

## Administrative

Present: Brenda Fest, Craig Childs, Ann Dietert, Kris Bobbitt, Lisa Flanagan, Tom Harrigan, Claire Mitchell, Dave Davies, Reggie Cox, Paula Harley, Vern Crawford, Larry Eskridge, Bridget Langdale, Kathy Ward.

Absent: Michelle Haggerty, Roy Watson.

Quorum met: Yes.

President Brenda Fest called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm.

## Welcome and Review Agenda

Brenda Fest welcomed all present.

## Operational

- The Minutes from the previous meeting were approved. Kathy Ward made the motion and Lisa Flanagan seconded; approved.
- The Treasurer's Report from the previous meeting was approved. Vern Crawford made the motion and Kathy Ward seconded; approved. Discussion ensued regarding the bank account for holding state money. Brenda will donate the remaining funds of \$24.01 from the Pollinator Garden to the Chapter. Diane McMahon discussed the sales tax on the donation of a computer to Old Tunnel of \$300 and The Inn of the Hills of \$400; she will contact the comptroller's office about a refund. Vern Crawford explained the rules. The plant sale is exempt from taxes. Diane responded to a question about payment of UGRA fees; the fees were paid in January 2017.
- The Vice-President's Report was presented by Craig Childs. He listed speakers who have been contacted to date regarding the monthly meetings. Among the confirmed are Craig Hensley TPWD on dragonflies in May, Robert Howell on mussels (topic to be determined), Brody Miller from the Texas Health Commission on cattle tick control. Craig Childs asked for suggestions for the remaining months. It was suggested that Lee from the Class of 2014 speak on bird behavior; he was warned about private business. A second topic was broached by Craig, "types of topics" are too broad. Some have not had enough substance; Craig feels that the topics should be science oriented. Brenda said that she liked that concept as citizen scientists are important. Craig then said that some topics are not Hill Country specific but are appropriate for the meetings. He suggested climate-related topics as Master Naturalists should be conversant on the subject of climate. Kathy Ward advised that she knows of a person with a PhD in plants who is studying climate change in the Arctic; she will provide contact information to Craig. She added the Native Plant Symposium was focused on how climate change effected each specific topic. Craig advised that he knows of a professor in nuclear science who is studying the effects of nuclear breakdown at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan, but perhaps that particular subject is too broad. Craig then changed the topic to the Vice-President job description. He spoke about social events held by the chapter. The annual picnic was cancelled due to low attendance. The Christmas party "competition" game will be hard to top. Dinosaur George and Last Chance Forever were mentioned as entertainment for the 2017 Christmas party. Diane McMahon said that John Karger (Last Chance Forever) will be at the Renaissance festival this coming weekend. She added that the budget for chapter social functions is \$1,500. Last year, \$500 was charged.

## Strategic Initiatives

- Web Site Familiarity is very important. Brenda said that the homework for the board is to review the websites of other chapters and develop suggestions to incorporate into our chapter's web site. She demonstrated the tabs and what's inside of each one. She gave the example of codes for projects. Bridgette Langdale suggested that members be listed by classes in addition to the other lists. Craig Childs said that it took several clicks to get to basic fact in the "About" section on Master Naturalists, this might cause outside persons to stop searching for this basic information about the group. Kathy Ward said a better word would be "Welcome" and the facts could be linked under "Welcome to our Chapter." Tom said the Board of Directors on the website should include the email addresses.
- Chapter Brochure update. David Davies said that the old trifold will be changed to a single card. This will be more generic and can be used over the years due to no specific information. A sample was shown to the board. The card has the website listed, and Lisa Flanagan's information regarding "Become Certified" is on the second side. It was stated that important information to include is that the training class is in Kerrville, the hours and dates. Discussion ensued among the board regarding specific items to be included. It was determined that the word "volunteer" be prominent on the brochure. It was decided that June 30<sup>th</sup> every year is a better date to end class recruitment. There should be one click to get the mission statement and one click to get to Chapter Facts about what the activities are. These should be bullet points. The insert will be completed soon. The trifold will take some time.
- Hospitality Events. Bridget Langdale presented three items. First, shortening the monthly meetings by changing recognitions. The plan is to have all people getting an award meet in the big room at 6:30, line up, and enter the meeting room at 6:55, receive awards. The group will be split by counties for photos which will then be sent to the appropriate newspapers. For the milestone awards, individual photos and a short story to include how much funding was provided to the state by the person's number of hours and the type of projects. This process brings public awareness to both the Monday night visitors and to the community through the papers. Discussion ensued regarding newspapers' different policies. Second, Bridget presented the fact that class members lose connection after graduation. She proposed hosting a 90-minute informal gathering at 4:30 prior to the monthly meeting. She

suggested four volunteers from the classes of 2014-2016. Mamacita's has a good set up in the bar where a gathering could meet. Third, Bridget spoke about after graduation retention of class members as part of the volunteer cadre of Master Naturalists. Discussion ensued regarding topics such as telephoning members, volunteer hours, VMS, mentors, etc. Brenda focused on mentors and the mentor program.

