**LINDHEIMER MASTER NATURALISTS**

**BOARD MEETING**

**APRIL 25, 2016**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jim Teeling, Joel Dunnington, Rich Nielson, Kim Wright, Susan James, Rich Bradley, Val Lefebvre, Darlene Varga, Judy Brupbacher, Cheryl Trock

**GUESTS:** Marie Miller, Marilyn McFarland, Troy Luepke (county agent and advisor)

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6 PM.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Kim had sent out the March minutes for corrections. Corrections were made prior to this meeting. Joel moved that the March minutes be approved; Susan seconded. Motion passed and the minutes were approved.

**OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. **Treasurer---**Rich Nielson reported that the end balance for March was $8534.52 (see report). He said $78.75 will be going to the Meadows field trip cost. Jim said he has a receipt for $13.04 for donuts purchased for those who helped at Folk Fest. Rich told him that there is a form on the website that he can fill out for reimbursement.
2. **Vice President---**Joel submitted his committee report (see report). Joel missed the April chapter meeting and asked if the speaker was good. The consensus was that he was well received and informative. Susan did a good job conducting the meeting in his stead. Joel said as of today, there are only 7 people signed up for the Meadows trip on May 21.
3. **Past President-**--Rich Bradley reported that he still has a couple of spots for volunteers for Open House on May 14. The first shift will report at 8:30 AM and the second shift will leave at 2:30 PM. Overall we are in good shape and the Open House hopefully will be well attended and not rained out. The chapter does have 6 canopies for shade or rain, and Darlene said she has a personal one that we can use. Parking may be an issue; Cheryl said that at Earth Day, parking did become a problem.
4. **Communication-**--Susan reported that there was a journalist at the last chapter meeting. Michael Varhola is a free lance photographer and he has been added to the Communications Committee contact list. Carmen Horn (current class) will set us up for a press release. Skywarn training will be added to the Out and About opportunities as a result of the April speaker’s topic of devastating flood events of the Hill Country. Darlene mentioned that the picture of the Community Recognition Award presentation did appear in the Zeitung. The award was presented to Fran Hutchins, director of Bracken Cave Preserve, for the efforts of Bat Conservation International and Texas Nature Conservancy to purchase 1526 acres surrounding the cave in order to protect the fly zone of the bats. Susan said that a reminder has been sent out on Out and About about the change of meeting location for June. It will be held at Agrilife instead of TPML.
5. **Education---**Darlene reported that 2 students may have to drop out of the current class due to their school schedules at Texas State. They have until next year to make up any classes that they may miss. Darlene said that last year’s attendance at Earth Day was 168. This year’s was 230. There were not many people there during the last ½ hour. Val asked Cheryl who should report the Outreach numbers to VMS. Cheryl said that whoever was in charge of Earth Day would be responsible for reporting. Jennifer Hendren was the chairperson, so she will report those numbers (male/female and adult/youth).
6. **Membership-**--Cheryl reported that a member had asked about reporting the ethnicity to VMS. She said that VMS has removed it from their form (they only want male/female and adult/youth numbers), but some Agrilife chapters want those statistics reported. The issue is how do we go about determining someone’s ethnicity without asking them and possibly offending them. The VMS coordinator said to just leave the ethnicity blank when reporting the Outreach numbers. Cheryl said she had received the latest newsletter from State. It mentioned that there is a backlog of background checks, so it may be a while before all members have their checks done. However, Cheryl said that the next time she checked on the VMS, about 50% of our members had their checks completed. Cheryl said that some are still having problems choosing the correct opportunity on VMS to report their hours, but it is getting better. By reducing the number of choices, she hopes that VMS has become more user friendly. State audits are being done to see if chapters are reporting hours correctly. There will be no more required quarterly reports to State since the VMS system is ongoing and current. Cheryl sent out email reminders to a few members who have not reported any hours yet. She heard back from a couple of members. Thirteen members have not signed in or reported any hours. She said Brian told her that only 60 members recertified last year. If a member has not reported any hours in the last year, they are put on the Inactive list. But they only have to report one hour to be considered Active. Cheryl spoke with Cinde Thomas-Jimenez about who should receive a notice about the Canyon Dam’s 50th anniversary celebration. Sara Riggs will send an email out about it. Cheryl said that in order to receive your recertification pin at the chapter meeting, you must have reached the hours requirement and reported them by the 2nd of the month. Cheryl said that there were a handful of people who attended Earth Day who seemed interested in our chapter and might want to take the training. She did talk with Art Williams about the Outreach numbers for Earth Day and asked if he still wanted those numbers. The question is will the numbers he receives match up with the numbers reported to VMS at the end of the year?
7. **Outreach---**Since Pat Gonser has resigned, there is no chairperson.
8. **Projects---**Judy said that she had nothing new to report.

**COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS FROM TROY LUEPKE:**

Jim asked Marie how the website was going. She said there are some new options for formatting that should make the site better. He also mentioned that the pictures that William Suddith posted on the site were good. Jim said he received an email form David Reel about the proliferation of Bastard Cabbage, an invasive plant. Joel might consider having someone speak at a chapter meeting about Invasive Plants.

Rich Bradley said that he is on the Facilities Steering Committee that is trying to determine what additions and/or improvements can be made to the Agrilife property, such as more barns, larger meeting/class room facility, offices for the Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners, storage, etc. Comal County Judge Sherman Krause has met with the committee and he is on board for some of these suggestions. Comal county is the 7th fastest growing county in the United States. The internet is not up to par at the facility and needs updating.

Troy said that he is working with Robert Edmondson at Mystic Shores subdivision to present a series on Oak Wilt. There is a lot of interest in educating residents about this devastating disease. Troy also wants to conduct seminars for small acreage land owners between here and Blanco. These programs would be offered on Saturdays either every month or every other month.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Earth Day---**see report under Education.
2. **Open House---**see report under Past President’s report.
3. **Issue of background checks vs. Privacy---**Joel reported that he sent questions to Mary Pearl at State about their policy on certain aspects of the background checks. She answered only about 50% of them (see report). Others she did not know the answers. Cheryl said that background checks done on Master Naturalists will count for those who are also Master Gardeners. TPWD does the checks yearly at no cost to the member. There was a question about liability for the BOD if they remove a member because of a failed check. Insurance is not provided by Agrilife or TPWD. Rich N. said that our chapter purchased Directors and Officers insurance last year.
4. **New Outreach Chairperson-**--Since Pat has resigned as chair for this committee, the question came up about whether we really need to replace her before the end of the year. Coco had told Jim that she did not think it was necessary at this point in time. No one knew for sure if Pat had gone to the schools to line up the Traveling Trunks presentations. Darlene thinks that the teachers should be trained to use the trunks and then check them out when they want to teach a class, or we could just have the trunks on display at different festivals during the year.

**ADJOURN:** Darlene moved that the meeting be adjourned; Rich B. seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

**Next Meeting---**Monday, May 26, 2016 at 6 PM at Agrilife.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Wright, Secretary

Lindheimer Master Naturalists