



Texas Master Naturalist

the Cyrano

The Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Chapter

President's Corner by Jim Waldson



“Be the change you wish to see in the world”

This quote from Gandhi is fitting for all Master Naturalists to live by. I believe the Master Naturalist program is a great avenue for individuals with interest in any aspect of nature to make a difference. We may not have global impact, but we are making a difference in our own communities. The fact that we call ourselves naturalists leaves the door open to a wide variety of interests and backgrounds. This diversity is part of what makes the program so fascinating. It allows us to gain perspective from people with backgrounds other than our own and put this to use through education or community service. Greet this diversity with an open mind and you will benefit greatly. The fact that we are part of a state-wide program opens up many more opportunities that we otherwise may not be aware of. Take advantage of that

network. The best part of it all is that we have fun doing what we're doing.

Whether your niche in nature is building bird boxes, enhancing the world through photography or prose, growing flowers, educating kids or creating nature trails (the list goes on and on), the important thing is, enjoy what you're doing. For when you cease to enjoy it, you cease to be effective.



Tree frog on okra leaf. Photo by Jim Waldson

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Don't Forget to Vote!

Texas Master Naturalists are invited to vote for the best article in this issue of *The Cyrano*. The author getting the most votes will receive a Organically Grown tri-color Swiss Chard and a bouquet of organically grown herbs. Please send your vote by April 15 to Kate Kelly at kate-kelly@tamu.edu. The winner will be announced during the April TMN meeting.

The Editors

Green Short Story Contest

Delta-Sky magazine has created a contest for a 'green' short story. The story should be up to 2,000 words in length and must have some aspect of Green as a prevailing presence, or even its theme. Stories should be submitted to www.deltasky.com by April 15, 2008 (look for the writing contest link). The winner will have his or her short story published in the July issue of the Delta-Sky magazine and will receive a prize of \$500.

The Brazos Day-Tripper - The Texas Coast in Winter

by Jimmie Killingsworth with photos by Jackie Palmer

I lived in Texas for a good while before I managed to overcome my distaste for the Texas coast. The problem was, I kept going there in the summer. It was hot, the beaches seemed dirty, the waves lacked power, and the jellyfish left invisible stinging tentacles in the water. Then one winter, everything changed.

It happened on a spontaneous trip over Christmas holidays in 2003. I said to Myrth and Jackie, "Let's go down to the Aransas Refuge and see the whooping cranes." We'd lived in Brazos Valley for over a decade and had seen the geese and sandhill cranes stream overhead every autumn, but had never been to see the population of endangered cranes that wintered along the coast. I hadn't watched the great whoopers since the days of the momentarily exciting but ill-fated experiment to introduce them into wintering flocks of sandhill cranes at the Bosque del Apache in New Mexico during the 1980s. I wanted to get reacquainted, and I guess the desire put me into the mood to be re-enchanted.

We set off after barely looking at the map. Four hours later we were scanning the little towns close to the

refuge for overnight habitat. Our search took us across a long causeway into the complex of bay communities known as Fulton-Rockport, where the shrimp industry still hangs on and visitors are greeted by a billboard claiming Fulton as the home of Dat Nguyen, the All-American linebacker for Texas A&M and later the Dallas Cowboys. Dat is a hero to Texans of many races, but he has a special connection with the Vietnamese coastal peoples, many of whom settled in this region in the 1970s after the Vietnam War. They have thrived here. Following on his own successful athletic career, Dat opened a restaurant with his brother Hu. With characteristic wit, they named the place "Hu Dat."

A few blocks away from the restaurant, we took a motel room across the street from the public fishing dock in Fulton. Luckily we remembered to throw in our fishing tackle, for this was the time of Myrth's brief fascination with angling, the time before she became a fully committed vegetarian. Back then, she figured that she could eat anything that she could catch, kill, and cook herself. Since butchering was out of the question with cows and chickens and most game (*Bambi* probably saved me from leading hunting expeditions), fish became her last bid for animal protein. I didn't mind since fishing got me near the water where I could watch for shorebirds and enjoy time outdoors with my teenaged daughter.

We settled quickly into the room, and leaving Jackie with her novel, we took our fishing rods over to the pier. We paid a dollar each for rights to fish as much as we wanted. A young man with long hair and a full beard took our money and sold us some frozen shrimp for bait. His look reminded me of the cosmic cowboy days back in the 1970s. He looked kind of like the singer Michael Murphy in his *Geronimo's Cadillac* phase.

