



Chapter News

December 2024

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Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Contact us at:

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

TMN programs serve all people without regard to socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Cover photo shared by Patty Brinkmeyer
White Ibis on parade, seen at BNWR during the 2023 Christmas Bird Count.

President's Message



"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John F. Kennedy

As we come to the end of the year, I want to extend a **HUGE THANK YOU** to all of you for your commitment to and support of our natural areas and the various activities of **YOUR Chapter**. Together, we have truly made a difference in the conservation of our natural areas as well as in the minds and hearts of many of our fellow Brazoria County residents. Our work, individually and together, is a blessing to the community that will carry on long after we are gone.

On behalf of your Board, I want to wish all of you a restful, peaceful Thanksgiving and Christmas season. I hope you will enjoy time with your family and friends, and that you will find time to enjoy our wonderful outdoors.

When I joined the Texas Master Naturalist™ program in 2019, I had no idea what adventures were in store for me on this never-ending journey. I am truly grateful for your hours, your insights, your knowledge, your stories, and most of all, for your friendship. I can't wait for see what new adventures that are to come!!!

Please plan to attend our next Chapter meeting on Wednesday, December 11th at 9:00 am. Social time is at 8:30 am. Elections will be held at this meeting, and we encourage nominations from the floor. I hope to see you there, and **BRING A FRIEND!!!**

Thank you for all you do for our area, and see you soon, **OUTSIDE!!!!**

Kathy Pittman

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. - Clarissa Pinkola Estes

<https://facebook.com/TMN.COT>

<https://txmn.org/tmncot/>

December Chapter Meeting

The December 11 General Meeting will be a hybrid:

Attend in person at the Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, TX, or virtually via e-mail invite. Visitors and guests are welcome.

8:30 – 9:00 am	Social Time and Refreshments
9:00 – 9:15 am	Welcome and Awards
9:15 – 10:15 am	Speaker: John Boettiger Advanced Training: “A hands-on experience with Whitetail Deer (and other critters) in Texas” <i>(Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting)</i>
10:15 – 11 am	General Membership Meeting <i>(Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting)</i>
11 am – 10 pm	19th Annual Hog-Wild Holiday Feast <i>See details on page 15</i>



Speaker - John Boettiger
Texas Master Naturalist (EST 2002)

Born in San Antonio, Texas
Grown on Central Texas Cattle Ranch
In Brazoria County since 1977

Nature/Public Access Service Project



Oron Adkins, George Valadez, Tom Taroni, Marlon Nation

Shared by Kathy Pittman

These guys are AWESOME!
They installed approximately 200 feet of landscape edging around the Wildscape area at [Delores Fenwick Nature Center](#) in Pearland. [Brazoria County Master Gardeners](#) and [Texas Master Naturalists Cradle of Texas Chapter](#) have been working together to revitalize this wonderful habitat.

Thank you, Oron, George, Tom and Marlon for your hard work and dedication to our parks and natural areas.

Visit this park in Pearland.
It's a real jewel!



Natural Resource Management Service Project



SEED COLLECTING ON THE NASH PRAIRIE

November 15, 2024

*Led by Susan Conaty
Photos by Angela Griffin*

Cradle of Texas and Coastal Prairie Master Naturalists, Coastal Prairie Conservancy, Native Prairie Association of Texas, Native Plant Society of Texas, Galveston Bay Foundation, Houston Audubon, USFW, The Nature Conservancy, Bayou City Parks Board and some other private and public individual projects, all with a mission of expanding Prairie and Native plants.

Specific projects for Brazoria County are for a prairie restoration project at The Nature Conservancy's Brazos Woods Preserve in East Columbia, and USFW Eagle Nest Lake Restoration Project.





Learn more about the [Nash Prairie Preserve](#)



Outreach Opportunities

Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge – Open House December 26th – January 1st ; contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

Public Outreach Director - Text, phone, or email [Ruby Lewis](#); ph. 979.583.7903

TMN-COT Calendar <https://txmn.org/tmncot/events>

Volunteer Opportunities

Christmas Bird Counts – Upper Texas Coast Locations (Field Research) December 14th – 20th.

