



Photo ©John Davis

## President's Message



### Meet Your 2018 President, Rich Nielson

"I started my journey in Omaha, Nebraska. After I received my BSBA in Finance and my commission in the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, I began my adventures. My second permanent duty station, in London, England, is where I met the love of my life, Evelyn (2018 LMN Treasurer). We were married in December 1972. She is from California so when I finished active duty we headed west.

"I received my MBA from Cal State Fresno and then lived in Northern & Southern California, and Pennsylvania before moving to Texas in 1984. Along the way, I picked up a BS in Computer Science, spent 25 years in the IT industry, 15 years with Electronic Data System (EDS) and 10 years with IBM before retiring in 2010. I spent 27 years in the U.S. Army (2 active and 25 reserve) before retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.

"I joined the Master Naturalists in 2011. Marlin Brendsel was my class leader and mentor as we had similar military careers. I was previously the Treasurer from 2015-2017. I have chosen **Communication, Promotion and Education** as the theme for this year. We do a number of activities as Master Naturalists and need to promote what we do. To improve communication, we are revising the website and will begin to post the minutes from the Board Meetings so the membership can see what is being planned. We also need to give back to the community by providing education. With all the people moving to this area we need to help them take care of the land and environment."

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# 2018 LMN Officers & Committee Chairs



**Standing L-R:** Troy Luepke, Jim Doyle, Kim Wright, Jeanie Springer, Joel Dunnington, Brian Trock & Rich Nielson. **Sitting L-R:** Darlene Varga, Debbie Kyrouac, Evelyn Nielson, Marilyn McFarland. **Not pictured:** Craig Hensley. Photo ©William Suddith

## 2018 CHAPTER OFFICERS

**President** Rich Nielson  
**Vice President** Jim Doyle  
**Secretary** Kim Wright  
**Treasurer** Evelyn Nielson  
**Past President/TMN Rep** Joel Dunnington

**2018 Chapter Focus**  
**Communication - Promotion - Education**

## STANDING COMMITTEES

**Communication** - Marilyn McFarland  
**Education** - Deb Kyrouac; Mike Hammack  
**Membership & Records** - Brian Trock  
**Outreach** - Darlene Varga  
**Projects & Opportunities** - Jeanie Springer



## SUBCOMMITTEES

**Historian** - Marilyn McFarland, Peggy Haley  
**Newsletter** - Carmen Horn, MJ McFarland, Bill Suddith (Photos)  
**Out & About** - Sara Riggs  
**Publicity** - Marilyn McFarland  
**Social Media** - Jennifer Hendren/Marilyn McFarland/Marie Miller  
**Webmaster** - Marie Miller  
**Community Recognition** - Jim Doyle  
**Hospitality** - Joyce Doyle, Salty Brady  
**Program to Assist Landowners (PAL)** - Art Williams  
**Speakers Bureau** - Darlene Varga  
**Traveling Trunks** - Darlene Varga

## CHAPTER ADVISORS

Craig Hensley, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Guadalupe River State Park  
 Troy Luepke, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

# "ON SPRING"

by Carmen Horn

"In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."



Or so said Alfred, Lord Tennyson in his poem "Locksley Hall". Perhaps Tennyson makes a salient point because as our feathered and furry friends come out of hiding, humans often fall heir to a condition known as "spring fever". The symptoms are both psychological and physiological and include restlessness, a tendency to day-dream and an increased sexual appetite. Scientists say the exact causes are unknown but possibly hormone levels are increased due to more light, more exercise and more exposed skin.



This year the winter seemed unusually hard - both for folks in Texas and throughout the country. There were terrible storms and long periods of below freezing temperatures in some areas. And then those days were slowly replaced by the cool, moist mornings, often foggy with fragrant air that signaled that the worst of winter was past. Trees and plants began budding out and there were more birds, both indigenous and

migratory and the landscape began to turn green again. The first day of Spring is generally recognized as the Vernal Equinox (or March Equinox) deriving from the Latin equal *aequus* and *nox* night and referring to the almost equal duration of day and night. At the same time the Southern Hemisphere is having the Autumnal Equinox or going into Autumn. It generally falls between March 19 and 22. This year it was March 20th.