Craig left the meeting at 3:15 for a prior engagement. There was still a quorum present.

- A Chapter Survey has been requested by Michelle Haggarty. It was decided that the survey would be emailed directly to the chapter members. Discussion ensued as to whether there should be an "A" and "B" for two responses or just blank for one response. Some people might not want to come up with two answers. Bridget Langdale ended the consternation by stating that it should be left at two answers.
- The Items from the Retreat topic was tabled by Brenda for lack of time. But members were encouraged to suggest items.

## Directors' Reports

- **Membership Director.** Lisa Flanagan addressed the issue of asking "rejected" applicants to keep involved. Brenda suggested keeping involved through an email asking them to reapply the next year. Diane McMahon added that non-viable applicants should not receive that email. Lisa said that the term could be "not accepted" versus "rejected." The group of Larry Eskridge, Brenda, and Lisa will meet next week.
- **Advanced Training Director.** Tom Harrigan said that last year there were 229 total AT opportunities in 2016 and so far in January 2017 there have been 40 advertised. There have been 14 members with so-called bad emails, six email addresses have been deleted by the user, and one member has become inactive. Claire Mitchell asked if Tom had used last year's email address list; Tom got a new list from Kristie Denbow, taking the names off the Master List and coordinating with the VMS. The spreadsheet of addresses is not correct. There are ten AgriLife county representatives. Items brought up during member discussion were AT credit for NPSOT classes, a bluebird meeting, and Tom doing paperwork; no further details were recorded by the Secretary.
- **Volunteer Projects Director.** Claire Mitchell advised that there is nothing to report.
- **Communications Director.** David Davies advised that he will have more contact with journalists and AgriLife. Lisa advised that there will be open houses in rural counties for people interested in learning more about Master Naturalists. Brenda presented an idea from Jim Stanley regarding a proposal for Lost Maples. Perhaps a new Class Committee. Possibly an event but not a field trip. Discussion ensued on this topic, with Larry Eskridge suggesting a picnic. A meeting with AT hour(s) and then a voluntary picnic.
- **New Class Director.** Reggie Cox discussed specifics of renting an alternate room for the October 18 class in the Boerne Public Library. Brenda brought up specifics for multiple items that were topics not specifically related to the board. The one item of interest to the board was the possibility of adding Ethnobotany as a class topic.

## Resource Development

- Brenda advised that the chapter **website review** had been conducted.
- Brenda, Ann Dietert, Lisa Flanagan, and Vern Crawford will meet with Michelle Haggerty regarding the **\$18,000 bank balance for the chapter**. Michelle had been contacted by Brenda regarding the surplus. Diane McMahon advised that there is no problem with the IRS regarding the surplus. Diane suggested using the surplus to help with the \$200 tuition, special project, etc. versus using for daily expenses. Brenda mentioned a \$75 stipend to help with individuals' expenses for the state meetings; she wanted to know how people would know scholarships were available. Larry Eskridge suggested some language to accomplish this. Vern was positive about the idea. Kathy Ward, Diane McMahon, Brenda Fest and others discussed this issue. Tom Harrigan suggested that (1) the topic is tabled at this time, and (2) a committee should be formed.
- Brenda advised she received an email from Tony Cieszkiewicz who was requesting a **grant from the Hill Country Chapter for \$1,500 to construct/improve a campsite for volunteers at Enchanted Rock**. Paula Harley advised that Master Naturalists would have access to the volunteer campsite after the grant funding was used to construct it. Brenda said she had checked with Michelle Haggerty who agreed that this was not an appropriate use of Master Naturalist funds; they determined that this grant request should be forwarded to Friends of Enchanted Rock. Brenda explained that the funding for a **pollinator garden** was an exception to the rules. The above grant is not a mission function and not in the operating budget. The Friends of Enchanted Rock raise funds due to the fact that state parks are not allowed to fundraise. This had already been decided by the Chapter. There is no fundraising by the chapter. Discussion continued. Diane McMahon suggested setting policies guidelines to provide a uniform response to each request. Brenda reiterated that the pollinator garden was reluctantly provided funds by the board due to the fact that it is a public display at the Kerr County Courthouse for public relations purposes.
- A later time for the beginning of the board meeting was requested. The Mamacita's hospitality events are scheduled from 4:30 to 6:15 pm. A proposal to start the chapter board meetings suggested a 2:30 starting time. Ann made a motion that the chapter board meetings should start at 2:30 pm. David Davies seconded the motion; however, the motion was not passed at this time.