

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter

September 2012
Volume 10
Number 9

SEPTEMBER 24TH MEETING. . .
ALDO LEOPOLD, THE MAN, HIS PHILOSOPHY, HIS WORDS

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist



Jim Stanley, a Texas Master Naturalist, author of *Hill Country Landowner's Guide*, and columnist for our newsletter and for the *Kerrville Daily Times*, will speak on the work of Aldo Leopold, an early naturalist who has been called America's foremost conservationist and the most influential environmentalist of the 20th century.



Everyone is invited to join us at the UGRA lecture hall (125 Lehman Drive, Kerrville) for the social half-hour at 6:30 PM. and Jim's lecture at 7:00 PM.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . Priscilla Stanley



We have 34 individuals who share a love of nature and the natural world in the 2012 class. Their bio statements are in this newsletter. Please introduce yourself to them at our chapter meetings. Their name tags will have a **brown** border; visitors' name tags will have a **blue** border.

Many thanks to Eileen Gotke, our Membership Director, for her recruiting work; to Daneshu Clarke, New Class Director; and to the New Class Committee: Rheda Boardman, Jim Burgin, Vern Crawford, Sharron Jay, Lenore Langsdorf, Tim Lewis, Jim Stanley, and Mary Francis Watson. They've worked together for eight months to plan the classes, and now are attending the classes and attending to the details that enable the sessions to run smoothly.

We also have a new member, Peter Cowger, who recently transferred from the Alamo Chapter. Peter worked for over 38 years in banking before retiring a few months ago. He now spends most of his time with his wife, Judy, and their three kids...a Catahoula, Blue Lacy and a Cavachon. Along with supporting the Wildlife Valuation Program on their ranch in Boerne, Peter is just getting into Honey Bees (apiary); he has three hives and has harvested their first batch of Hill Country Wildflower Honey, which he reports to be quite good. Also, he's a beginning wood turner; thus far, he's made pens, bowls and pepper mills. Peter transferred over 250 volunteer hours from his projects in San Antonio. Please welcome him when you see him at our meetings.

The annual **Down By the Riverside Native Plant Sale and Nature Festival** fundraiser, co-sponsored with Riverside Nature Center, will be on Saturday, September 29th from 8 AM to 3 PM. We greatly appreciate the many members who've volunteered to help in making this a successful event.

THIS MONTH WE HONOR

Special Recertification - Mexican Free-tail Bat

Jan Grimes
Bob Wiedenfeld

2012 Recertification - Mexican Free-tail Bat

Carolyn Bean	Debra Bond
Koy Coffey	Lenore Langsdorf
Ruth McArthur	Roger McRoberts
Sharon Rodriguez	Virginia Sawin
Karla Trefny	

Milestones

Vern Crawford - 250 + hours, Bronze Dragonfly
Daneshu Clarke - 500+ hours, Brushed Silver
Tom Hynes - 1000+ hours, Gold Dragonfly
Kristie Denbow - 5000 + hours, Diamond Dragonfly

President's Message, continued from page 1

Unlike many other native plant sales, we do not bring in vendors. Volunteers shop at four -- five nurseries for native plants that provide the best selection and quality available. Our experienced plant docents, who have known and grown these native plants for years, offer selection assistance that helps customers to find native plants that will thrive in their growing conditions, whether they have sun or shade, or wet or dry areas.

The Nature Festival includes two presentations; both are approved as Advanced Training for our members and trainees in the 2012 new class:

10:00 AM Rainwater Collection: Why & How, with a tour of the RNC system, by Jim Stanley & Andy Pesez

11:30 AM What Fossils Reveal About Hill Country Limestone, by Kathy Ward.

There is a members only pre-sale on Friday, September 28 from 5:00 – 6:30 PM for Hill Country Master Naturalists and Riverside Nature Center members. Please wear your badge to facilitate membership verification. There will be a "names only" list for verification of new class members.

HCMN New Class 2012



Special thanks to Sally Garrett for the new class portraits



and to Rheda Boardman for the great group photo and class candids!



Yvonne Baca

Yvonne was born and raised in New Mexico and has lived in the Hill Country for 33 years. She is the mother of four children, the past president of the San Antonio Herb Society, a licensed massage therapist, and has a natural holistic healing practice. Yvonne loves traveling, reading, drumming, and hiking in the great outdoors, and she looks forward to learning more about the land, mammals, flora, and fauna.

Yvonne's volunteering interests are working in native gardens and natural areas, together with teaching children to appreciate nature.

Ralph Behrens

Ralph is originally from the Sharpstown area of Houston. He practiced law in Houston after earning his bachelor's degree in political science in 1969 and his law degree in 1973, both from the University of Houston. Ralph and his wife Ocine retired to the Hill Country 18 years ago. However, he accepted a part-time position with the 216th District Attorney's office and continues in that role today. He is a former substitute teacher with the Ingram ISD, enjoys reading mysteries, history of religion, and biography, and is interested in aquatic ecosystems, plant and wildlife census, habitat restoration projects and land management.

Ralph would like to be involved with children's activities.