See TMN-COT calendar for locations and contact info. <https://txmn.org/tmncot/events/month/2024-12/>

Beach Sweep – Monday, December 2 (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Quintana Jetty; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas (jimmy.salinas217@gmail.com; msluhu@gmail.com)

Exploration Green Workday – every Wednesday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm; contact [Christie Taylor](#)

Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project – self-directed; Cleanup of Brazoria County public beaches or other public places and recording data to the CleanSwell app. Contact partner [Brazoria County Parks](#)

Nurdle Beach Patrol – self-directed; <https://www.nurdlepatrol.org/app/>

Brazoria County Comprehensive Spider Survey – self-directed; contact [Melanie Hollenshead](#)

Adopt-a-Loop for TMN – self-directed; contact [Debbie Nance](#)

TMN-COT iNaturalist Data Collection Project; contact [Amanda Gabehart](#)

2025 Proposed Officer Slate

Voting will take place at the December General meeting

President	Kathy Pittman
Vice President	Jimmy Salinas
Secretary	Kathy Purvis
Treasurer	Don Sabathier

Committee Members: Jimmy and Luanne Salinas, Tara Lawrence, Barbara Whaley, Mickey Dufilho

Still need AT?

[Click Here](#)

to access past presentations

For advanced training!

Note: Only 2024 presentations will count towards AT for 2024.

Field Research / Citizen Science

Contributed by Angela Griffin

Do you love Blacklight Nights (Sometimes called Mothing)? Two of our members are enthusiastically involved with Bioblitzes and Blacklight Nights in the area counties. Angela Griffin and Amanda Gabehart can often be found at these opportunities ready to provide scientific data and/or outreach regarding insects and other night creatures! Recently they participated in a **Blacklight Night** at **Brazos Bend State Park** with the "Moth Posse" on October 19 during the Pollinator Bioblitz. If you are interested in joining in any of these activities, you can contact [Angela](#) or [Amanda](#) for more information. We visit various locations throughout the year, some near some farther!

One regular event is Moonlit Moth Mania at Exploration Green - it's held monthly on 2nd Saturdays. NOTE: Location alternates between Diana Lane and Bay Area Blvd. "Odd" months (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov): 16203 Diana Ln, Houston, TX 77062 (park in main parking lot and walk downhill) "Even" months (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec): 2201 Bay Area Blvd., Houston, TX 77058 (EG Phase 5) You also can check [Rednat](#) (Mary Spoyler with Coastal Prairie chapter) Journal in iNaturalist for updated information.



Angela Griffin and Amanda Gabehart



MOONLIT MOTH MANIA

at Exploration Green

Come out and discover the biodiversity of insect life at EG. There are so many more critters other than Moths. Learn how to confirm identification and track what we have found over time. Hosted by local Texas Master Naturalists. The family friendly event is appropriate for all ages.

Children often enjoy finding and catching specimens for observation and release. While adults can be a part of our citizen science team as we discover and document species new at EG. These events take place on the second Saturday of the month, weather permitting, start at sunset and will last for about two hours.



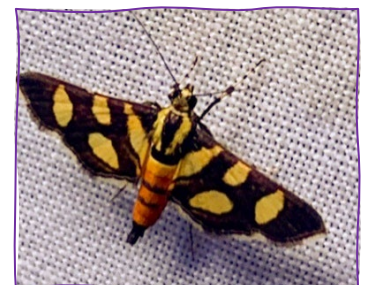
Mantidfly



Emerald Moth



Cucumber Moth



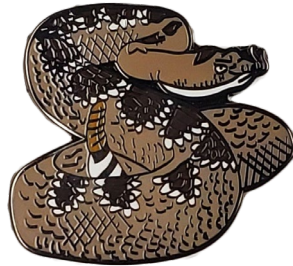
Red Waisted Florella Moth

Certifications September and October

Congratulations to all!