*Photos ©Carmen Horn. Clockwise: Carolina Jasmine, Mountain Laurel, and a Rose (by any other name...)*

CHAPTER MEETING - January 18, 2018  
"Backyard Bluebirds: Extending an Invitation"  
Craig Hensley, TPWD Park Ranger/Interpreter, GRSP

Craig Hensley provided the group of about 55 members with an introduction to bluebirds, including how to attract them to your property. Bluebirds are members of the thrush family (Turdidae), & the most common bluebird in the Hill Country area is the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*).



brilliant blue head and back



rusty throat and chest

back and head paler and rustier than male



back of tail bright blue

diet of berries & insects such as crickets, grasshoppers & seasonal cicadas, as well as spiders, worms & the occasional small lizard or tree frog. They forage mainly by perching low & fluttering down to the ground

to catch insects. They perch to eat berries - they will eat poisonous berries, so be careful what you plant (no nandina). Lifespan is about 6 - 8 years. We also learned about "fecal sacs", nature's way of keeping the nest clean & our vehicles in need of a wash!

The male sings & flutters with wings & tail partly spread for the female as a courtship display. Once mated, the pair (mostly the female) build a nest in a hollow tree, abandoned nests, or birdhouses, for 4 - 6 pale blue or white, eggs, which are laid one a day, then incubated for 12 - 14 days. Both parents bring food until fledging occurs (about 20 days). Bluebirds are tenacious, protective parents. They may have 2 - 3 broods annually.

Craig demonstrated a proper bluebird house (there are numerous ones) with tips on how to successfully attract bluebirds, prevent other birds from using the houses and minimize predation from snakes & raccoons. The best location for a bluebird house is on a pole in open areas with scattered trees (don't nail to a tree) away from fence lines.

There are a number of do's & don'ts for placing

bluebird houses (don't face them west or southwest is one). For further information on how to extend an invitation to bluebirds, go to the Texas Bluebird Society at [texasbluebirdsociety.org](http://texasbluebirdsociety.org)



CHAPTER MEETING – February 15, 2018  
CEMEX: Development of a nature habitat  
Adam Slusser, Operations Manager – Balcones Quarry Aggregates



Adam Slusser, Operations Manager, spoke on the nature habitat under development on the grounds of the CEMEX Balcones Quarry on Wald Road in New Braunfels. Many thanks to Adam for an interesting discussion!

If you were unable to attend the meeting, please go to the following to review the slide show:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/tgggypxnnbo7xjc/2018%20February%20-%20Master%20Naturalists.pptx?dl=0>

CHAPTER MEETING – March 15, 2018  
Social Media and the LMN Chapter  
Rich Nielson/MJ McFarland

The showing of the film "History of the Lindheimer Chapter" with Art Williams has been rescheduled for later in the year. There were three of the founding members of LMN who were presented at the meeting, and their contributions to the early chapter were detailed. David Will was part of the team that took participation in the Texas Master Naturalist Program from conception to reality in Comal County. Mary B. Wenzel was in the very first class and very active for many years. Darlene Welge was the first president of the Chapter – while she was a student in the first class! We have these three, among others, to thank for beginning and nurturing the LMN chapter into the very productive group it is today. Thank you!

Our presentation was on "Social Media and the LMN Chapter." LMN uses Facebook as our daily communication, to communicate last minute changes, to reinforce the Out & About Calendar events, and to highlight LMN activities, including fabulous photos!!

Marilyn demonstrated a number of features of Facebook to the group. Please send any photos or articles for Facebook, the newsletter or our scrapbook to Marilyn at [mcfarland1953@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mcfarland1953@sbcglobal.net).

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!