Margaret Carter

Margaret is originally from Colorado. After several moves including one to San Antonio, she settled in the Hill Country, near Pipe Creek, in 1998. She is a registered nurse (semi-retired), a mom, and a grandmother of six who loves nature and desires a better understanding of our natural surroundings and best practices to preserve them. Her hobbies include hiking, fly fishing, time spent with her horse; she also enjoys quilting, needlework, and reading.

Margaret is interested in teaching and working with children, in native plant gardening, and in improving local plant and animal habitats.

James D. Clarke

Jim was born and raised in Fort Worth and moved to Boerne in 1975. He is married, the father of two children, retired from the Army Reserve and Civil Service, and enjoys competitive shooting, kayaking and recreational Texas Hold-em. He is interested in habitat restoration and learning more about plants, animals and birds.

Jim wants to increase his general working knowledge of nature and how best to preserve it and looks forward to learning more about land management and how to apply it to the ranch that he and his wife own.

JD Clarke, Jr.

JD was born and raised in Texas and retired from the Marine Corps in 2011 after 21 years, including his first eight years in the Navy Submarine Service. He is an avid reader of history, human physiology, and the origin of plant and animal life, and enjoys running, gardening, and competitive shooting. He is environmentally conscious, constantly looking for ways to better care for the land and how his actions affect it, and is interested in preservation, learning more about wildlife (especially raptors and snakes) and is most interested in geology and paleo-anthropology.

JD looks forward to assisting in hikes/field trips and teaching children and adults to appreciate and preserve the land.

Terri Criswell

Terri was born and raised in San Antonio; as a child, she spent summers in Mason. She was an educator and project administrator before retirement and now is a substitute teacher for Harper ISD and a member/organizer of the Harper VFD Auxiliary. Her husband's job required them to move 13 times over a period of 33 years. At each new location one of Terri's first priorities was to create a big garden. They retired three years ago to her beloved Hill Country after finding "their special place," which backs up to a large undeveloped tract of land. They have cleared their home site and built a workshop and house. Now that she has a little spare time, she wants to learn how to preserve, protect, and promote our beautiful Hill Country, and to initiate good land stewardship practices on their property.

Terri is most interested in working with teachers in Harper to help students learn to appreciate our local natural resources. She also would like to work with the local Boy Scout troop to develop and maintain a native plant garden at the Harper Library.

Becky Etzler

Becky moved to Harper two years ago with her husband, dogs, and cats and has been renovating a rural home in Gillespie County. Formerly she lived in Daytona Beach. Her formal education focused on anthropology and psychology. However, she worked in the veterinary and animal welfare business for more than 25 years. Becky is enthusiastic about preserving the native flora and fauna and being a better steward of her own property. She's also interested in working with ranchers on how to incorporate eco-friendly practices in their land management.

Darlene Funk

Darlene is a seventh generation Texan who is originally from Houston but has traveled widely with her husband, who is completing the last two years of his overseas career. Prior to moving to Comfort, she resided in Saudi Arabia. She is an experienced secondary school teacher who specialized in reading and English and chose to be a stay-at-home mom during her two sons' growing-up years. Both sons are now in graduate school and she's ready to learn about the environment of her new home. She enjoys handicrafts of all types (rug hooking, needlepoint, embroidery, and quilting), loves to read, is "into" dachshunds, and curious about the natural world: the plants, animals, aquifers and everything else in the Hill Country. Family, church and community service are important parts of her life.

Darlene is especially interested in volunteering at Muleshoe Ranch and in working with children.

Barb Herbst

Barb was born in San Antonio and earned her bachelor's degree in biomedical science from Texas A&M University. She has been married to Charlie for 30 years; they live on his family's ranch on the Upper Cibolo Creek in Kendall County and have three grown daughters. Barb became fascinated with local ecology, and especially with riparian biology, while teaching science at Boerne High School.

Barb has retired from teaching and currently is a Stream Team monitor and Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) volunteer observer.

Junior Hilburn

Ervin Leroy Hilburn (Junior) is a native Texan who grew up in Pleasanton. He and Sarah were married in 1979 and lived in Boerne before Junior was transferred to Montgomery, where they lived for 23 years before moving to Kerrville. He retired in December 2011 after 31 years with ExxonMobil. He and Sarah also managed a church retreat camp for seven years. They want to buy some land and learn to manage their property's natural resources.

Junior wants to learn more about the flora and fauna of the Hill Country and is interested in volunteering at Kerrville-Schreiner Park and for wildlife census projects. He also wants to learn how to create and manage trails so he would be interested in volunteering on the Kerrville Guadalupe River Trail.

Sarah Hilburn

Sarah grew up in Pleasanton and then headed off to college where she obtained her master's degree in education administration. She worked in that field 32 years at several colleges: Tarleton State University, Southwest Texas (now Texas State) University, the University of Texas at Austin, Austin Community College, Sam Houston State University, and Texas A & I University. She also attended Texas A & M University and happily considers herself an "Aggie." Sarah and her husband Junior recently retired and moved to Kerrville from Montgomery. They enjoy biking, hiking, swimming, and snow skiing. Presently they are volunteering as park hosts at Kerrville Schreiner Park.

Sarah has always enjoyed spending time outdoors and wants to learn about plants, animals, trees, flowers, and birds.