It was late evening, just getting dark by the time we tossed our lines in the water off the far (northern, or left-hand) end of the T-shaped pier. There



Green Bee on Thistle, Gulf Coast, TX

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were no other people fishing, but by the time it was fully dark and the dim pier lights came on (either automatically or from a switch operated at a distance by the cosmic cowboy), a great blue heron and a yellow-crowned night heron joined us and stood watching at the opposite end of the T. In the water was a duck-like bird diving occasionally and bringing up a fish to swallow. A grebe? No, too heavy-bodied. It came close and looked at us with a piercing red eye, its beak not flat but sharply pointed. We don't have loons in Texas, do we? Surely not, and the colors seemed too dull.

As I was musing on the bird, Myrth got a bite and hauled in a sleek silver fish, about seven inches long, with iridescent blue stripes. "It's an ocean trout," I guessed. "It's so pretty," she said, taking it off the hook. As she threw it back, the loon (or whatever) gave chase. That one got away, just as another struck my line. Myrth barely got hers re-baited and back in the water before another struck.

So it went for a half hour or more. We were into a night-swimming school. The agitated bird in the water circled in silent anxiety, causing us some concern that



Hermit Crab Feast, Palacios, TX

we would hook it. The herons inched closer to observe. Jackie came out to join us and said a Vietnamese family down the pier was catching them, too. By the time we'd had enough and walked past the man and two young girls on our way back to the hotel, they had a bucketful of trout. They smiled at us as we admired the catch.

Almost off the pier, we passed a circle of light made in the water by the brighter dock lights. In the middle of the illumination a school of mullet sucked at the water's surface, seemingly hypnotized by the light. At Myrth's urging, I cast a line into their midst. They ignored it, intent on what seemed a ritual observance well beyond the ken of man and girl.

The next morning, we went up to the wildlife refuge and followed directions out to a viewing post. Way in the distance we could see a pair of whooping cranes with the help of a scope. I confess I had expected something better since over two hundred of the big birds are reported to winter at Aransas each year. The ranger admitted that the best view you could get is from the paid boat tours out of Rockport. I was content to let that opportunity pass. Seeing the great whoopers off at a distance reminded me of times in the distant past when I watched the stately white cranes set off in bold contrast by the smaller, but also impressive, gray sandhill cranes, hundreds of them feeding in a field of millet or sorghum at the Bosque del Apache.

When I caught myself thinking of the distance of the view at Aransas as a metaphor for the distance of memory, I urged my mind back toward the present, knowing



Ibis Flock, Gulf Coast, TX

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that experiences cannot be recaptured in different places and times. You have to be open to the whims of the moment.

I came back in time to enjoy Jackie watching wild hogs scampering through tall grass from the vantage of the sun roof while Myrth drove and I sat in the back seat laughing. "Their ears are long, like rabbits," Jackie said. That seemed hilarious at the time. The scenery must have made us giddy.

A little later, a flock of sandhill cranes emerged into vision out of their camouflage in an open field. We stopped the car and marveled at how the movement of their legs had first seemed like old stems of grain or grass flicking in the winter wind. Recognition of their cautious high steps on wet ground was followed by the sound of their chortling conversations coming to us in fragments as the wind shifted.

That night we went to the dock again for more trout fishing, Myrth happily equipped with a new fishing pole designed for salt water. The birds came back, along with the people. And as I fished the bay at Fulton alongside my daughter and wife, two herons, a family of immigrant Vietnamese, a cosmic cowboy of a dockhand, and what turned out to be a loon after all—the bird winters in Texas in a dull gray, nonbreeding plumage and refrains from uttering its notorious call during its stay in the south—my eyes were opened. There in the presence of

that virtual ghost of the northern summer bird that shared Walden Pond with Thoreau, I came to see the bays and broad marshes, the coastal wetlands, as the jeweled fringe of southeast Texas.

The realization brought pieces of memory together—the V-shaped waves of snow geese overhead in the gray skies every November and March, as if to show me the way to the winter coast; the smell of a thunderstorm in spring sweeping over the Bolivar Peninsula; walking the two-mile promenade at dawn along the bay at Palacios, then returning to the comfort of good coffee at the venerable Luther Hotel that fronts the water; marveling at the size of a thistle flower growing in marsh grass, a green bee embedded head-first in the center; strolling the boardwalk through the marshes at Sea-Rim State Park, the sudden flight of a Virginia rail against the background of the world's largest oil refinery in the distance at Port Arthur, a study in contrasts; the wealth of nature manifest in the diversity of marsh grasses, spartinas, bushy blue stem, and a hundred varieties I could never name.

