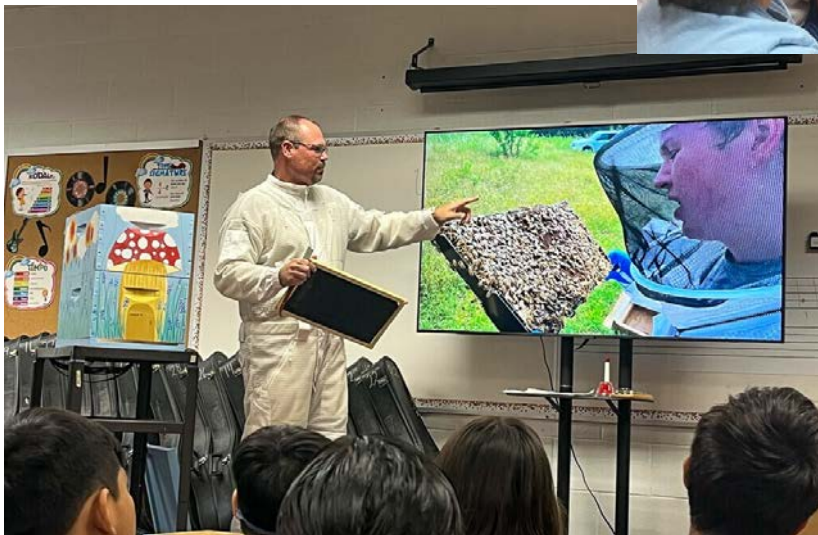


The Wonderful Life of Bees Presentation

By Harold Vanicek, Training Class of 2026, Photo by Kathy Payson

Harold Vanicek was invited to give a presentation on bees to the third-grade class at Highland Lakes Elementary. Together, the students painted some bee boxes for Harold as part of a third-grade art project and for the new bee yard going in at the The Ark of the Highland Lakes transformational living community between Marble and Burnet. Here are few pictures from the event.



A Tale of Two Turkeys

By Mike Zarelle, Photos by Mike Zarelle

A wonderful benefit of being a Master Naturalist trainee is that each week brings the opportunity to visit beautiful places and experience nature firsthand. On the drive into Selah—Bamberger Ranch Preserve—for a recent class, I was greeted by a group of wild turkeys moving through a restoration field, now alive with vibrant, purple prairie verbenas. Farther along the road, a pair of turkey vultures perched atop Texas persimmon trees, waiting for the morning sun to warm the air so they could take to the sky, riding thermals in search of their next meal. A fitting “tale of two turkeys” to begin the day.



Turkey vulture



Wild Turkey

Great Outdoor Project at Inks Lake State Park

Photos by Julie Jary



Left: Binoculars and Birding with Mike Parker



Right: Ray Buchanan and Karyn Parker
presenting Birding and Binoculars



Left: Mary Ann Hold and DJ Sanders describing bird attributes through bird silhouettes

Right: Mary Ann Hold and DJ Sanders with a third-grade group



Left: Underwater Discovery with Karen Stewart, Rick Vance, and Al Lillis



Right: Bill Nabors explaining different species of fish



Left: George Brugnoli, Al Lillis, Rick Vance, and Eric Norman in green shirt





Left: Bill and Chris McCartney on Monarchs



Right: Cathy Hill and Cindy Dietz and All about Trees



Left: Cathy Hill, Cindy Dietz, and Nadine Cowey



Sharon Drake and Steph Beardsley with vertebrates



Releasing fish back to the lake, trees, and birds

Photos by Al Lillis





Mary Ann and DJ with Sillouettes



Cathy Hill and Nadine Cowey modeling trees swaying in the breeze

Photos by Kim Jungkind



George Brugnoli, Andrew Berezin Park interpreter, and Daniel Stauffer Park Superintendent



Al Lillis and Rick Vance



Bill and Chris McCartney



DJ and Mary Ann



Ray holding a Osprey statue



Photos by Bill and Karen Brents



Above: Mary Ann and DJ

Left: Playground station



Bill Nabors

Photos by Karen Stewart



Above: George Brugnoli



Right: George Brugnoli and Al Lillis

Below left: Bill Nabors

Below right: Gary Sullivan on left with Bill and Chris McCartney on the right.



Photos by Karyn and Mike Parker



Above left: Karyn Parker

Above right: Mary Lynne Norman

Below: Mike Parker





Above: Osprey over Inks Lake State Park
Photo by Julie Jary

Geese and their goslings at Inks Lake State Park
Photo by Karyn Parker



A New Chapter for *The Steward*

After many rewarding years, this issue marks my final issue as publisher of *The Steward*.

The Highland Lakes Master Naturalist newsletter began in 2010 during Phil Wyde's presidency, with Mike Childers serving as its first publisher. In 2017, Becky Breazeale and I stepped into the editor and publisher roles, and together we watched *The Steward* continue to grow into the award-winning publication it is today. In 2022, *The Steward* won first place at the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Convention. In 2024, Bill McCartney joined us as proofing editor, creating an incredible trio.

Over the past six years, I've been working toward becoming a licensed Texas Registered Accessibility Specialist, a goal I was proud to achieve. As my career has grown, so have its demands, and I can no longer devote the time *The Steward* deserves.

I'm delighted that Julie Jary will be stepping into the role of publisher. With Becky, Bill, and Julie leading the way, I'm excited to see *The Steward's* next chapter unfold.

While I'm stepping away from publishing, I'm not going far. I'll simply be trading my desk for my boots as I move into the role of boots-on-the-ground reporter.

Thank you for every article, haiku, book review, story, photograph, and adventure you've shared over the years. It has been a privilege to help tell the stories of our chapter, and I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as part of *The Steward* for the past decade.

Sincerely, Martelle Luedecke



MISSION

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The mission of the program is 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 their communities for the state of Texas



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