Jacquelyn Huecksteadt

Jackie is a native of the San Francisco Bay area who lived in Atlanta and retired to Fredericksburg. She enjoys jigsaw puzzles, crosswords, swimming, and golfing; she loves playing with her dogs. She has a real estate license, loves everything involving nature, and is excited about learning more about the plants and animals around her.

Jackie is interested in volunteering in areas of nature trails, nature walks, census taking and habitat restoration, and would enjoy teaching children about nature and helping the elderly enjoy the outdoors.

Johnathan G. Johnson

Jonathan was born near Los Angeles, moved to Illinois at 14, and to Round Rock at 16. He attended Schreiner University and then served in the army for 10 years, after which he lived in Huntsville and worked as a psychiatric nurse. He also served in the National Guard and Army Reserve. He's lived in the Hill Country for the past 20 years, during which he worked as a nurse in Kerrville before retiring two years ago. He owns and lives on 10 acres in Gillespie County, near Kerr County and shares his home with a yellow lab. His adult child lives in Seattle. Johnathan has just completed the Master Gardener program and has spread quantities of bluebonnet seeds on his property and nearby roadsides. He will begin fencing a vegetable garden area soon. He's established a rainwater collection system (9000 gallon primary tank, 3000 gallon overflow tank, and 1000 gallon overflow tank) and intends to add additional (3000 gallon) capacity. Johnathan loves the wildlife and plant life, and wants to learn how to be a better steward of his property.

Trish McGough

Trish is from Lufkin and lived in Comfort for about 10 years after earning an interior design degree from Texas A&M University. She had her own interior design company but is now retired to her Hill Country home between Comfort and Center Point. She has landscaped her backyard in the past three years and has built several miles of trails on her property. She has two grown children and her husband Scott works in Kerrville. She enjoys walking, is an avid reader and is taking a Pilates course. Trish has always been interested in native plants and the natural beauty of the Hill Country, and is interested in volunteering at Cibolo Nature Center.

Sandra Mensch Meineke

Sand (as she's known to her friends) recently moved to Kerrville from the Katy area near Houston, where she did public relations work for several Houston area non-profit organizations, including the Katy Prairie Conservancy. She has a degree in journalism from the University of North Texas and was the editor of a newsletter for the EPA's Gulf of Mexico program. She is a retired photo-journalist who now works part time for the Dietert Center's Club Ed in Kerrville. She loves to garden and is learning to identify Hill Country birds and butterflies, and wants to learn about Hill Country fauna and flora, as well as ecosystems and returning land to its native state. She is a member of Riverside Nature Center. Sand is interested in replanting native grasses, national bird counts, public relations, and public education programs, such as Earth Day.

Patti Moore

Patti and her husband Pat (whom she has known since she was twelve years old) like to travel, snow ski, and scuba dive. They enjoy spending time on their future 20-acre home site in Fredericksburg, where—judging by the tomato crop—they tend a very productive vegetable garden. The hypnotic bombardment of blitzing hummingbirds at the feeders keeps them entertained as they catalog the passing parade of wildlife. Patti is a retired nurse who is a native of Fort Worth, lived in Nashville 27 years and has always sung in her church choir. Her interests are music, reading, and needlework, counted cross-stich, crochet, and Yorkies; they have three. Patti and Pat plan to keep their land in its natural state until the chapter's Land Management Assistance Program visits to assist them in preserving valuable native plants.

Mary Muse

Mary Muse is a recent transplant to Kerrville from the state of Montana, where she was employed as the executive director of the Adams Event Center at the University of Montana. She arrived in early March of this year and took up the position of executive director of Riverside Nature Center (RNC). Mary graduated from Texas Tech University and then worked as the program development coordinator for the City of Lubbock Parks and Recreation Department. While there she received recognition and awards from the Texas Recreation and Parks Society and the Southwest Parks and Recreation Training Institute. She met her husband-to-be at the Kerrville Folk Music Festival and they pursued their dream of being musicians for a few years before deciding to return to "regular jobs." She and Bill were lured back to the Hill Country when Bill took a position at Schreiner University and Mary at RNC. Mary plans to use her skills in computer work, event planning, and public speaking when volunteering in a variety of educational programs.

Pat Nelson

Pat was born in Houston and spent summers from an early age on her parent's property in Hunt, observing and learning about nature. She and her husband Frank moved permanently to Hunt about 1996 from San Antonio. Their backyard adjoins the Guadalupe River and they share the beauty of their land with many friends. Pat worked for the San Antonio ISD, where she taught earth, life and physical science, using a hands-on or discovery method. She continues to spend time outdoors walking and observing nature. Pat has a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Texas at Austin, a master's degree from Trinity University, and studied science in New York City where she learned how to identify fossils and trees. Her interests include art, volunteering and reading stories about early naturalists.

Pat wants more in depth knowledge about nature so that she can put her teaching skills to use in helping others to understand why we need to conserve native plants and animals, particularly in her beloved Hill Country.