The gathering together of memory and experience that comes into focus in special places, especially natural places like beaches and bays, but also built places—a warm fire-lit room on a cold night or a shady screen porch on a summer evening—that's where you find the soul on its home ground.

First Time by Lynette Davila

This past December I went birding for the first time. I have to admit, before I joined the TMN I didn't know what "birding" was. When Betty mentioned in the November meeting that the Audubon society was planning a trip, I thought to myself, heck why not? I borrowed some binoculars from a friend and met the birders one Saturday morning and to Katy we went. As soon as we parked, we saw a beautiful bird. I couldn't tell you what it was (I'm terrible with names—human and bird alike), so I knew that this was going to be a wonderful day. My favorite moment was when everybody else had seen a woodpecker, again, I couldn't tell you which one, and I couldn't find it, until at last I saw it. It was spectacular and I just gasped and they all laughed and said, "She found it!" We saw many Cardinals (to this day the only bird I can identify without a doubt). I have to admit that after lunch had

I been in my own car I would have probably headed home, but I'm glad I didn't. We went to somebody's house to see hummingbirds. I still can't believe we actually walked into somebody's backyard and watched birds. That's just crazy. After this, we were driving around birding, and we stopped to see a bird, but I saw an armadillo. I'd been wanting to see an armadillo since moving to Texas 2 years ago. I got to see a live one—not some roadkill flattened on the pavement. Needless to say, I jumped out of the car and scared it away before anyone could take a picture of it. But I saw it!! I had fun on my first birding trip. I saw many beautiful birds, according to Betty, over 90. But I have to admit that the only things I clearly remember are that wonderful woodpecker and the live armadillo.



Developing the Junior Master Naturalist Program by Leslie Gall¹

On Valentine's Day's night I spoke to the February Master Naturalist meeting about my love for educating youth about the environment. It's easy for me to talk about, I have spent many years teaching kids outside. One of my personal goals is to give others a positive experience in nature so that they feel comfortable and confident to take another trip outside.

Over the last few months, I have been talking with Jo Anne Bates, Dwight Bohlmeier, Jim and Kitty Anding, and Madge Luquette about expanding the youth portion of natural resource education. We met three times to discuss goals of a youth program and to investigate other chapter activities. After last month, the list of members interested in this endeavor has grown.

The timing is right for youth outdoor education. The Brazos Valley Master Naturalists have been involved in Summer Tuesdays at the Aquatic Center at Blinn College, school presentations, Bio Blitz, and many other education activities throughout Brazos County. How can we make a bigger or longer impact? Environmental experts agree and interpreters understand that we need to expose young children to nature early through accurate, first-hand experiences. Inviting children to see and experience nature gives them "real" outdoor experiences, eliminates the fear of the unknown, makes getting dirty exciting, and allows them to bond with the earth.

Children want to experience the natural world as a "sheer sensory experience," rather than to be told about the world by adults. Because children learn by sensory perception, exposure to the natural world is critical; children must be immersed in nature in order to observe and experience it. Research has shown that successful interactions between the youth audience and the natural world must be fundamentally based on independently experiencing the environment first-hand, up-close-and-personal, and with the five senses.

A survey of some other Master Naturalist Chapters has shown varying degrees of youth programming. The Cradle of Texas and Mid-Coast chapter has one avenue of a pre-K through 5th grade field trip program called

L.E.E.P.ing into Learning. The members spend several days at the ConocoPhillips Little Linnville Wildlife Habitat facilitating activities on-site as an early introduction of environmental education. The Rio Grande Valley chapter participates in youth festivals and school presentations. The North Texas chapter participates in a Farm Day, Tiny Trekkers hikes, Scout programs, Nature Art in the schools, and outdoor learning areas at schools. The Capital Area chapter has produced a proposal for a pilot Junior program for a statewide initiative that includes two levels of participation: Young Naturalist for ages 3-7 of workbook-based activities and Junior Naturalist ages 8-11 of classroom instruction, hand-on and field study.