Initial Certifications

Sarah Castillo
Emily Matula
Donna Rich
Betty Taylor
Nicole Lochmann
Katie Maddox



2024 Pin

John Boettiger, Membership Director

Recertifications

Patty Brinkmeyer
Kimberly Calhoun
Mel McKey
Ken Sluis
Linda Sluis
Betty Taylor



Kathy Pittman, Katie Maddox,
Nicole Lochmann, Donna Rich, Betty Taylor

Milestones

Barbara Whaley
500 Hours!



Photos by Richard Schaffhausen



Kathy Pittman, Patty Brinkmeyer, Betty Taylor,
Barbara Whaley, John Boettiger

Outreach



On November 1st, Kathy Pittman and Scott Brown represented TMN-COT at the [Keep Pearland Beautiful](#) 20th Annual Plant Thyme Fall Luncheon

On November 14th, members shared Ruby's Reptiles with students and families at Freeport Elementary for their STEM Family Science Night. It was well attended, and the students loved the critters. A highlight of the evening was a young autistic boy that made multiple trips back to see the turtles. His dad said he never interacts like that, and he was clearly beaming!



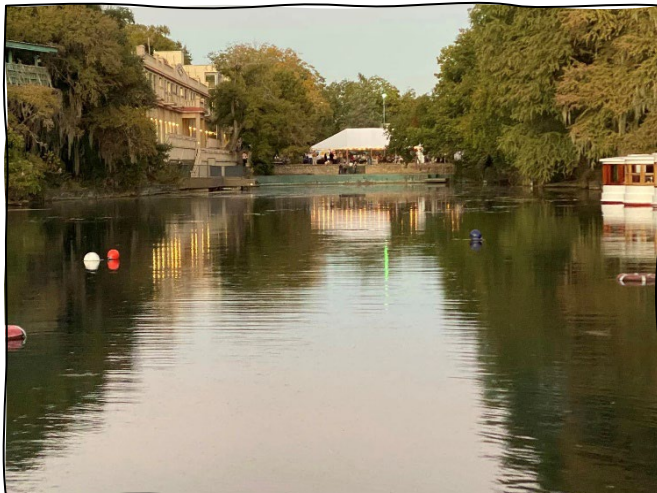
Patty Brinkmeyer, Lisa Glover, Ed Barrios, Layna Lewis, Cris Tabola, Ruby Lewis

2024 TMN Annual State Meeting

Mickey Dufilho reports: We had a great time in San Marcos and surrounding areas. There were 142 classroom presentations and 32 field sessions. I personally attended field trips to Bamberger ranch (fabulous- one of my bucket list items), Westcave Preserve, Meadows Center and a tour of all the facilities at the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State university including the human decomposition site. Fascinating!!!! I also attended 9 training classes.



Above: Cradle of Texas attendees are L to R, Angela Griffin, Susan Conaty, Kristine Rivers, Mickey Dufilho, Connie Stolte, Kathy Pittman, John O'Connell