Maddy Nolin and Ray Nolin

Maddy and Ray, who have been married for 49 years and have three sons, moved to Fredericksburg from Connecticut in April. Maddy has degrees in fine arts and graphic design, but she spent most of her career in the medical profession, which she loves. She worked in a variety of areas at Manchester Memorial Hospital and at Manchester Community College, where she helped students with disabilities to earn degrees. Ray began working as an electrician after a tour of duty in Vietnam. He became a master electrician, then a project manager, and finally a project estimator for commercial and institutional projects before he retired in March after 43 years in that field. They both thoroughly enjoyed their professions, but working and raising a family left little time for being outdoors doing the things they enjoy, like hiking, gardening, cycling, fishing and bow hunting (yes, Maddy bow hunts). Now that Ray is retired, they hope to make up for lost time.

Maddy and Ray want to learn about the plants, animals, geology and history of their new Hill Country home and apply that knowledge by sharing it with others through volunteer work.

Barbara Boster Oates

Barbara was born in San Angelo and is a graduate of the Texas College of Pharmacy. She has been married to Michael Oates for 32 years and they have three daughters, two sons-in-law, and a grandson. Recently Mike retired from active duty with the Army and they have settled in Kerrville after years of traveling. Barbara worked in her profession for 32 years in addition to volunteering in support of Army families. She now volunteers at the VA and with TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors), which supports those who have lost a loved one in the military.

Barbara recently acquired part of the original Real Homestead on Turtle Creek, where her mother, grandfather and great grandfather were born. She is looking forward to becoming a good steward of the land here in the Hill Country.

Donna E. Oliver-Leep

Donna is a native Texan who lived in the Dallas area for the last 38 years and worked for the past 16 years as a legal secretary. On 11.11.11, she married Mike Leep, whom she had known for about 40 years, and moved to his 30-acre home on the South Llano River in Junction. Donna has always loved gardening and converted the yards of two homes in the Dallas area into mini-arboretums. She finds that the plants, climate, and soils in the Hill Country are very different, and has planted and catalogued more than 55 species of trees and shrubs in the last nine months at her new home, and is a volunteer at Riverside Nature Center.

Donna desires to know more about her new environment, native plants, and the beautiful forbs that grow in the Hill Country, and wants to turn their goat farm into a wildlife retreat.

Phyllis Perata

Phyllis calls Idaho home, though she has lived in Arizona, New Mexico, California, and Oregon. She loves to travel (and has a voluminous passport to prove it), and has a varied business background. She has worked for Southwest Airlines, been a home designer, and bought, rehabbed, and resold real estate. She had the first producing vineyard (with 1,200 Riesling and Gewurztraminer grapes) in Ada County, Idaho. Her family business in Idaho was the Oroweat franchise, as well as a specialty bakery which was run by one of her sons and specialized in sourdough bread made from his grandfather's formula. Her four sons and one daughter are involved in life in interesting ways and scattered across the country.

Phyllis lives in Fredericksburg; she loves the outdoors and camping.

Mary Pressler

Mary is originally from Wisconsin and still has relatives, including her mother, there. She moved to Texas in 1999 and has lived in Austin and San Antonio. She and her husband own part of a ranch near Willow City that has been in his family since 1878. Mary's diverse career started in accounting; then she was certified in micro computers and management and worked for 15 years in information technology. Now she is mostly retired and does some consulting. In Wisconsin she did a lot of hiking, fishing and gardening. She's added experience in working with power tools, tractors and other implements. Mary and her husband are living with their two cats in Fredericksburg until they can complete their new home on the ranch; they're using the basic design and many materials salvaged from an older house on the property. They are concerned with protecting the environment and have planned many eco-friendly features for the house and property. Mary knows much about the flora, fauna and environment of Wisconsin and is eager to learn about this area and apply that information on their ranch and in their new home.

Tom Riordan

Tom is a native of San Antonio who has always enjoyed the Hill Country and moved to Pipe Creek in 1993. He earned his mechanical engineering degree from Texas A&M University and more recently obtained his real estate license. He is a board member of the Ranch & Landowners Association of Texas, has skills in computers and digital photography, and wants to learn more about taking care of his property and developing it as an attractive wildlife habitat.

Tom is especially interested in habitat management, plant and wildlife censuses, habitat restoration, and land and animal management.

Hunter Scott

Hunter was born in San Antonio and earned his bachelor's degree in botany/chemistry from San Angelo State University. He worked in the West Texas oil fields, and traveled the world "chasing the booms" for over 25 years and working in other businesses before returning to school at Texas Tech University and earning his master's degree in immunology. He married Pauline in England in 1991; they live on 28 acres west of Fredericksburg and own and operate a bed-and-breakfast, the Cat's Meow, on their property.

Hunter has always been interested in, and wants to continue learning about, everything outdoors.

Melissa Seymour

Melissa is originally from Houston and lived in western Washington before coming to Kerrville. She worked in the computer industry for years as a technical writer/editor and product designer, currently works part time, and is renovating a home in Kerrville. Melissa has a life-long interest in nature and passion for animals (domestic and wild). Her interests include cleanup of river riparian areas while getting to know the flora and fauna along the river "up close and personal." She is particularly fond of the Mexican free-tailed bat.

Melissa wants to use her writing and editing skills for informing visitors about bats as well as in other chapter projects.