Here in the Brazos Valley, we'd like to connect youth and their parents with local areas and parks. Initially we want to expand the Summer Tuesdays at Blinn College;



add Summer Saturday mornings at local parks; create a club; and develop a recognition model. Our next step is to identify the focus, goals, and objectives of this Master Naturalist chapter for increasing youth environment education in the Brazos Valley. The planning group identified will soon meet to continue that process. Remember that, by initiating youth's contact with the natural world, you can help foster in them a bond with, an appreciation for, and knowledge of the earth.

¹Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agent for Brazos County

Striving Green by Jackie Girouard

About six years ago, I moved about 600 miles due south from one river valley to another, from the Kaw Valley to the Brazos Valley. Topeka actually has a river running through the town unlike our own landlocked twin cities, but it doesn't matter—the river is ignored and unloved. But I digress. Soon after arrival, a local church sponsored a nine-week class called Voluntary Simplicity which intrigued me for several reasons. I had very recently retired four years before eligibility for social security retirement. I had put away enough funds (how can anyone know what is needed for four years?) to supplement my state pension until the magic 62 would arrive. Just the idea that I actually looked forward to reaching age 62 often caused me to stop and think. Really, it was a leap of faith to believe I could simplify enough to survive. So, living intentionally, voluntarily cutting corners, denying myself little gifts became my goal, but I also wanted to do poverty with a little style as well.

This class, sponsored by some folks who call themselves the Northwest Institute, was a series of essays and studies on living simply. Having lived in the Midwest for over 30 years, I had no trouble recognizing that what we were studying were our pioneer ancestors—it was really a close look at how people in the Midwest lived as they pioneered some 175 years ago (statehood for Kansas was 1861). Many still live this frugal, no-nonsense life to this day—they don't call it fly-over country for nothing. A bumper sticker I saw in Topeka last century read,

“Committing Suicide in Kansas is Redundant”. It's true, there's no style there.

I do recycle, but recycling can be just a way for us to think it's ok to keep buying whatever it is we are recycling. Recycling doesn't return the object to its natural state—it usually produces a degraded product. I think living green is a mind-set. It's asking yourself, do I need this object, how long will it last, what will I do with it when I no longer want it or it no longer works, who made it and what did it take to get it made and in my hands? Living green with style, to me, is not being a pain in the butt to others while trying to reduce consumption—the idea of policing others or being policed is not one I embrace at all. It's not being judgmental—it's ok with me if you shop at Wal-Mart. Can you tell I was alive and well in the sixties?

The biggest effort I make every day is resisting consumption and the hardest part about it is where my child is concerned. Every single day it seems, new items come into her life—plastic or paper, non-edible bits of stuff seem to float in the air surrounding her and attach themselves to her in a way that amazes me. I took a small stand last week—I didn't provide a goody bag full of useless “stuff” to the friends who came to her ninth birthday party! And, we made her cake at home. How radical is that? Now, if someone can help me remember to bring my reusable bags shopping with me, I'd be your friend forever.

Beaver Sighting by Mary Strauss

Just a quick observation to share with you. One evening in early February I took a walk through College Station's D.A. "Andy" Anderson Arboretum off Southwest Parkway. I had never been there before and it was quite nice. There were lots of small oaks and one very large juniper tree—it must be very old—along a trail that follows Bee Creek and a small pond. While walking the trail, I noticed a recurring sight—beaver eaten trees! They were everywhere! I wasn't able to find any tracks due to the amount of fallen foliage on the ground, but I'm sure they are somewhere. Hopefully some of you can make it out there if you haven't been already.

For more information on the D.A. "Andy" Anderson Arboretum you can visit <http://www.cctx.gov/home/index.asp?page=1199>





Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park text and photos by Dwight Bohlmeier

My parents have been Winter Texans in the Rio Grande Valley for the last 20 years. I visit them in the valley about twice a year and have toured many of the natural attractions that occur throughout the valley. I have visited Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Alamo numerous times, but I had never visited Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park in Mission until last December. What a treat! It is one of the best spots in the valley to view wildlife.



Javelinas (*Tayassu tajacu*)

They have a number of bird feeding stations along the main trail and I saw many new species for the first time. Green jays and chachalacas are ubiquitous throughout the park as are the collared peccaries, or javelinas. Feeding stations are awash in colors from the tangerine of the Altamira oriole, the brilliant blues and greens of green jays, the bright reds of cardinals and the yellows of the great kiskadee. The collared peccaries feed on the spilled seeds under each feeder and travel in groups from one feeder to the next.

