

## SEPTEMBER PROGRAM:

# A SPACECRAFT TOUR OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Our September program will be “A Spacecraft Tour of the Solar System” by Dr. John Dietrich, who enjoyed a 25 year career at NASA. Manned and unmanned spacecraft missions during the past four decades have acquired images of most major and many minor objects in our Solar System. Images captured by spacecraft near these objects reveal details that cannot be seen from Earth using the largest telescopes. Studies of surface features on the planets and smaller objects have greatly increased our knowledge of the Solar System. These studies provide information that, together with other data acquired by the spacecraft missions, has put important constraints on our concept of Solar System development and on the early history of Earth.

The “Spacecraft Tour of the Solar System” presentation takes us about 2.8 trillion miles from the Sun at the center of our Solar System to the orbit of Neptune. Distinctive features on each of the eight planets that have been visited by spacecraft will be shown. Most of the planets have one or more natural satellites. Images of some of these planetary moons will be shown. Some interesting facts about the Cassini mission to Saturn and its natural satellites will be included.

Dr. John Dietrich is a native of Beaumont, Texas. Following service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he received a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering at The Rice Institute. He became interested in geology while working as an electrical engineer on an oceanographic project in southern Louisiana. In 1965 he received a Ph.D. in Geology at the University of Texas in Austin.

Dr. Dietrich joined NASA’s Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston during the summer of 1966 to assist in the geological training of astronauts and other tasks supporting the Apollo program. He was part of the Johnson Space Center group charged with the care and distribution of extraterrestrial materials during his last 10 years with NASA. For three years before retiring at the end of 1991, he was Chief of the Curatorial Branch and Lunar Sample Curator. Dietrich has attended the annual Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in Houston most years since retirement to keep in touch with current research on the moon and planets and to visit with colleagues from around the world. John and his wife, Hazel, moved to Kerrville during the summer of 1992. Both are active in several local organizations including Gardeners of Kerrville, and Fredericksburg Rockhounds.

This program will be held at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, in Kerrville, on **Monday, September 27th** beginning with a social time at **6:30 PM**. The meeting begins at **7:00 PM**. The meeting is free, and the public is invited to attend.

## President’s Message

*by Sandy Peña*

Our Chapter is now coming to the end of its third year, and we have much to celebrate. With this year’s fall training class, we now have over seventy members and the enthusiasm has never been better. With the growth of our Chapter, your Board recognizes the need for its structure to evolve as well. The Board was initially established in 2001 with the following elected officers: President, VP of Training, VP of Communications and PR, VP of Programs and Projects, Secretary/VP of Membership, and Treasurer. (At that time, there were no State program by-laws to chapters to follow.) Each of the four VPs has at least two committee chairmen reporting to them. Last year, we added a one-year position for a Class Representative, and we also approved a policy that no member could serve more than two consecutive years in the same position.

This year, after much deliberation, the State MN program has finally established a set of statewide By-laws for chapters. These new bylaws call for only four elected officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Chapters may add appointed Directors for the various standing committees as they see fit. The By-laws also specify that the Past President be a member of the Board, and serve as chair of the Nominating Committee.

Your Board recently voted unanimously to implement the new By-laws for the election process we are about to undergo this fall. We also voted to establish the following standing committees: Director of Membership, Director of Communications, Director of Class Training, Director of Volunteer Service, and Director of Advanced Training. (The By-laws specify that the Vice President shall chair the Program Committee, so there is not a separate Director for that position.) Each of these Directors will serve as Board members. We also voted to continue the policy of having a one-year Class Representative term for each succeeding training class. Each training class will elect its representative to the Board. These changes bring the total number of Board members from 7 to 11. The Board feels very positively about this expansion of the Board, in that it will give more members direct input into the Board’s

decisions.

In keeping with the election process specified in the State By-laws, the Board has appointed me to head up the Nominating Committee and to select two additional ad-hoc members with Board approval. The two members who have agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee are Bob Ritchie and Myrna Langford. This Committee will submit a slate of candidates for the four elected positions for next year. We will publish this slate in October's newsletter, and will vote on it at our last regular meeting of the year in November (In December, we hold a Holiday Covered-Dish Supper in place of a regular meeting). The new officers will assume their duties at the conclusion of that meeting. The Nominating Committee is also encouraged to recommend candidates for the appointed positions. If you are interested in becoming a candidate either for an elective office or for an appointed Director, please let Bob, Myrna or me know as soon as possible!

## Complimentary Newsletter Subscriptions Expire

Many of our guests have been receiving complimentary subscriptions to our newsletter for several years to help them learn more about the activities of our Chapter. As of October, these complimentary subscriptions will end unless we receive a request to continue – in which case we would be happy to do so. Please contact our Vice President of Membership, Myrna Langford, at [mlf@omniglobal.net](mailto:mlf@omniglobal.net) if you wish to continue receiving our newsletter.

