

T E X A S



Cradle of Texas Chapter
Brazoria County Extension Office
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<http://grovesite.com/tamu/tmn>

Minutes: Board Meeting, February 7, 2007

President Ed Barrios called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

Attending: Jerry Krampota, Mary Helen Israel, Carl Dodson, Roy Morgan, Neal McLain, Jerry Eppner, Ellis Burkhardt, Barbara Burkhardt, Dave Brandes, Laura Brandes, Justina Dent, Connie Stolte, Rich Tillman, and John Marshall.

1. Chili Cook-Off: A new time has been selected for the chili cook-off between the Brazoria County Master Gardeners Association (BCMGA) and the COT Master Naturalist Chapter.
Friday, February 23, 2007, BCMGA Education Station (Old TAMU Research Station), 12:00 noon
Those with membership in both organizations may enter under the name of either or both. The entrants are asked to prepare enough chili to serve 10-12 people. A winner will be chosen from BCMGA and from COTMN entrants. The "best of taste" will be chosen from these two winners. Rich is arranging for the judges, probably from the commissioners court.

2. Regional Spring Meeting, Galveston Bay Area Chapter: The Bay Area Chapter is hosting the Region 6 meeting on February 24, at the Wayne Johnson Community Center near Hitchcock. No agenda has been released at this time. The tentative time has been set for 10:00 a.m. They will have items for a light breakfast and a BBQ plate lunch can be purchased for \$8:00. Neal has posted directions and a map on the COT website. For further details, contact Mary Jean Hayden, (409)737-5306, bean1219@earthlink.net

Neal has agreed to represent COT since the State Rep. and President will be out of the area at that time. The meeting is open to all members. If anyone else is interested in attending, please contact Neal.

3. Treasurer's Report: Jerry E. thanked Jan Kater for the wonder job he did during his tenure as secretary. The books are in good shape and ready to be audited. The auditing committee is: Jerry, Jan, Ed and John Marshall. Barbara, Ed and Jerry have updated the account signature sheet at TDECU.
Balance 1/01/07: \$2723.36 We finished the year at near the break even point.

The classes generated about \$320.00 in positive cash flow. 2007 dues, paid in 2006, generated \$450.00. However, this contained a \$225.00 lifetime membership which will not be received in 2007. We were also given a \$200.00 donation to cover the cost of the binders for the training books. Without these inputs, the ending balance for 2006 would have decreased by almost 25%.

Dave and Laura are preparing the proposed budget for the '07 training class. It will be ready by March.

Training fees will not fund the chapter as the chapter grows. We need to consider carefully how we spend our funds. Dues are need so that the chapter has a positive cash flow. Only 60% of the total the active membership has paid their dues. The question of membership status if dues are not paid was raised. It will be considered at a later board meeting.

Dues were payable by January 1, 2007.

Individual \$10, Family \$15, Supporting \$25, Life \$225 (one time assessment)
Jerry's complete presentation is found at the end of the minutes.

3. Membership Resignation: Maurice Monie submitted his resignation from the chapter. No reason other than we did not make his '07 priorities was given. His name will be removed from the distribution list.

4. Approval of '07 Committee Chairmen: The formal approval of the committee chairmen had been overlooked at the January meeting. Ellis moved, Jerry E. seconded, that the nominations for committee chairs be accepted. Motion unanimously approved.

5. Expansion of Voting Rights to Committee Chair: At the January board meeting, the board approved a motion to extend voting rights to all committee chairs. Questions were raised as to the legality of this move, since committee chairs are appointed by the president, not elected by the general membership. It was felt that the board could be "stacked" in such a way that appointed board members could out vote the duly elected members. However, some board members were also of the opinion that the training chairperson and the membership chairperson have a great deal of responsibility and should be allowed to vote as board members.

Research was done on whom other chapters allowed to vote as executive board members. This was very inconclusive in that each chapter had their own set of voting board members. Some chapters do not allow committee chair to vote, some do. Some chapters only allow specific committee chairs to vote. Some chapters do not allow sponsors to vote. After a reading of the discussion from the January meeting minutes, the COT Policies and Procedures, pages 3 and 13, it was determined that there are no specific instructions on this question. Ellis moved, Connie seconded, that the training and membership committee chairs should be allowed to vote.

Further discussion proposed that these two chairpersons, be elected as general directors to the board with voting privileges. There would be no tenure restrictions for the directors. Connie moved, Justina seconded, that the original motion be amended. The motion voted on: The persons, who serve as training chair and membership chair, shall be elected by the general membership, as general directors to the board, with voting privileges. The motion passed 6 to 1.