Eastern Cicada Killer

By Marlon Nation, Training Class Representative 2023



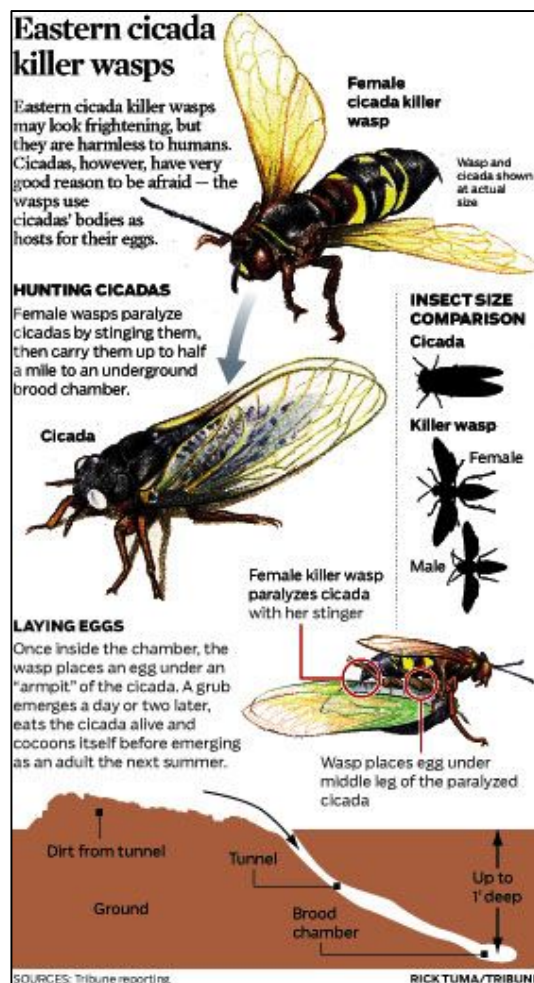
A couple of years ago, my family and I were traveling West on Highway 6 in Northern Brazoria County, TX. When suddenly our family banter was interrupted with a loud “crack!” It sounded like a rock had hit the windshield. My wife being shaken, shouted “What is that!”, and instinctively tried to apply the non-existent brakes on the passenger side of the truck, pressing her back deeper into the seat. We had taken on a passenger, and it was alive.

I looked over expecting to see a cracked windshield. Instead, I saw one of the largest wasps that I have ever seen in my life. The word “massive” is appropriate. In hindsight when thinking of my wife’s question, the nerd in me would like to have said, “You know, that looks like a (*Sphecius speciosus*) aka “Eastern Cicada Killer.” However, at the time, I had no idea. I saw a magnificent insect, brilliant in form and color, like nothing I had seen before. It was about 2 inches long with black and yellow markings. It was probably my imagination, but it seemed angry and dangerous. In a moment of brilliance and amateurish insight all I could say was, “That’s a huge wasp!” My wife used more colorful language to describe it, but you probably won’t find her description in any insect guide.

This insect had become wedged beneath the windshield wiper blade. And for about 10 seconds it struggled for freedom and survival, but it was stunned, stuck, and fighting against a 50 mile per hour headwind. I thought, there is no way it’s going to escape. After deciding against turning on the windshield wiper to remove it, I looked for a place to pull over. I didn’t have a plan, but anything was better than a wife demanding immediate action. Then suddenly, just as soon as it appeared it was gone. Amazingly, it had worked its way free. Despite the impact, headwind and the clutches of a wiper blade, this creature had managed to escape. Displaying a remarkable will to live.

Today, even as a Master Naturalist I don’t pretend to be an expert when it comes to insect identification. Sure, I’ve learned a systematic way to identify some insects. I’m now familiar with terms like; “Arthropoda”, “hind and forewings”, “spiracle”, “thorax”, and “abdomen,” but that was not the case a couple of years ago. After that experience, I searched various insect guides to determine what this thing was. It stuck with me, but I had no pictures and was working from memory. Still seeking answers, a couple of weeks after the encounter, I asked my wife if she could remember what it looked like and at that point our fading memories suggested that it could have been anything from a bumble bee to a hummingbird.

Recently, in a remarkable coincidence, I opened my front door on a balmy summer morning and there on the storm door glass was.... something. A bug? A wasp? The angle and glare made identification difficult, and I couldn’t be sure. There were similarities to the wasp we faced a couple of years ago but with some differences. Although the markings were similar, this insect was smaller, it’s disposition calmer and it seemed exhausted. I quickly grabbed my phone and tried not to disturb it as I moved closer. It waited patiently as I took up different positions and there it was. My thoughts this time were those of a Master Naturalist. I thought, is this another, “Eastern Cicada Killer?” They’re not rare, but another encounter, especially under these circumstances, would be serendipitous to say the least. I took a couple of pictures, then my thoughts moved to capture. This time I had a plan, maybe not the best but one I thought was workable. *Continued next page...*



Remembering the strength of the first wasp, I awkwardly moved closer with collection tools that I wouldn't recommend to anybody. Motivated by interest, and inquiry, I captured this specimen. And now, with the benefit of research, study, "iNaturalist," "Google lens", and various other reference material I can say with a reasonable amount of certainty that it was indeed another (*Sphecius speciosus*) aka, "Eastern Cicada Killer."