Lindheimer Chapter Texas...  
212 likes  
Liked Send Message

**Earth Day**  
FREE & OPEN To The Public! FUN for the Whole Family!  
Meet Keps of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Heritage Museum  
Learn about native grass, rainwater collection, bee keeping and more!  
**2018**  
Saturday, April 21 ~ 10:00 am to 2:00 pm  
Tye Preston Memorial Library

More than 20 Exhibitors  
"Dirt Fainting" activities  
Skins & Skulls  
Birding

Hands-on activities for kids  
Face Painting  
Butterflies  
Fossils

TEXAS  
Master Naturalist  
Texas Master Naturalist

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Where books are only the beginning.  
16311 South Access Road,

# Let's Build a Trail!

## Article & Photos by John Davis



Comal Trails Alliance began a new trail project in the Spring of 2017 at the 9.67 acre Canyon Lake Area Chamber of Commerce property. The trail, which needs a proper name, is the first project that CTA has undertaken starting from a clean slate. When completed, the loop trail will likely be slightly less than a mile in length with the main trailhead located by the parking lot. Additional spur trails to access points along Village Lake Drive and Skyline Drive may also be developed.

On a May 2017 weekend, S & S Trail Services, LLC instructed volunteers from Lindheimer Chapter Master Naturalists, CTA, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, and visiting trail builders from Laredo.



On Saturday, participants spent the day at Tye Preston Memorial Library learning theory about sustainable trail building practices. A quick walk around the Library Trail demonstrated many of the concepts presented in class. On Sunday morning, 25 volunteers met at the Chamber of Commerce site (3934 FM 2673 Canyon Lake, TX) for hands on instruction. Before any trail building could begin, volunteers cut a corridor through a dense area of Junipers. In groups of two, participants then learned to use a clinometer while flagging the trail route.

In a few hours time, volunteers learned to work safely in groups cutting in a new trail using pick, rake, mcleod, pulaski, and other implements. "Respect the Circle of Death", the words of instructor Ryan Spates are now etched into the minds of the participants. Eighty man-hours of work later, 450 feet of a new trail had been created.

Since the workshop CTA has held 13 additional workdays contributing about 160 volunteer hours. Reconnaissance of the site and planning, flagging trail, and thinning juniper required 5 workdays. Following 8 build days, an additional 1350 feet of trail has been created. Many more hours of work lay ahead, but the opportunity to create a sustainable trail while training volunteers in the process is well worth the effort.

Comal Trails Alliance workdays are posted on the Out and About Calendar. Other CTA projects include the Tye Preston Memorial Library Trail, Panther Canyon Trail, and the Dry Comal Creek Trail. Comal Trails Alliance is 501c3 organization dedicated to creating a system of trails connecting communities and providing opportunities for education, health, and enjoyment of the natural resources located within Comal Co. CTA advocates for continued development of local trails, active transportation, and healthy living in Comal Co. and neighboring communities.



Website: [www.comaltrails.org](http://www.comaltrails.org)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/comaltrailsalliance/>





**Recertifications & Volunteer Hour Milestones**  
 Thank you LMN Volunteers,  
 for your dedication & service to our natural world!

**December 2017**  
**Recertifications -**  
 Melissa Skasik  
**N2Nature Double Certification**  
 Cynthia Dewitt, Harry Ferrell  
**Volunteer Milestones**  
**250 Hours - James Doyle**

Please note: Some of the folks pictured are receiving pins from previous months.



**January 2018**  
**Recertifications - Ocelot Pin**  
 Susan Bogle, Rich Bradley, Brian Trock  
**Volunteer Milestones**  
**250 Hours - Joyce Doyle**  
 Don Fletcher  
**500 Hours - Joel Dunnington,**  
 Marilyn McFarland  
**1,000 Hours - James Jameson**

**February 2018**  
**Recertifications - Ocelot Pin**  
 Ellen Anderson, Don Berquist, Edith Berquist, John Davis, Jim Doyle, Joel Dunnington, Laird Ingham, Jim Jameson, Valerie Lefebvre, Lisa Marler, Mary Mathey, Marilyn McFarland, Lois Ricci, Bill Sewell, Jeanie Springer, Teresa Turko, Darlene Varga, Art Williams  
 (not all are pictured)



# Earth Day

FREE & OPEN  
To The Public!



FUN for the  
Whole Family!

Meet Reps of the  
Army Corps of Engineers  
and the Heritage Museum

## 2018

Learn about native grass,  
rainwater collection,  
bee keeping and more!

