

Peg La Point

“Engaging” With Kids in Volunteering

It is often given as advice in show business...never work with animals or children. This sentiment has made some people hesitant to volunteer their time with children. “I don’t know if I am comfortable talking to children one on one, in groups, or in classes. How do I speak to the kids? How do I engage them and get them excited about the activities they are going to do? What about my role with the parents or chaperones? And just where is that line of “appropriate” language and behavior? (That seems to have changed a lot in the past few years). So many questions, and even if I really want to volunteer with children, maybe it is just a too much work to figure all of this out.”

Engaging children and families in hands-on or informal activities does not have to be difficult or stressful, especially after some practice. There are some “tricks of the trade” that can make the experience a lot more enjoyable for you and for your guests. These techniques are tried and true in classrooms and learning centers, and can increase your comfort and confidence as you interact with children.

At our January 15 general meeting, Marti Lathrop will present and discuss some of these techniques and how we can apply them. This will be a great introduction to the subject and we hope it will make our members eager to work with kids.

So that Marti can go into more detail, she will also host an advanced training workshop on Saturday, February 14 from 9:00 am to noon in the meeting room of the Carroll Building. She will lead participants through hands-on activities that practice and use techniques in role playing and scenario settings. Participants will have a lot of fun and learn some great skills to apply right away in our project service hours.

Marti says, “Volunteering is very rewarding, and volunteering with organizations that serve children and families can be especially fun. Practicing the tools that can make the experience as stress free as possible can be the key to a whole new world of volunteering. I hope our time together will help you move toward that goal of ‘engaging’ volunteerism”.

Marti Lathrop has been a highly-regarded academic professional at the UNT Elm Fork Education Center since 2003. She has a BS in Interdisciplinary Studies, concentration in Integrated Sciences, from UTSA. She earned her MS in Educational Psychology from UNT. As the spouse of a retired Air Force officer, Marti has lived and taught in a number of places around the world as a certified teacher, a facilitator, and as a home school mom. She has many years of experience in engaging the young and young at heart in both formal and informal educational settings.

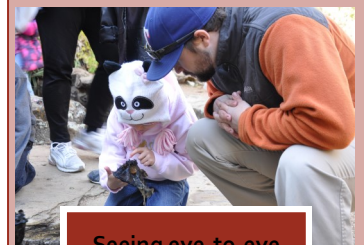
Hands on



Marti in the middle



...just where is that line of “appropriate” language and behavior? (That seems to have changed a lot in the past few years).



Seeing eye-to-eye

Joanne Fellows

“Look closely at the green fringe that edges all of the wings. It is one of the identifiers.”

Wavy-lined Emerald, *Synchlora aerate*

This tiny green moth, WS \approx 13-24mm, is also called Camouflaged looper. Their larvae adorn themselves with plant fragments. Pretty as these moths are, the larvae are often considered pests. They feed on many composite flowers, shrubs or trees. **Emeralds are members of the Geometer moths.** The term Geometridae is Greek meaning earth measure. Look closely at the green fringe that edges all of the wings. It is one of the identifiers. This group can be brownish or yellowish in the spring.



Wavy-lined Emerald

A New Year Springs Eternal

By Bob Ross

Here it is January, 2015 and we all are starting anew. After treading through twelve months of 2014, accumulating some soot along with some knowledge, we are able to clean the slate. We can begin this month with a feeling of hope and less despair. We can do things that are both smart and inane.

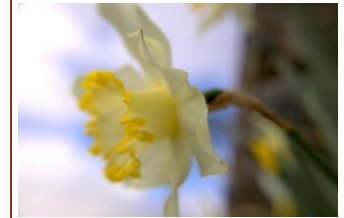
We enjoy the wonderment of beginning a new year. A new year allows us to be somewhat inane with such an adage as: "I am going to lose weight." Nowadays, many of us have considered the resolution of losing weight and some will be successful, while most will not be successful getting on the proper diet and maintaining the proper weight. Other well-amplified adages for this time of year could be: "I am going to be a better person" or "I want to be less judgmental" or "I want to think less about me and more about others" or "I want to help the needy".