Tony Simons

Tony was born and raised in Medina. He is a seventh-generation Texan, descended from a long line of pioneer Texans including William "Bigfoot" Wallace, a famous Texas Ranger and early settler of the Medina River area. Tony and his wife Nancy live near Medina on Wallace Creek, which was named for that ancestor. They co-founded the Utopia Animal Rescue Ranch over 14 years ago and continue to oversee that successful no-kill rescue operation. He enjoys nature photography, building cedar furniture, and fishing on the Texas coast while staying at the home of a good friend who lives in a lighthouse near Port Arthur.

Tony looks forward to taking part in bird and butterfly counts on several hundred acres across from the Echo Hill Ranch Boys and Girls Camp near Medina. He also plans to assist the camp with other wildlife and land stewardship projects.

Melanie Swan

Melanie was born in Houston, grew up in Beaumont, and is new to the Hill Country. She retired from teaching after 23 years, during which she helped to bring inner-city sixth-graders to the school district's outdoor education center to learn about nature. She enjoys hiking, kayaking, and photography.

Melanie would like to work in nature education with children—especially, on monitoring streams and lakes.

Terry Swan

Terry was born and raised in Beaumont, recently retired after 32 years of working in the electric utility industry, and arrived in the Hill Country a month ago. He earned his bachelor's degree in environmental science from Lamar University and is a certified energy manager and registered sanitarian. Along with environmental and energy efficiency projects, he worked on a project that used warm power plant discharge water to raise redfish and tilapia, and another project using hybrid grass carp to control aquatic vegetation in a power plant cooling lake. He enjoys outdoor activities: camping, canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.

Terry's volunteering interests include stream, lake, and wildlife monitoring; teaching; and field tours.

Joe von Rosenberg

Joe and his wife Sharon have lived in Kendall County since 2008. They and a teenage son and daughter live on seven acres in the Bergheim area. Joe says that "resource conservation is something I think about every day; we just installed a 50,000 gallon rainwater harvesting system." Joe was raised in South Carolina, graduated from Clemson University, and then lived in New Orleans while he earned his law degree from Tulane University. He lived in Houston for twenty one years and worked as the CEO of the Omega Protein Corp. Currently retired, Joe remains active as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Omega Corp. He is an assistant scoutmaster for his son's Boy Scout troop.

Tony is interested in nature, the outdoors, and the Land Management Assistance Program. He hopes to learn more about the Hill Country environment so that he can help protect it and teach others to do the same.

Russell Vowell

Russ is a native of Fort Worth, has a fine arts degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and served four years in the Air Force Reserve. After college he worked as a jeweler and a dental ceramist; then, after moving to New Mexico, as a jewelry designer and goldsmith. He later moved to Chicago, took up woodworking, and was a custom stair-builder. After fifteen years in Chicago, Russ and his wife Rose moved back to Texas in 2005 and now live six miles east of Fredericksburg with their five rescue lab mixes, one cat and 40 very stately post oaks. Russ is an active member of the Fredericksburg NPSOT chapter and also been involved with the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center, Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival, and Third Grade Nature Day. He is an avid landscape and nature photographer and recently completed an extensive drip system for his home gardens.

Russ wants to develop a better understanding of how elements in nature come together to form a balanced ecosystem and to find a role within the community in which to apply that knowledge.

John Walker

John, his wife Debra, and son Justin moved to Fair Oaks Ranch in 2007 after having lived for 27 years in Travis County. John's father encouraged John's interest in the great outdoors and wildlife, which resulted in many adventures collecting reptiles and fish. His dad's career brought the family to New Orleans and later to the Seabrook area near Houston; thus his playground included the vast woodlands, swamps, bayous and saltwater bays near these two Gulf Coast cities. John earned his degree in music education in 1980 from Texas State University and a certificate in surgical technology from Austin Community College in 1989. He worked as a music educator, in the Texas oil fields as an offshore logger, and as a surgical technician. Now, in retirement, he volunteers at the Cibolo Nature Center (CNC) in wildlife monitoring and survey projects.

John wishes to continue his volunteering at CNC as well as to spread the word of the beauty and diversity of the Hill Country and the importance of caring for this magnificent ecology.

Kathy Ward

Kathy is a native of San Antonio who returned to this area in 1995 and now lives outside of Boerne with her 97-year-old mother-in-law. She has three married children and five grandchildren. Kathy worked for 37 years in science education for kindergarten through graduate school. She earned a geology degree at the University of Texas at Austin and both a master's in biology and a PhD in education and curriculum in New Orleans. She was married to Bill Ward, a carbonate geologist, for 53 years and with him traveled to wherever there were limestone rocks or their children: Egypt, Spain, China, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Japan, Ecuador, Peru, England, Austria, Italy and Mexico. Kathy's late husband was an official friend of the chapter and taught geology for the new classes.

Kathy is an active volunteer at Cibolo Nature Center (CNC); she is a founder of the CNC Nature Box program, which presents materials to Boerne elementary schools. She is an avid native plant fan and is vice president in charge of programs for Boerne's chapter of the Native Plant Society.



Photos by Vern Crawford

Fears of Nature are Greatly Exaggerated and Mostly Unfounded

I recently read an article by a woman who described her visit to a tall grass prairie remnant in Kansas, and the utter joy she felt by simply walking among the grasses and wildflowers and experiencing what much of the middle of the country used to look like. But then she described a conversation she had with a waitress at a diner just down the road from the prairie. She asked the waitress if she ever goes there, and her answer was, “Oh no! My high school biology teacher showed us photos of what chigger bites look like!”