Saturday, April 21 ~ 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

### Tye Preston Memorial Library

More than 20 Exhibitors  
“Dirt Painting” activities  
Skins & Skulls  
Birding

Hands-on activities for kids  
Face Painting  
Butterflies  
Fossils



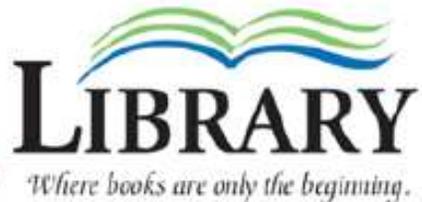
T E X A S



Texas Master Naturalist,  
Lindheimer Chapter  
[www.txmn.org/lindheimer](http://www.txmn.org/lindheimer)



TYE PRESTON MEMORIAL



16311 South Access Road,  
Canyon Lake, TX 78133  
830.964.3744 ~ [www.tmpl.org](http://www.tmpl.org)



# Master Naturalists-in-Training 2017-2018

## "The Mud Daubers"

by Mike Hammack, Co-Chair, Education Committee



The Lindheimer Chapter has been enriched with a new class of aspiring Master Naturalists, "The Mud Daubers." The 33 members of the Class of 2017-2018 have quickly exhibited a keen interest in learning about the plants, birds and wildlife of the region; quite a few of them bring a wealth of previous experience & knowledge.



The Mud Daubers during an initial class meeting.  
Photo ©Dick Scarbrock

Like their predecessors in earlier classes, many members of the class are relatively new to the area. They are taking the class as an opportunity to learn more about developing and caring for their new homes and surroundings by understanding the natural environment. Based on the

volunteer hours reported, the new class members are already enthusiastically playing a constructive role working to help preserve and protect the natural beauty of our community.



The Mud Daubers on their field trip to Gault Archeological Laboratory.  
Photo ©Dick Scarbrock

Debbie Kyrouac, Co-Chair for the Education Committee sponsoring the new class said, "My favorite part about being education co-chair is meeting our newest group of enthusiasts and helping them embark on their journey."

In addition to their initial orientation, they have participated in classes on Ecological Concepts, Archeology, and Botany. On 12

January, the new class conducted their first field trip to the Gault Archeological Laboratory on the campus of Texas State University in San Marcos.

The Mud Daubers have quickly organized themselves for their class project, Earth Day 2018 at the Tye Preston Memorial Laboratory. All initial indications are that they will match or exceed the successes of earlier classes. They are assisted in this effort by Joe and Jane Finneran from the Lindheimer Chapter who are serving as the Senior Mentors for the effort, as well as many of the key committee chairpersons from last year's class.

Kristin Martinez, the Class President commented, "I feel we have a very strong and diverse group and I, for one, am very excited to see what each person brings to this year's Earth Day."

**LMN Members:** At the next chapter meeting or voluntary service project, please take the opportunity to welcome these new members. They are truly enriching our chapter by their contributions.



## ...and speaking of "*Mud Daubers*" by MJ McFarland



Perhaps you've never really thought about mud daubers very much, or when you have, it's because you've found one of their "mud huts" in an inconvenient place. You probably don't realize how amazing &

beneficial are these members of Order Hymenoptera.

For example, take a look at the species *Sceliphron caementarium*, the black & yellow mud dauber about an inch long, common in Texas. As a Hymenopterian, it has a stinger, so most folks are only concerned with the rear end of *S. caementarium*. Not to fear - mud daubers are docile, solitary wasps (meaning each nest has only one wasp responsible for all the necessary tasks), do not defend their nests & are rarely aggressive. Their rare stings aren't medically significant, causing little pain or swelling. They have a much smaller amount of venom than social wasps & bees. Their mild venom lacks the antigenic components responsible for pain, swelling and anaphylactic reactions. This is because - unlike most wasps and bees who use venom for defense - *S. caementarium* uses venom to paralyze spiders, which doesn't require all those components.