The park has numerous trails with a tram running along the main trail every 30 minutes. You can ride the tram through the entire park, or hop off at one of the many feeding stations. Walking between feeding stations we happened upon a leaf cutter ant colony that was out foraging. As we were heading back to the park entrance, my sister Becky and I decided to take a trail down to an



Green Jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*)

old resaca. You had to watch your step because the trail was heavily covered with bobcat scat (another group reported seeing a female bobcat and 2 cubs earlier that morning). We got to the end and the resaca was bone dry.

My sister was disappointed that we had walked all that way and there was no water. As we followed the looping trail to return, a large bird suddenly flew between us. I turned around and it was flying right at me. I halfway ducked before realizing it was an owl. Other owls continued to flutter out of the tree, a

total of seven in all! I snapped a picture and tentatively identified the owls as long-eared owls, which I later confirmed with the many avid birders in our TMN group.

After returning to my parent's house, I had to do a little research to explain the difference between peccaries and pigs to my family. Old world pigs are in the family Suidae, peccaries are in the new world family Tayassuidae. There are three species of peccaries. The collared peccary ranges from south Texas into Central & South America. Collared peccaries have three toes on their hind legs whereas pigs have four. Peccary canines or tusks are also smaller and straighter than those of true pigs. Their ca-

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nines slide past each other and sharpen themselves each time they open and close their mouths. I had never seen a collared peccary in the wild until visiting Bentsen State Park and I will definitely visit the park again the next time I am in the valley!



Left: Golden Fronted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) ; Right: Longeared Owl (*Asio otus*)

Ho-Ho Bags by Madge Luquette

About three years ago my grandson, who was then a senior at Bryan High, got tired of the amount of paper, ribbon, and tape that had to be disposed of after Christmas. He thought there must be a more ecologically-friendly way of celebrating Christmas. Thus was born the idea of the "Ho-Ho Bag", an easy, practical way of dealing with a multitude of presents at Christmas, birthdays, or any occasion.

MATERIALS: Buy colorful fabric ribbon and enough yards of pretty fabric (holiday fabric is readily available in craft stores) to make the number of bags you want. You can make any size bag and adapt them to this pattern.

STEP 1: For one bag, cut out a piece of fabric 22" by 42" (or 45" depending on the width of the material) in size. Fold the fabric in half.

STEP 2: With the "outside" sides pinned together, stitch the side seam and bottom seam (try to pay attention to the pattern so it's not upside down when you use it). Turn the raw edge on top of the bag opening inside and hem. Turn bag right side out.

STEP 3: Thread ribbon through the opening you have created at the top of the bag.

STEP 4: Slip present inside, tighten ribbon, form a pretty bow with ribbon--and you're done!

These bags are great for bulky or oddly shaped presents and can be used and re-used for years. By adding a rectangular bottom and handles and using heavier material, you can also make your own grocery bags. For further ideas, just Google "reuseable gift bags".



Green Living in the Brazos Valley *by Kate Kelly*

In this regular column, we'd like to feature local growers (within a 100-mile radius, organic* or not—do tell us which), local honey providers, egg producers, soap makers, seamstresses, carpenters, and craftspersons with a green approach to their products. We can also feature services—auto mechanics, dry cleaners, hair salons, fish markets, bookshops—that make an effort to reduce their carbon footprint**. We'd like to begin compiling "Cyrano's List"—a group of local providers with a green bent (recommended by individual members of TMNBV but not promoted officially by our organization) both to celebrate and support those folks and encourage others to join their efforts. Send us your listings with as much information as you can provide. The listings below come from our members. The listings below come from our members. Please add to this list by sending your information to *The Cyrano* editors, and give us feedback on your experiences with the items on these lists.

Products

Food

Farmer's Markets in Bryan and College Station

Saturdays, 7 a.m. - noon

Wednesdays, 4 - 7 p.m.

Bryan: corner of W.J. Bryan and Texas Ave. - Begins June 3rd

College Station: Central Park (near the main pavilion) - Begins May 24

Brazos Valley Farmer's Market Association Phone: (936) 870-4099 Fax: (979) 775-0026

E-mail: gendron@suddenlinkmail.com

Web site: www.brazosvalleyfarmersmarket.com

Non-toxic Household Cleaning Products

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/8088/clngrn.html> (free recipes for household cleaners using mostly non-toxic, cheap and available ingredients)

Services (Please note: TMNBV does not endorse the businesses listed here. We are sharing members' opinions.)

