

Please Notice This



What's Next?



TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST,
ELM FORK CHAPTER



February 16, 2017

Annual Awards Ceremony

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND CELEBRATE WITH
CHAPTER MEMBERS WHO ARE RECOGNIZED FOR
OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS DURING 2016.





Projects on Target



The Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition 2016

is now on display in the Eagle Exhibit Hall at the Elm Fork Education Center in the EESAT Bldg. at UNT. All of the 190 award winning paintings by 4th. grade students from the 14 participating schools are displayed.

The exhibit will be at UNT for the month of February. Don't miss this opportunity to see the creative, colorful artwork.

Marilyn Blanton, Project Manager





Remembering Tina and Recognizing the Importance of Her Memorial Bench at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center

With MN class 2003 at Clear Creek



Photo from Jan Thompson



“Dave Rowley and I showing off our work on the repaired Tina Bench on the Fisherman’s Trail at Clear Creek.” Photo from Jonathan Reynolds



Tina working at Clear Creek

Photo from Jan Thompson

Tina Litherland, a Texas Master Naturalist class of 2003 was our colleague in work and mischief at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center. Cutely petite but, oh so strong and determined. She could handle any piece of equipment on our first major construction project – building a walkway bridge for the stream bed on Fisherman’s Trail. When we were clearing trails, she would remark at things she could see from a distance or bugs and flowers along the trails, she loved nature. Her early history growing up as part of family that were subsistence farmers may have influence her love and respect of nature.

David Rowley remembers a project he requested help for in removing a plant that had become invasive, the American Lotus at Crosstimbers Park. Tina jumped in to help, literally. Read Dave’s story -

In 2003 I had a project to plant aquatic plants in the pond at Crosstimbers Park. One of the plants we planted was an American Lotus which liked the setting way too much. By the next year it had completely covered the entire pond so that even the water wasn’t visible. The neighbors and the Denton Parks Department were none too pleased with how it turned out. Since I was the responsible person, I volunteered to do my best to remove the Lotus from the pond. I asked for volunteers to assist and as you might expect, not many were willing to take on the chore. But...Tina who was a relatively new member at the time stepped up to help. As I recall, it was she, Dave Ford and myself who showed to do the removal, which was an almost impossible task. Dave and I had on chest high waders, but Tina showed up in her bathing suit! Dave and I reluctantly waded in, fully protected, but Tina didn’t hesitate and waded right in her bathing suit and began ripping out Lotus plants. Tina wasn’t afraid of hard work or snakes and I’ll never forget that day.



Memorial for Tina at bench

Tina’s bench was built some time after her passing so she would always be remembered. It saddens us to see the human destruction that has damaged her bench. But a thanks to all who keep her memory alive by maintaining her bench and enjoying sitting in nature and seeing nature as if Tina were still looking on.

Article by Jan Thompson with input from Dave Rowley

A Eulogy for Tina Litherland by John Cooper—May 18, 2006—In Tina's closing days, Merrill told me, he and Tina wanted me to give her eulogy, and asked if I would. I was reluctant, at first since I had known her only a few years. After a few moments reflection though, I realized Tina had given me so much, it was my turn to give something back. So I agreed, and I am glad I did, because I discovered a life that was even richer than I had imagined. Everything she did was important to her and everyone she knew received the best she had to give.

Tina was born in the Philippine Islands on July 1, 1939 to Isidro and Encarnacion Pontila Cacal. Following World War II, in 1946, at the age of seven, Tina moved with her family to the Hawaiian Islands, where she lived throughout her formative years. In 1962, at the age of 23, Tina moved from Honolulu, to Jan Jose, California, where she reared her six children. In 1979, she married Merrill Litherland, and with Merrill's two children, Tina's nuclear family became a perfect ten. Tina and Merrill moved their family to Bartonville in 1980, where Tina lived the next 26 years, in devoted service to her family and friends. Tina leaves eight children, 21 grandchildren, and five great grandchildren, spread across Texas, Iowa, Ohio, Illinois, California, and one in Africa on a Peace Corps mission.