The motion will be brought before the general membership for a vote of approval.

6. New Board Members: During the research on board membership, it was found that most chapters have representatives from the new training classes on the board. Rich moved, Justina seconded, that each new training class will elect two representatives to serve on the Board for a 1 year term, at the final training session. The representatives will be non voting members. Motion unanimously approved.

7. Change in Policies and Procedures (P/P): The list of COT partners is contained in the chapter Policies and Procedures (P/P). Each time a new partner is added or deleted, the P/P must be amended. Ellis moved, Rich seconded, that the list of partners be removed as an official part of the P/P. This would simplify the procedure when change is needed. Motion unanimously approved.

8. Revision in P/P Wording on "Guidelines for Volunteer Service", pg. 16: John M., volunteer service chair, has proposed new wording for the guidelines. There was concern among the board members that the new wording would cause conflict with the state guidelines on volunteer hours. Since John had not arrived, the topic was tabled until the March meeting.

To Do: John furnish board with copy of new wording.

9. Clarification on Sea Center Hours Counted Toward MN Volunteer Hour Awards: Connie clarified how the transfer of Sea Center volunteer hours to COTMN will work. Both she and Tom M., membership chair, do not wish to keep two sets of books. At the end of each year, the membership chair will be provided with a record of the Sea Center volunteer hours. The MN hours will then be counted up and used in awarding COTMN service pins to COT members. Since both Sea Center Texas and the extension service are state agencies and report volunteer hours to the state, they can not "double dip" by reporting the same hours for each agency. If a MN wishes to have his/her hours counted toward MN awards, then this can be accomplished at the time of sign in at Sea Center. The MN member will then report his/her volunteer hours to the membership chair.

10. Committee Reports:

Program: Justina asked approval of the board, to move the October general meeting to another day. The general meeting time would conflict with a training class. She would like this change so that interns and members involved with running the class can attend the AT session. The board agreed with her request.

Rich Tillman: Rich received a request from the county health officer, Dr. ??? O’Gorman, to help build bat houses. The houses would be located on the refuges and in rural areas away from dense populations. There is a health scare in the county because of bats moving into abandoned homes, run down apartments, etc. It is hoped that by providing proper habitat for the resident bat population, a decrease in the interaction between man and bat will be achieved. Rich will find out more details about the project from Dr. O’Gorman. Bat Conservancy International will also be contacted.

Rich also asked that we keep his daughter Jeanie, in our thoughts and prayers as she battles a re-occurrence of brain tumors. She is under treatment at M. D. Anderson in Houston.

INEOS: Carl reminded us that the classes at INEOS begin on Friday, February 23, at the Chocolate Bayou site. This will be the first class of third graders from Angleton’s Westside Elementary. Other classes from Westside will be present on March 3, March 3rd, and April 20th. The topics for this session will include birding,?????, owl pellets and salt water life. The afternoon session will be conducted by the Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue personnel. Other class dates are March 2nd and 9th, April 27th and May11th. Help is needed with the owl pellet and salt water life classes.

If you can help, please let Carl know in advance. Because of security restrictions, our names must be submitted in advance of the class. They also need a head count since they provide us with lunch.

Training: Dave and Laura reported on the preparations for the fall training classes. The speakers, lecture sites, equipment (computer/projector), field trip sites and field trip guides are set and confirmed. Other items, i.e. detailed agendas, certificates, name tags, shirts, etc. still need to be arranged for. A full list is provided in a copy of Dave/Laura’s presentation at the end of the minutes. Dave also presented a copy of the proposed budget to be finalized by March. He also asked us to think about what we want the training to look like. There are things we can change to improve the training classes and to save money.

One of the main topics discussed was the necessity of buying the state curriculum books. The majority of board members agree that they do not fulfill the training needs in most subjects. The costs of the books have added an extra \$30.00 to the training fee, which most feel has lead to a decrease in the number of interns trained. There has also been an indication from state that the cost of the books will go up to \$75.00/copy in 2007. This would be prohibitive. Other chapters do not buy individual books, but maintain several copies as references for the interns.

The board requested that representatives to the regional meeting, February 23, and at the state representatives meeting, later in the year, bring this topic to the attention of Michelle and Sonny.

Other suggestions to save money and lower the training fee were:

- * Have interns bring sack lunches to first meeting as well as later ones.
 - * Have a “pot luck” type lunch for the class graduation.
 - * Furnish only coffee at training sessions. Other drinks would be provided by interns for personal use.
- The main objects are to improve training, lower cost, and make it possible to train more MN members.

Volunteer Projects: John M., