dollars.

As an aside to you all, 13,089 hours were from the Master Naturalists. And this isn't even your total for the year, but rather all the hours we had at the end of November. Thank you for all your service to Denton County and for reporting those hours! It really does matter!



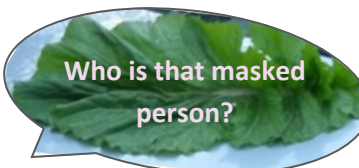




## IN PROFILE—IS THERE LIFE BEYOND MASTER NATURALIST?



Courtesy D. Thetford



None other than our own **Dorothy Thetford** with her 29" mustard leaf!

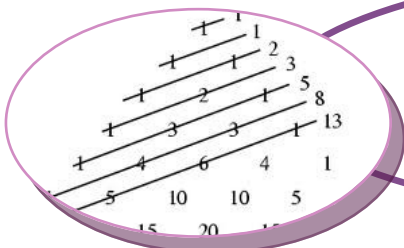


*And if that doesn't catch your eye, how about broccoli as well!*



*Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience. ~Ralph Waldo Emerson*

When she's not guiding nature hikes or teaching DISD students about nature, Dorothy may be found "doin' a bit of farming." She states that this mustard plant, left over from spring, sort of existed throughout the summer, then "whammo," decided to do a showboat display and produced 4 leaves of this size this past fall. Dorothy's mantra? "Come grow with me."







Random "surfing" on a rainy afternoon (yes, really!) produced this interesting photo.



Green Lynx Spider on a rose, in the public rose gardens in Tyler, Texas. *Sept. 10, 2009*

***Peucetia viridans***, the **green lynx spider**, is a conspicuous bright-green spider found on shrubs. It is the largest North American lynx spider.

The green lynx spider very seldom bites humans, and its bite is harmless though painful. It is primarily of interest for its use in agricultural pest management, for example in cotton fields. The spiders have been observed to hunt several moth species and their larvae, including some of the most important crop pests, such as the bollworm moth (*Heliothis zea*), the cotton leafworm moth (*Alabama agrillacea*) and the cabbage looper moth (*Trichoplusia ni*). However, they also prey on beneficial insects, such as honey bees.

This species occurs in the southern United States, some parts in Northern California, Central America, the West Indies, and Venezuela.

The species name, *viridans*, is Latin for "becoming green". It is not to be confused with *P. viridana*, a species that occurs only in India and Myanmar, or *P. viridis* from Spain and Africa.

*From w.odum — photo and related information comes from the Wikipedia site and is in the public domain.*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peucetia\\_viridans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peucetia_viridans)



CLEAR CREEK HERITAGE CENTER LONG-AWAITED KIOSK



Texas Master Naturalist  
Elm Fork Chapter  
2011



"Construction boss" gets a thank you snuggle from Dave Ford.



Be it cool, foggy, or sapphire blue, this group of master carpenters — **Dave Ford, George Kragle, Peg La Point, Jan Thompson** — could not be deterred from completing the kiosk at **Clear Creek Heritage Center**.

Photos—J. Thompson





***“FIELD NOTES IN FOCUS”***



**Exotic Alstromeria aka Peruvian Lily (snapped at BRIT)  
comes from the Laurie Hemming gallery.**

*A periodic feature showcasing member photographers — flora and fauna as you see them —*





**ELM FORK CHAPTER**

Texas AgriLife Extension  
306 North Loop 288, Suite 222  
Denton, TX 76209-4887

940-349-2883

*Education, Conservation, Preservation,  
Restoration*

OUR MISSION . . .

*"to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community"*



**Members of the Board**

PRESIDENT—Rob Roy  
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT—George Kragle  
VICE-PRESIDENT—Susan Pohlen  
SECRETARY—Diane Kohlhase  
TREASURER—Kay Crowe  
CLASS REPRESENTATIVE—Dale Meyer  
MEMBER-at-LARGE—Doug Chadwick  
COMMITTEES:  
Communications:  
    Wanda Odum (chair rotation with Sharon Barr & Monica Chaffin)  
Projects: Marian Kester  
Publicity: Jan Deatherage  
Training: Van Elliott  
ADVISORS:  
    Janet Laminack, Extension Agent  
    Patrick Shutz, TP&W

**Monthly Chapter Meetings**

9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

Chapter meetings are open to the public.

Next meeting: January 19, 2012 — Location: AgriLIFE Extension Office

**Board Meetings**

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m., Denton County AgriLIFE Extension Office. The Board last met January 12, 2012. Next meeting is February 9, 2012

Board meetings are open to members.

"Hear! hear!" screamed the jay from a neighboring tree, where I had heard a tittering for some time, "winter has a concentrated and nutty kernel, if you know where to look for it." ~Henry David Thoreau, 28 November 1858