A couple of reminders:

- **Watch in late spring for announcements of application period dates for the 2005 fall training class.** This information will be in area newspapers and at our website at [www.hilcountrymasternaturalist.org](http://www.hilcountrymasternaturalist.org).
- **Guests are welcome to attend Chapter meetings on the fourth Monday of each month** at Riverside Nature Center.

## CALENDAR

**“Approved AT”** indicates that an event has been approved as Advanced Training for our Chapter.

For **Cibolo Nature Center events**, contact Cibolo at (830) 249-4616 or by e-mail at [nature@cibolo.org](mailto:nature@cibolo.org), or online at [www.cibolo.org](http://www.cibolo.org) under “Learning”. **Class sizes are limited, so it is important to pre-register. Fees apply to some events.**

**NOW!** September is the best time to plant wildflower seeds in the Hill Country since it is still warm enough for rapid germination, and statistically September is the wettest fall month. If it doesn't rain, a light sprinkling of your seeds **each day** until the young plants are about the size of a quarter (25 cents) can significantly increase your yield of wildflowers.

**September 21: 9 AM – 4 PM Tree and Shrub Identification – Class & Field Work – Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) training Session 2 at Riverside Nature Center.** Any TMN - Hill Country Chapter member may attend. **“Approved AT”** Please note that at the present time, there are no plans to hold this LMAP training series next year. For more information, contact Jim Stanley at [jpbstan@kctc.com](mailto:jpbstan@kctc.com).

**September 22: Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter- Board Meeting - Noon** at Riverside Nature Center. Chapter members may attend.

**September 27: Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter, “NASA”** by John Dietrich, at **6:30 PM** at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, Kerrville (*see article above*).

**September 28: 9 AM – 4 PM Cedar- Rainfall Interception, Methods of Removal– Wildlife Assessment, Deer & other wildlife management; Wildlife Evaluation – Land Management Assistance Program training Session 3 at Kerr County Cooperative Extension Office.** Any TMN - Hill Country Chapter member may attend. **“Approved AT”**

**September 28: “The “NICE” (Natives Instead of Common Exotics) Program** by Ann Black of NPSOT-Boerne Chapter at Native Plant Society of Texas, Fredericksburg Chapter at 7 PM. New meeting location for the rest of 2004 is Gillespie County Historical Society in Fredericksburg. For more information, see <http://www.npsot.org/Fredericksburg/>

**October 1: RNC & TMN Members Plant Pre-sale at Down By the Riverside Mostly Native Plant Sale**

**October 2:** [Down By the Riverside Mostly Native Plant Sale and Nature Festival](#), (see article below)

**October 5: 9 AM – 4 PM Field Trip: Grass & Forb ID & Collection and Tree & Shrub ID & Leaf Collection – Land Management Assistance Program training Session 4 at Kerr Wildlife Management Area.** Any TMN - Hill Country Chapter member may attend. For more information, contact Jim Stanley at [jpbstan@ktc.com](mailto:jpbstan@ktc.com) **“Approved AT”**

**October 5: 2 PM “Native Plants of the Llano Uplift”** by Mike McBride of NPSOT- Fredericksburg Chapter and former State NPSOT President at Native Plant Society of Texas - Kerrville Chapter at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville.

**October 7 - 9: Field Research Days** at Cibolo Nature Center. Volunteer and learn about prairie vegetation, grass and forb identification, small mammals, water snakes and more. More info should appear at [www.cibolo.org](http://www.cibolo.org).

**October 16: 9 AM to 3 PM "Hill Country Living 101: A Learning Opportunity for New Landowners": Session II: "Wildlife Management in the Hill Country"** organized by Roy Walston, Kerr County Extension Agent for Agriculture). Registration fees are \$30/session which includes lunch, refreshments and hand-outs. **You need to pre-register** if interested. There is a limit of 20 attendees. A brochure available at the Ag office on Rt.27 in Kerrville (near the Veterans' Hospital), or you can call the office at 257-6568. **“Approved AT” Editor’s Note: The first session is no longer a requirement for attending any other session.** The first session on Land Management, Soils, Ag Evaluation and a field trip on recognizing ecological sites and their characteristic vegetation was excellent.