This new year springs eternal with our recently graduated 2014 training class. I tried to meet them at the Roundup, at different General Meetings, and at the Christmas party. I have met most, if not all. Wow! What a very impressive group of folks. Thank you to each of you recent grads for taking the time to find out what being a Master Naturalist is all about and what the journey entails. Welcome aboard. Also, a big thank you to the training committee members: Cheryl Ellis, Rita Lokie, Don Fikes and Vin Merrill. I feel the training committee fulfilled the adage "I want to think less about me and more about others." Job well done.

This new year springs eternal with our recently elected Board of Directors. We need to give them our full support and effort. With Jan Deatherage at the helm, as President, things may be different and that is okay. Each President has their own way of doing things. If you are one who wants to fulfill the adage of "I want to be less judgmental" then, here is where you can begin. Instead of standing in the dark and being critical about the way things are being done, step up and try to understand why things are being done the way they are being done. Ask questions because most of the time you won't know if you don't ask.

We often feel the word "needy" only means financially poor. However, "needy" can describe so many more situations. Have you ever known anyone who just needed a hug? Have you ever seen a child who needed some help in their formative years to get to a place in their lives that they felt self-assured and confident? Have you ever known anyone who is extremely shy and needs help to gravitate to a group? As a Master Naturalist, there are so many ways one can fulfill the adage of, "I want to help the needy." If you know someone who will be experiencing a hard time in 2015, try giving them a hug. If you are working and teaching with children, remember they may not be as confident as you and may need you to help them get to their next step of development. And, if you see someone who has made the effort to come as a visitor to a General Meeting, well, go up to them and introduce yourself and take it upon yourself to make them feel less shy and alone.

Being a member of Elm Fork Chapter is like anything else where the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. If you feel you are heading down the road to the dysfunction junction, consider others before yourself, be less judgmental, and give a hand to the needy. I promise you, it will make you be a better person.



... springs eternal.

As a Master Naturalist, there are so many ways one can fulfill the adage of, "I want to help the needy."

Everyone understands kindness.



Celebrating 50 Years

From Bob Ross

We must give a big “thank you” to Aldo Leopold (Jan 11, 1887 – April 21, 1948). Leopold was an American author, scientist, ecologist, forester and environmentalist. While living at Tres Piedras, New Mexico, which is northwest of Taos, Leopold devised an idea for setting aside remote areas of wilderness for preservation.

In 1924, he convinced the U. S. Forest Service to designate the Gila Wilderness, in southwest New Mexico, as the first wilderness area in the U.S. and the forerunner of today’s 110 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System.

America has just completed celebrating the 50th

anniversary of the 1964 System. While signing the Wilderness Act, President Lyndon B. Johnson said, “If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.”



The land surrounding Aldo Leopold’s shack served as the inspiration for “A Sand County Almanac. Photo courtesy Aldo Leopold Foundation.

Powderhorn Ranch Purchase

From Bob Ross

Last month’s issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine had an excellent article, written by Tom Harvey, titled Powderhorn. Harvey explains the purchase of the Powderhorn Ranch. It is one of the last wild havens on the Texas coast. The 17,351-acre property was purchased for \$37.7 million, the largest dollar amount ever raised for a conservation land purchase in the state.

According to Harvey, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation is spearheading fundraising for the \$50 million project, which includes

purchase of the property and a long-term endowment for habitat restoration and management.

A major part of the funding comes from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, created with dollars paid by British Petroleum and Transocean in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Harvey claims NFWF has committed \$34.5 million over the next three years, making this the largest land acquisition in the nation to date using BP spill restoration dollars.

Other partners in the purchase are The Conservation Fund and the Nature Conservancy of Texas. Each provided \$10 million in interim funding to buy the property in 2014. Harvey explained that the two organizations will be reimbursed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, which will hold title on the property by the end of 2016, and will eventually turn it over to TPWD with the likelihood of establishing a state park.

For more information, go to www.tpwmagazine.com.



TPW Chair Dan Allen Hughes, Jr.

www.Chron.com/News/

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www.natureconservancy.com