Stearns Construction: "Stearns Construction green building philosophy together with an advanced project bidding and planning management system provides the ability to produce energy efficient homes designed for your needs." 2151 Harvey Mitchell Pkwy., Suite 219, College Station, TX, 77840. Phone: 979-696-0524. Web site:

www.stearnsconstruction.biz

Local Green News

For the first time, a locally-built home will sell solar energy to BTU. From "Life On The Brazos: Information, perspective and discussion on quality of life in the Brazos Valley" (<http://polbrazos.blogspot.com>): "Our energy company, BTU, is ahead of the curve in supporting innovation. We at Stearns Design Build are in the process of building what will be the first house in the county to sell solar generated energy back to the energy company. And BTU is providing substantial rebates to encourage this wise means of power generation. This is called net metering. By allowing excess energy to be sold back to the power company we eliminate the need for solar energy to be stored in batteries. Net metering is innovative technology that takes the cost, bulk and maintenance of battery storage out of solar energy production. By subsidizing the cost, BTU makes this technology much more accessible to its customers." (See blogspot above for full story).

Website for green living:

The best I've seen (National Geographic-sponsored):

<http://www.thegreenguide.com/>

**The USDA definition of "organic": Organic food is produced without antibiotics or growth hormones; without using most conventional pesticides; without fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation. Before a product can be labeled "organic," a Government-approved certifier inspects the farm where the food is grown to make sure the farmer is following all the rules necessary to meet USDA organic standards. Companies that handle or process organic food before it gets to your local supermarket or restaurant must be certified. Go to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Consumers/brochure.html> for more information.

**Carbon footprint: this is a broader concept with a strong foothold in Europe. "Also named Carbon profile, it (refers to) the overall amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (e.g. methane, etc.) associated with a product (i.e. both goods and services) along its supply-chain and sometimes including from use and end-of-life recovery and disposal. Causes of these emissions are, for example, electricity production in power plants, heating with fossil fuels, transport operations and other industrial and agricultural processes." Go to http://lca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Carbon_footprint.pdf for more information.

Disco Dancing With Skunks by Dwight Bohlmeier

Two years ago I adopted a Scottish terrier with cerebellar abiotrophy. He loves to go on long walks and he performs a spastic little dance each time he marks a bush—hence his name “Disco”. Since adopting him I have gotten to know most of the neighborhoods surrounding the A&M campus because we never walk the same way twice. It’s amazing how much more flora and fauna you notice when you are walking rather than driving. Ball mosses decorate the live oaks on Glade. A buckeye tree grows curbside on Park Place. Mexican plum trees & deciduous hollies compete for space with the invasive species in Crompton Park and spike rushes line the ditches in Thomas Park.

We also see a wide variety of animal life. Disco is quite good at flushing out rabbits around the College Station Conference Center. He is equally adept at finding animals around the edge of the A&M golf course. On our early morning walks we have spotted opossums, a beaver, nutria, blue herons, and striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*)

are particularly abundant. On a recent walk in February we spotted three striped skunks within 100 yards of each other. The terrier in Disco comes out each time he spots a rabbit or skunk and he wants to give chase. We’ve had several close calls! He once charged a skunk near the Justice of the Peace Center on George Bush. I yelled “Nooooooooo!” at the top of my lungs startling him and the skunk, altering the skunks aim and he just missed getting sprayed. Striped skunks are nocturnal and are found all throughout Texas. They primarily forage for insects and arachnids and are quite beautiful to look at (from a distance). With the recent rash of rabid skunks found in College Station its best to give them a wide birth when you see them. When we spot them they usually run for cover, diving down holes along the fairways that look entirely too small for them. To find out more about striped skunks check out The Mammals of Texas-Online Edition <http://www.nsrl.ttu.edu/tmot1/mephmeph.htm> .

Our Final Thought

A Monarch chrysalis photographed by Manuelita Ureta. For great videos of a pupating Monarch larva and a contracting pupa visit <http://clayruth.com/pupa.html>

If you would like to have one of your photos featured in one of the next issues of the Cyrano, you can do so, by submitting it electronically to Leo Lombardini

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