Of all people, it was her high school biology teacher who forever put the fear of wild places in that young girl’s mind. And of course the media sensationalize every incident of anyone being injured, chased or just scared by anything in nature. Just today I saw, on TV, for the umpteenth time, the video of a woman, fishing from a 10 foot high pier and having a small shark grab her fish as she was reeling it in--the screams went on for some time. The San Antonio Zoo is now advertising their “Cold-Blooded Reptiles” in the manner that one might advertise a Halloween visit to a Haunted House.

Parents inadvertently instill in their children certain fears just by the act of protecting them from harm. When a mother sees her child getting too close to a hot stove or a fireplace, or picking up a knife, her actions, words and tone of voice tell the child that this is something to fear. And of course, when she sees her child pick up a bug or a lizard she may react the same way and the child gets the impression of danger. The child will grow up to no longer fear a hot stove or a knife, but may forever fear wild things.

The reality, of course, is that there are far more dangerous things in your kitchen, or your garage, or your workshop, than there are in the local fields or woodlands. People cutting themselves with knives in the kitchen, or hitting their thumbs with a hammer, or falling off a ladder, seldom make the news. And then of course, there are all the sports we play. Most things that threaten us are man-made.

In 12 years of walking many miles over the hills, pastures, or creek bottoms of over 250 Hill Country properties, plus hiking the trails of most all of the Hill Country State parks, my wife and I have yet to see a poisonous snake. Or encounter any threat from any animal. Or be bitten by any insect more serious than chiggers or occasional fire ants. The Hill Country is just not a dangerous place.

On the other hand, in that same period of time we have experienced two scorpion stings and one paper wasp sting, all either in the house or on the porch.

I guess the critters that most people are afraid of are snakes. Of course, nothing can be more harmless than non-poisonous snakes, which make up the very high percentage of all snakes in the Hill Country. But since most people cannot, with confidence, tell the difference between harmless and poisonous snakes, all snakes strike fear in many people. People are almost always startled when seeing one, even if it is a little rough green snake or a tiny ring-necked snake. In 12 years of living in the Hill Country, I have seen only one rattlesnake—and it wasn't out in the pasture, but in our garage!

My concern about people being afraid of nature is that they will therefore avoid spending any time with nature or learning about it. And to me that means they are missing out on one of life's greatest joys—experiencing nature. It also drives some people to want to surround themselves with as little vegetation as possible, to cut the grass as short as possible, and to eliminate any wild animal, from a caterpillar to a mouse to a rabbit to a raccoon.

The “wild animal” I have the most concern for is the brown recluse spider. My wife was bitten many years ago and the subsequent wound was very painful and slow to heal. You are very much more likely to encounter one in your closet or under furniture or in your storage shed than in the wild.

Until next time...

Jim Stanley is a Texas Master Naturalist and the author of *Hill Country Landowner's Guide*. He can be reached at jstmn@ktc.com. Previous columns can be seen at www.hillcountrynaturalist.org.

Although the weather in Texas has been far better this year than last, the reverse is true for the Upper Midwest where most of the soon-to-be overwintering monarchs originate.

Due to the drought and above average temperatures across much of the north, monarch numbers are significantly down from last year.

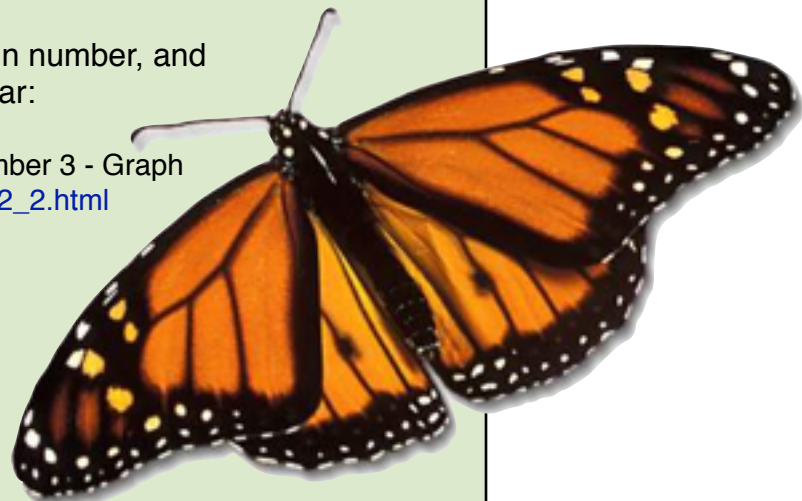
Fall 2012 monarch roosts are later to form, fewer in number, and smaller in size when compared to this time last year:

Comparing 2012 and 2011 Monarch Roosts by September 3 - Graph
http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/fall2012/c090612_2.html

US Drought Map - August 28
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/drmon.gif>

Texas Monarch Watch, Est. 1993
<http://www.texasento.net/dplex.htm>

-- from Mike Quinn, Austin



Advanced Training

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2012 10 AM – 3 PM GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK (GRSP)

AT 12-125 MAKING OF A NATURALIST: WILDFLOWERS OF THE HILL COUNTRY

The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park & Honey Creek present this five-hour workshop on the wildflowers of the Hill Country. Led by Park Interpreter Craig Hensley, this workshop will help you learn basic terminology and parts of plants, and include a PowerPoint presentation to introduce you to a variety of the common wildflowers in the area. We'll then head outdoors for a walk to identify those plants currently blooming. Be sure to bring sack lunch and drink.