The world of a Naturalist is interesting. Always providing new discoveries, ideas, and experiences. This experience has taken me into a world of various ideas, opinions, and debates. After this capture, I realized the debate concerning ethics and the morality of killing insects. In essence the logic of "taking life to study life." Honestly, I had never considered it, but many have. It's one that I still haven't resolved. There are many positions and considerations in this argument. But the beauty of education is the ability to consider different opinions and distilling those into a solution that works best for your personal philosophy, goals, and objectives. For me, it's an ongoing process.

I've always held creation in awe, which is why I'm a Master Naturalist. However, my appreciation for our shared natural world continues to grow. Nature's interconnectedness and intricacies are a gift if we would slow down, look, and listen. Her surprises, serenity, simplicities, and sometimes violence are an unfolding wonder. I can better appreciate the "universe" in a drop of pond water as well as the mysteries of migrating Monarch butterflies. Even as a Naturalist I don't completely understand any of it, but I can appreciate all of it. Nature offers its delicacies, but to fully realize them, your appetite must be wetted with humility, a sense of wonder and a spirit of inquiry.

Impact Data 2024

		Sept	Oct	YTD
Hours*	VT	835	545	12,296
	AT	103	183	2,040
	Total	938	728	14,336

Impact Data*	Adults	468	46	8,417
	Youth	810	0	25,469
	Total	1,278	46	33,886

*will not be considered final until mid-December 2024

Dave Brandes, Data Manager

Entomology Corner

Those Pesky Silverfish

By Barbara Whaley



Silverfish (scientific name: *Lepisma saccharina* Linnaeus) are found worldwide but are most commonly found in North America, Europe, China, Japan and the Hawaiian Islands. They have a voracious appetite for materials high in starches, glue and cellulose such as paper. It is a common pest in libraries and museums where paper books and labels are abundant. It is also found outdoors under rocks, leaf litter, in caves and in ant nests.

Silverfish are silver or pearl-gray in color with a body covered in tiny glistening scales. The scales are often described as fish-like, hence, the name silverfish. They are wingless and about .33 inches in length and have two long antennae. The body is wide at the head and tapers down to the posterior end where three long appendages with bristles are found. One of these appendages continues straight back from the end of the body and the other two curve out to the left and right. Silverfish are nocturnal and rarely seen in the daytime unless disturbed from their resting places. I have seen them during the day, but most likely turning on the light disturbed their little nap.

Silverfish are found in high humidity environments with temperatures between 72 degrees F to 81 degrees F and can survive a wide range of temperatures (Hello! 100 degrees Texas). They are usually found indoors in concealed, temperature-controlled areas such as bathrooms, attics and basements. When discovered or disturbed, they will dart away quickly to conceal themselves, making them difficult to catch.

Silverfish are in one of the simplest, least evolved orders of insects, the Zygentoma. The first immature insects that hatch from the eggs resemble miniature versions of adults. They molt six or seven times until they reach their adult, sexually mature stage. The silverfish does not have a fixed number of instars in its adult stage but have been recorded to molt between 25 to 66 times in a lifespan. If conditions are optimal, they may continue to molt during a lifespan of up to four years.

So, you are probably wondering how to manage these pesky insects.

Essential oil from Japanese cedar has been shown to act as a repellent and preventative control, as well as cedar shavings, cinnamon and cloves. Diatomaceous Earth (DE) dehydrates silverfish if they come in contact with it and will eventually kill them and is safe for humans and pets. Boric acid is harmful to humans and pets if ingested, so it is not recommended for use. Physical measures include vacuuming, sealing holes and cracks in areas where they are found, removing standing water and removing paper sources from damp environments. If infestations are heavy, chemical control measures may be used but be sure to read all instructions on pesticide labels and follow guidelines to prevent future infestations.