Tina Litherland was a daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and friend to many. She pursued her passions in gardening, nature study, bowling, and volunteer service through the Retired and Seniors Volunteer Program. We were all inspired by her energy, and enthusiasm for life. Above all, she was a giving person. She gave her life unreservedly to her family and friends. She loved helping others, and did so in many ways. Her passion was bowling. She loved her team and her teammates loved her. She was competitive at the national level with trips to Reno, Wichita, and Tulsa, among others. She bowled in up to five leagues at a time, and up to four days a week. She did a lot of subbing over the past few years, and filled in for others, so their teams could remain in competition. Locally, she bowled in Denton, Lewisville, and the Fort Worth area. This year her team won first place in the Denton County Women's Tournament held in Lewisville. During the past five years, Merrill bowled with her in the Fort Worth Travel League, and enjoyed the company of her many friends. Over her 25-year bowling career, Tina enjoyed close to 200 different teammates. Tina was scheduled to compete in the state championship-bowling tournament next week in San Antonio, which would have marked her 25th consecutive year in the state championship tournament. Her teammates knew how much having her 25-year patch meant to her, so they went to the state office of the Texas Women's Bowling Association, and got it for her. Naturally she was gratified, and grateful too. Tina was a plant collector. Everywhere she went, she brought plants back home with her. Merrill told me that, while on a national bowling trip to Milwaukee, she filled up the truck with plants, to bring back home and try in her own gardens. When Tina and Merrill bought their property in 1980, it was mostly just an open pasture with only a few sparse trees. Today, it is a veritable garden, filled with trees, ponds, and garden plants of every kind. Tina was always bringing flowers from her garden to the Extension office to brighten up our day, and she brought her most interesting plants to Master Gardener and Master Naturalist meetings, to share with her gardening friends. She had all manner of plants, iris, passion vine, grapes galore, sunflowers everywhere, and roses, she loved. She always stayed after master volunteer meetings, to collect the coffee grounds, to feed them. Of course, after she cleaned the coffee pots, she stayed to help the clean-up crew, and didn't leave, until the last chore was done. When Tina and Merrill moved from California, she brought with her, a single pad of spineless opuntia, a.k.a. pear cactus, the yellow rose of Texas. Obviously she had done her research and knew what would grow well here. Of course it thrived and can now be seen throughout her gardens and landscape. She shared her cactus with everyone, especially her children, and it has now spread throughout the country. Tina brought the yellow rose of Texas back where it belonged. And just like her cactus, Tina made her home here, in her gardens. The last of this year's yellow cactus blossoms still linger in her gardens today. Tina loved wildlife. She fed and nurtured them all. A giant volunteer sunflower now blooms in her garden and will ripen its seeds this summer for her birds to enjoy. She was always inquisitive, exploring the edges to find signs and clues, evidences of life. Discovery was natural for her. Perhaps that is what drew us to her.

We learned from her, seeing the world through her eyes. Tina loved to crochet. She crocheted at the bowling alley, at master volunteer meetings, at home, everywhere she went. Of course, she was always thinking of whom she would give her next piece of crochet art. She gave her handwork to her family and friends, but she also crocheted to show her love for people, she didn't even know. As a volunteer for the Retired and Seniors Volunteer Program she crocheted baby hats, adult hats, baby blankets, lap robes, and afghans for seniors in nursing homes and infants in hospitals. Some of her handwork even went to Indonesia through a Baptist Mission team. Ask her family what was most important to her, and they will tell you, her family. She was a role model, and taught by example. They said: "She was always willing to talk to them, and listen too. She was always encouraging them, always smiling, and energetic, constantly busy, morning to night. Crocheting, bowling, volunteering, gardening...She could never say no. Well-liked, by everyone. Infectious smile, backbone of the family, always made sure the family was okay, very giving, constantly giving, people she just met, were friends instantly, she never missed an opportunity, to help others." Most unselfish person her children ever met...they all agreed on that. She taught them this, and more...Don't give up, hang in there. No matter how much, or how little you have, you always have enough to share with others. She never ran out of room in her house for guests. She always made room.

John Cooper, retired Denton County Extension Agent, was founder of Elm Fork Chapter