Reservations required (limited enrollment): \$5.00 fee to the Friends Group on the day of the workshop.

Call 830-438-7653 or email Craig at craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2012 9 AM - 5 PM GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK (GRSP)

AT 12-126 MONARCH MANIA CELEBRATION

Join us to celebrate the migration of the Monarch Butterfly and butterflies in general! We'll meet at the Discovery Center and have children's crafts, presentations on what you can do to help monarchs and other butterflies, butterfly catching opportunities and more. Watch the GRSP FaceBook page for more details or call 830-438-7653.

Free with a Park Pass, or \$7.00 daily pass; children ages 12 and younger are free.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2012 9 AM – 12:30 PM TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY – JUNCTION

AT 12-134 CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP

The South Llano Watershed Alliance is sponsoring this workshop, which includes several speakers and a panel discussion with an opportunity to question the speakers.

Free; Visit the SLWA website (www.southllano.org) for further information.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2012 8 AM PHILLIPS RANCH, McCULLOCH COUNTY

AT 12-132 HEART OF TEXAS TOUR: IMPROVING HABITATS

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service presents this multi-county tour that will highlight several demonstrations on the Phillips Ranch that focus on reducing invasive species.

Cost: \$10.00 (preregistration) or \$20.00 late registration. Call Vance Christie (325-456-9687) or email

(vschristie@ag.tamu.edu) for registration or further information.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2012 7:00 PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY (UGRA)

AT 12-130 ALDO LEOPOLD: THE MAN, HIS PHILOSOPHY, HIS WORDS

Jim Stanley, a member of the first class of the Hill Country Chapter, will speak at the monthly meeting. Jim will explore the thinking and writing of Aldo Leopold, an early environmentalist, who many believe to be well head of his own time. Leopold has been called the father of the science of game management, America's foremost conservationist, and the most influential environmentalist of the 20th century. His writings are considered to be in the same class as those of John Muir and Henry David Thoreau.

Free; call Tom Hynes, 830-990-5750 for further information.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2012 1:30 PM IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL, COMFORT

AT 12-116 BATS: WHERE THEY LIVE, WHAT THEY EAT, & WHY THEY'RE IMPORTANT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Comfort Garden Club president has invited members of the HCMN to attend this talk by Nyta Brown at their monthly meeting.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2012 10:00 AM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER (RNC)

AT 12-136 RAINWATER COLLECTION: WHY & HOW WITH A TOUR OF THE RNC SYSTEM

The reasons for harvesting rainwater, the basics of how to collect it, the equipment needed and its availability, and details of his own system will be discussed by Jim Stanley. After time for questions and answers, Andy Pesez will conduct a tour of the RNC's rainwater harvesting system.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2012 11:30 AM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER (RNC)

AT 12-136 WHAT FOSSILS REVEAL ABOUT HILL COUNTRY LIMESTONE

In this talk for both kids and adults, Kathy Ward will compare present-day ocean environments and the animals that live there with Hill Country fossils.

Continued next page

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2012 8:30 - NOON GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK (GRSP)

AT 12-127 BAUER UNIT BIRD WALK

Whether you are a beginning birdwatcher or seasoned birder, learn about the birds of the Bauer Unit. We will be conducting monthly bird surveys/walks to document the birds of this area. Led by Park Interpreter Craig Hensley, you'll be helping us get a handle on the birds of this area as well as enjoy a wonderful morning bird watching with fellow enthusiasts. We'll meet at the Headquarters parking lot at Guadalupe River State Park and then head for the Unit. Please bring binoculars, a field guide (we do have a few to loan), and water; wear sturdy hiking shoes or boots. Free with a Park Pass, or \$7.00 daily pass; children ages 12 and younger are free.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2012 7:00 - 8:30 PM GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK (GRSP)

AT 12-128 WALK UNDER THE FULL MOON

Join us for our monthly series as we walk under the Harvest Moon. We'll head out along one of our trails and enjoy the night sights and sounds. We'll even view the moon through one of our telescopes at hike's end. We'll meet at the Guadalupe River State Park Headquarters parking lot for this walk of approximately one mile. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes; bring a flashlight and water. This hike will be along a fairly level trail with some rocky spots. Free with a Park Pass, or \$7.00 daily pass; children ages 12 and under are free.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2012 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER (CNC)

AT 12-140 MONARCH BIOLOGY, ECOLOGY, AND RESEARCH

Examine live specimens as you study the monarch's lifecycle from egg to larvae, to chrysalis, to butterfly. Follow multiple generations as they embark on a fantastic annual migration from Mexico to the farthest reaches of North America. Learn about predators and threats to monarch habitats that threaten the existence of this unique and wonderful butterfly. Get up to date on the latest monarch research and realize how you too can contribute to scientific research and monarch conservation. Presenters are Cathy Downs, Mary Kennedy, and Kip Kiphart. Suggested donation is \$16.00 For registration, go to <https://secure.cibolo.org/civcrm/event/register?id=101&reset=1>.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2012 9 AM – NOON CIBOLO NATURE CENTER (CNC)

AT 12-141 MONARCH LARVAL MONITORING PROJECT

This training workshop focuses on tools and techniques for monitoring monarch larvae and monarch habitat. After reviewing monarch life stages, participants will visit the CNC's Monarch Research Area to perform a habitat assessment and monitor monarch density. Presenters are Cathy Downs, Mary Kennedy, and Kip Kiphart.