This thin-waisted wasp is a truly fearsome spider hunter with a rather gruesome feeding habit. Once a female *S. caementarium* has mated (male mud daubers survive mating, unlike bees) she will construct a mud nest of one or more cells under an



overhang or in almost any place which provides shelter & a nearby supply of mud & spiders. When the first brood cell has been constructed, she goes on a spider safari to provision the cell. Each captured spider is injected with venom near the sub-esophageal ganglion (ouch!). The venom creates a non-reversible *living* paralysis, removing the spider's ability to move while keeping it alive until the larva is ready for the banquet. The

female lays one egg on the first spider captured, then hunts more spiders until the cell is packed with up to 25, at which time she caps it off with more mud. When the egg hatches, it eats every bit of the spiders, including legs & exoskeletons (waste not, want not) and pupates into an adult. Adults (who live about a year) feed mostly on nectar (with some spider hemolymph) - but the larvae can only survive on fresh spider meat. The male dauber guards the nest against parasites & predators until the cells are being capped, and then mom & pop are done with their reproductive & child care responsibilities.

When *Sceliphron* babies emerge & leave the nest, along comes *Chalybion californicum*, the blue mud dauber that truly just daubs mud - they don't build, only remodel nests with new mud. Here's a reason to love *Chalybion californicum*: It specializes in *black widow spiders* as baby food! ("Yum!" say the baby Blue daubers. "We eat the red spot first!")

Mud daubers like human habitats because there is an abundance of shelter, spiders & mud to be found. They can become nuisances when they build large nests in inconvenient places - for example, your vehicle engine or over your front door. Their pest value seems to be mostly aesthetic. However, when I think of fewer black widow spiders (no offense if you love them), I leave those little mud huts alone. It seems small enough price to pay for these natural, organic, and free spider hunters extraordinaire! P.S. Never swat at flying things with stingers - that's a declaration of war!



# CHAPTER INFORMATION



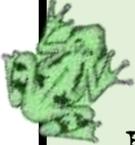
## 2018 CHAPTER OFFICERS

President Rich Nielson  
 Vice President Jim Doyle  
 Secretary Kim Wright  
 Treasurer Evelyn Nielson  
 Past President/TMN Rep Joel Dunnington



## STANDING COMMITTEES

Communication - Marilyn McFarland  
 Education - Deb Kyrouac; Mike Hammack  
 Membership & Records - Brian Trock  
 Outreach - Darlene Varga  
 Projects & Opportunities - Jeanie Springer



## SUBCOMMITTEES

### Communication Subcommittees

Historian - Marilyn McFarland, Peggy Haley  
 Newsletter - Carmen Horn, Editor;  
 MJ McFarland, Asst.; Bill Suddith, Photography  
 Out & About - Sara Riggs  
 Publicity - Marilyn McFarland  
 Social Media - Jennifer Hendren  
 Webmaster - Marie Miller

### Outreach Subcommittees

Trunks - Darlene Varga  
 PAL - Art Williams  
 Speaker's Bureau - Darlene Varga

### VP Subcommittees

Community Recognition - Jim Doyle  
 Hospitality - Joyce Doyle, Salty Brady

## Chapter Advisors

**Craig Hensley**  
 Texas Parks & Wildlife  
 Guadalupe River State Park



**Troy Luepke**  
 Texas A&M AgriLife  
 Extension Service

Chapter Meetings - 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
 5:45 Social, 6:15 Speaker  
 Tye Preston Memorial Library

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### Upcoming Meetings

April 19 "American Badgers"  
 Pamela Owen  
 May 17 "Hummingbird Hotspot"  
 Kathleen Scott  
 Jun 21 "Woody Plants of the Texas  
 Hill Country"  
 Craig Hensley

LMN Board Meetings  
 4<sup>th</sup> Monday 5:00-6:00  
 AgriLife Building



## LMN HOSPITALITY

Many thanks to Joyce Doyle, Hospitality  
 Head, and the LMN members  
 who volunteer to feed us  
 such delicious food.  
**Wow! Earn 1 VH**  
**by bringing**  
**refreshments!**



### January

Don Epps, Gretchen Ferrell, Harry  
 Ferrell, Marilyn Garrison, Marie  
 Miller, Evelyn Nielson, Art Williams

### February

Joel Dunnington, Gretchen Ferrell,  
 Harry Ferrell, Nancy Fitzpatrick,  
 Gloria Glass, Jane Schnell,  
 Brian Trock

### March

Martha Bersch, Carmen Horn,  
 Laird Ingham, Debbie Kyrouac,  
 Al Steger, Debbie Subke

