



Midland Master Naturalists Newsletter

LLANO ESTACADO CHAPTER

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New 2010 class begins as largest yet

Expecting to brave the cold morning weather and glad to have a nicer-than-expected start, the fourth group of Master Naturalists gathered in the Sibley Center Jan. 9. Several in the crowd had responded to Burr Williams' latest article in The Midland Reporter-Telegram and had joined in the previous three days. Twenty-seven sat in the room and quietly visited while Past-president

Sammy Hunnicutt and President Chris Cherry counted heads and took care of business. Then Burr Williams began their journey into the eight habitats in Texas.

That afternoon, although it was cold it wasn't windy or wet, the group went outside and hunted for plants to take to Burr to name and to talk about. He added stories to make the learning more memorable.



On their first outside venture, the 2010 class finds plants for Burr Williams to name and describe. While hunting for their assignments, class members kept an eye on thrashers, mockingbirds, and desert cardinals in the mesquite brush.
Photo by Kent Ivy

The next meeting is 9 a.m. Feb. 6 and the group will study the Mesquite brushland habitat in the morning. The afternoon advanced training about Ethnobotany has been canceled. Bring a sack lunch!

I-20 pond cleanup scheduled

Earn volunteer hours and help the environment by working a trail-clearing

along the north side of the I-20 pond. (The pond is between Midkiff and Warehouse Road.)

Meet at the pumpjack at 9:30 a.m. Bring gloves, loppers, hand pruners, rakes, and big trash bags. Email Chris Cherry at cherrycw@sbcglobal.net to let him know that you'll be there.



The Jan. 9, 2010, Master Naturalist class

Arachnophobes, beware!

First Art Show begins with photography display

Refusing to look at the photo, the teenager put her hand up to ward off the effects of -- the spider.

"You know I hate spiders, and I don't want to look at the picture," she said emphatically when taken to view her father's work on display at the Sibley Center. She walked away.

Several people have commented on the pictures by Chris Cherry, now up for the public to see, but the negative reaction was unexpected.

"There are a lot of talented and creative people out there, and most people don't see that in themselves: Chris included!" Michael Nickell said. He is in charge of the display. "I have had two people in the course of one week make comments to me about how professional Chris's photos look!"

Nickell said he has no official name for the display, but that there are two areas he plans to use. One is on a folding floor display wall in the main lobby and the other is in the auditorium where there are spotlights.

"In time I hope to open up and have display space in all Sibley rooms," Nickell said. He hopes to have the facilities to display safely both 2-D and 3-D work. He would like to enlarge the project to include any type of visual art media such as



drawings, paintings, prints, sculpture, etc.

The purpose, Nickell said, is to provide an opportunity for people affiliated with the Sibley Nature Center to "exhibit their creative works." The project is open to the Master Naturalists, Permian Basin Outing Club, Junior Master Gardeners, Camera Club, Midland Naturalists, Mustang Draw Woodcarvers, Midland Gem and Mineral Society, Urban 4-H, Midland Archaeological Society ... "and I apologize to any group I may have left out," he said.

The art of course belongs to the individual artist, and, as with any art show, the artist is responsible for the cost of their prints, canvas, paper, paints, mats, framing, etc.

"I have the tools to cut mats, so there is a considerable savings by not having to go through a frame shop," Nickell said. "I plan on expanding my services to include cutting and assembling simple frame molding. The artist provides the materials; Sibley (through me) provides the labor."

He said his main concern is quality. When he asked Burr Williams if he had any recommendations of artists, Cherry was one of his top choices.

"I do feel that there should be some emphasis that fits with the mission of the Sibley Nature Center, though. But I feel that there is ample wiggle room. I don't feel that it is necessary to have shows that are strictly representational, either," he said. Nickell is responsible for acceptance, content, and display.

He said he had seen displays like this at art festivals, art centers, craft

fairs and such.

"The difference is, I want everyone to have their own individual show without the additional pressure that they might feel as though they were in a competition. This is not a competition, and there is certainly no prize money involved," Nickell said.

He encouraged people to contact him at the Sibley Nature Center at 684-6827 or to email him at michael@sibleynaturecenter.org. He expects that a show will run six to eight weeks before being changed out.

But, if you are afraid of spiders, you may want to wait for the next show, or at least be forewarned, and concentrate on the photos of the bird and butterflies.

Submit your story or photo essay for a future newsletter! We would like an article about an organism or plant, photos of people at work for the MNs, or other information pertaining to the Master Naturalists! Send your ideas or information to Barbara Cherry at cherrytree@sbcglobal.net. We are also looking for a less generic name for this newsletter!