Suggested donation is \$8.00. Go to <https://secure.cibolo.org/civcrm/event/register?id=102&reset=1> for registration.

FRIDAY – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12-14, 2012

AT 12-138 SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL ROCK ART FOUNDATION RENDEZVOUS

The rendezvous (for which registration is required) will focus on site tours. It includes camping, Saturday evening entertainment, continental breakfast on both Saturday and Sunday mornings, and a BBQ dinner on Saturday evening. Go to http://www.fellowpages.org/rockart/store/rendezvous_schedule.pdf for further information, including a schedule. Cost: \$65.00

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2012 8:30 AM BRUNS RANCH, COMFORT

AT 12-096 BRUNS RANCH TOUR

The Kendall County Soil & Water Conservation District is hosting a ranch tour that includes speakers discussing spring development, brush sculpting, plant identification, prescribed burning, and riparian areas. If you do not drive a four-wheel drive vehicle, you'll buddy with someone who does. Wear walking shoes; bring walking stick, hat, and sunscreen. Cost includes coffee, snacks, and a covered-wagon lunch.

Cost is \$20.00. Advance registration required; call 830-249-2821.

The newsletter's publication schedule does not allow all AT events to be listed in each issue. Check email messages for AT announcements and check the chapter calendar on our website for available AT.

NICE!

Natives Instead of Common Exotics!

Fall 2012 Plant of the Season

- Texas Persimmon -
Diospyros texana

also known as: Chapote, Chapote prieto,
Black persimmon, Mexican persimmon



Small Deciduous Tree with intricate branches, the smooth bark of mature trees peels to reveal shades of light gray to white to pink on the trunk - Fragrant 1/2" flowers

Female trees bear edible 1" black to dark purple sweet fruit
Ebenaceae (Ebony family)

Flowers bloom March - April, Fruit ripens late July - September
10-15 ft, can reach up to 35 ft. in some areas

Very drought tolerant & disease resistant - Low water - Sun, part shade - Moderate Deer Resistance - Attracts birds & butterflies

Visit the following participating nurseries:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ◆ Friendly Natives Nursery | 1107 N. Llano St. | 830-997-6288 |
| ◆ Dodds Family Tree Nursery | 515 W. Main St. | 830-997-9571 |
| ◆ Woerner Feed & Garden Supply | 305 S Lincoln St. | 830-997-2246 |

The Native Plant Society of Texas will present “The Texas Hill Country – A Changing Landscape,” at the Y.O. Ranch Hotel and Conference Center in Kerrville from October 4-7, 2012. The symposium will explore the history of the Edwards Plateau eco-region, highlight the factors that have influenced its transformation, and debate the issues that we face today in conserving our native plants and habitats. Speakers will share their research and best practices on how we might positively influence the future evolution of the landscape, improve stewardship of our natural resources, and preserve unspoiled natural habitats in the Edwards Plateau.



Field trips to diverse locales will showcase beautiful examples of endemic habitats and efforts to restore or preserve endangered areas.



For further information and registration, go to the NPSOT website, <http://npsot.org/wp/symposium2012>.

Chapter Merchandise

Another year brings more new merchandise for our Hill Country Chapter members.

This year we have new polos for men and women in a great fabric and colors, and have added a really nice windbreaker for cooler days.

Along with the sling bag for field days, we now have a messenger bag for meetings to hold a laptop and paperwork, both with our dragonfly logo.

And since this is our Tenth Anniversary, we have a Limited Edition Tenth Anniversary T-shirt to recognize all that our members have achieved and accomplished.

Of course we have caps, and a great hat made of woven sea grass.

And don't forget to get a decal for your car or truck!

Be sure to look for us at the Chapter Meetings and classes!

-- from Gracie Waggener



T E X A S

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We meet on the fourth Monday of most months at 7:00 PM. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehman Drive in Kerrville.

Join us at 6:30 for our social half-hour.

Everyone is welcome.

Texas Master Naturalist mission:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

Board of Directors 2012

- Priscilla Stanley -- President
- Tom Hynes -- Vice President
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- Sally Garrett -- 2011 New Class Representatives
- Phyllis Muska -- Immediate Past President



The *Texas Star* is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News stories, comments, and ideas are welcome.

Please email them to:

[Lenore Langsdorf, Editor](mailto:LenoreLangsdorf@Gmail.com)
LenoreLangsdorf@Gmail.com

Questions about our chapter?

Email Eileen Gotke,
Director of Membership
Gotke@HCTC.Net

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