November Beach Sweep

Wow! We had a great turnout from members and nonmembers today and the beach had a different look! The winds were challenging, but it didn't discourage this team from collecting a wide variety of discards! We had everything from multiple discarded cast nets, electrical breaker boxes, IV tubing, baby pacifiers, a rare dinosaur fossil, and a \$20 bill!

Just ask Jim Calvert, it pays to pick up trash!

Thanks to all who braved the 15-20 mph winds to help make a difference at the Quintana Beach/Jetty area.

*Blessings,
Jimmy & Luanne*



TOP TEN	QTY
1. Other waste	260
2. Plastic bottles	249
3. Plastic bottle caps	226
4. Beverage cans	149
5. Cigarette butts.	134
6. Line, nets, etc.	118
7. Plastic grocery bags	89
8. Paper cups/plates	73
9. Food wrappers	36
10. Metal bottle caps	35



Ocean Conservancy

Thank you for cleaning up with *Clean Swell!*

Here's a summary of your recent cleanup:

Date	November 04, 2024
Duration	2 hours 4 minutes
Number of People	3
Weight of Trash Picked Up	223.78 lbs
Group Name	Team Q
Distance Covered	0.0123 Miles

Your cleanup makes a difference! Thank you for being part of a global community, identifying ocean trash and helping find solutions. Check out what others are cleaning and more ways to get involved at <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/icc/>.

(Reprint courtesy of OceanConservancy)

19th Annual Hog-Wild Holiday Feast

Wednesday, December 11, 2024 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM

At 325 Timbercreek Drive, Lake Jackson [Map](#)



Appetizer Medley

Cheese and Sausage Dip

Other appetizers, provided by guests

Featured Main Course

(Serving 2:00-6:00 pm)

Smoked Wild Hog (Marty Cornell & Crew)

Borracho Beans (Ed Barrios)



Dessert Medley

Desserts provided by guests

Featured Beverages

Red & White Wines

Bottled Water

Significant others are welcome,

Please RSVP to Ed Barrios



\$5 Donation per person appreciated, \$10 if you drink wine

Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

President	Kathy Pittman, Rosharon
Vice President/Programs	Jimmy Salinas, Freeport
Secretary	Kathy Purvis, Richwood
Treasurer	Donald Sabathier, Pearland
State Representative	Connie Stolte, Palacios
Immediate Past President	Mickey Dufilho, Brazoria
Training Director	Melanie Hollenshead, Brazoria
Membership Director	John Boettiger, Lake Jackson
Advanced Training Director	Kristine Rivers, Manvel
Volunteer Service Director	Oron Atkins, Lake Jackson
Outreach Director	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Hospitality Director	Rose Wagner, Sweeny
Communications Director	Larry Peterson, Manvel
Training Class Representative 2023	Marlon Nation, Pearland
Training Class Representative 2024	Donna Rich

Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLife Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas
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Non-voting positions:

Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson

Newsletter Editor	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Oron Atkins, Ruby Lewis, Jimmy Salinas, Patty Brinkmeyer, Angela Griffin, Barbara Whaley, Amanda Gabehart, Marlon Nation, Mickey Dufilho, Susan Conaty, Richard Schaffhausen, Ed Barrios

Website	https://txmn.org/tmncot/
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN-COT
Twitter	https://twitter.com/tmncot
E-mail Listserv	http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail

Texas Master Naturalist Email Lists

TMN-COT Chapter list

- Instructions <https://txmn.org/tmncot/organization/email-lists/>
- Send messages to TMN-COT@googlegroups.com
- Message Archive <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail>
- All messages are sent immediately.

State Master Naturalist list

- Instructions <http://txmn.org/staying-connected/sign-up-for-tmn-listserv/>
- Subscribe listserv@listserv.tamu.edu
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator.



Chapter News is published monthly on or before the first day of the month by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is the 20th day of the month preceding issue. Send submissions by e-mail to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