**October 19: 9 AM – 4 PM Oak Wilt & Riparian Areas: Erosion control, Ponds & Streams – Land Management Assistance Program training Session 5 at Kerr County Cooperative Extension Office.** Any TMN - Hill Country Chapter member may attend. **“Approved AT”**

**October 22 – 24: Texas Master Naturalist 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Meeting & Advanced Training** See <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu/pdf/2004MeetingInfo.pdf> for more information. **Register before October 12 to avoid \$25 late fee!**

**October 25<sup>th</sup>: “Fall Wildflowers & Prairie Restoration”** by Janis Merritt, San Antonio Natural Resources Dept (previously at the San Antonio Botanical Garden) **9 AM - Noon** at Cibolo Nature Center. Learn how to start and maintain a wildflower meadow or a native grass and wildflower prairie on your property. **Cost:** \$10/member; \$15/member couple; Non-members: \$12/person; \$18/couple. (See top of Calendar section for Cibolo contact information for Registration.)

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Down By the Riverside Nature Festival

### and Mostly Native Plant Sale:

**When & Where:** **Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>** at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville

**What:** (Mostly) Native Tree and Plant Sale—**8 AM to 3 PM**

Nature Festival for the Entire Family---**10 AM to 3 PM**

**“Members Only” Plant Pre-Sale on Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup> 5 – 6:30 PM for Riverside &**

**TMN – Hill Country Chapter members** (shop early!....shop often!)

**Sponsors:** Riverside Nature Center and the Texas Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter

**Admission:** \$5 per family or \$3 for singles; no admission charge for plant sale only

On Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, we invite you to get “up close and personal” with the creatures who call the Hill Country home—bats, butterflies, insects, snakes, lizards, turtles, fish, and much more! Join us for a fun-filled day of informative talks and fun

workshops, canoe rides, special activities for the kids, demonstrations, entertainment, and good food!

The Mostly Native Plant Sale will focus on native trees and shrubs since October is the best time of year to plant trees and shrubs to allow them to grow throughout our mild winter and be better established to meet the challenges of our hot summer. There will be a large selection of native trees and plants for sale, including some less common trees, such as the **Anacacho Orchid Tree**, the fast-growing **Retama** tree which has small yellow flowers throughout the summer, the **Bigtooth Maple** for fall color, the **American Beautyberry** shrub with rings of brilliant purple berries in fall, and many more. Native perennials will also be available. We will have a limited number of a Hill Country native plant that has not been previously commercially available. The xeric **White Cordia** (also known as the Mexican Saucer Flower) has been propagated by Medina Garden Nursery (see Enquist, *Wildflowers of the Texas Hill Country* p. 153).

This year's event will offer several new activities:

Our Nature Festival for the entire family will feature hands-on displays of Hill Country critters, and experts to talk about them throughout the day, from 10 AM to 3 PM. Folks at the "**Mystery Leaves Table**" will again endeavor to identify any "mystery plants" growing on your property. Please bring a reasonable size piece of the plant (not just one or a few leaves). For woody plants, please bring a specimen at least a foot long, if possible. All specimens will benefit from being kept in a closed plastic bag with some wet paper.

Our **featured speaker** this year is birding expert, photographer, and columnist Bill Lindemann, who will present an outstanding program, "**Big Bend National Park: A Naturalist's Dreamland**," at **11 AM**. Come early to get a good seat!

Three informative one-hour workshops will include:

**10 AM "A Tree-Planting Demonstration"** by Dr. Robert Dewers, former Professor of Dendrology at Texas A&M

**1 PM "Discover the Secret Life of Native Seeds"** by the Riverside Nature Center Gleaners

**2 PM "Easy-to-Make Potpourri for Nature Lovers"** by Ann Rice.

At **noon**, don't miss the award-winning **Haile Family Storytellers** who have charmed audiences all over Texas, blending humorous folk tales, legends, stories, and songs for an hour of great entertainment. Bring your lunch or buy it on-site. We'll have hot dogs and sausages, and cold drinks for sale. For more information, call 830-257-4837.

## MASTER NATURALIST CERTIFICATIONS for 2004

We are pleased to report that **30%** of our 47 members have been certified or re-certified so far in 2004. Come to the September meeting to see who will be certified this month.

For the information of our prospective members and our Class of 2004, a Master Naturalist achieves certification by completing the 40 hours of required training, a minimum of 40 hours of approved volunteer service, and the minimum of 8 hours of approved Advanced Training within approximately one year. The Master Naturalist program encourages members to continue serving their communities, and continue their education by requiring a minimum of 40 hours of approved volunteer service, and a minimum of 8 hours of approved Advanced Training in each successive year to achieve recertification for that year.

## REFRESHMENTS

Thanks go to **Marilyn Murmann, Myrna Langford and Edna Platte** for the wonderful homebaked treats at our August meeting.

Refreshments for our September meeting will be provided by **Bob Ritchie** and **Kim Whitaker**.

Please send newsletter contributions and comments to your Editor, Priscilla Stanley at [jpbstan@ktc.com](mailto:jpbstan@ktc.com).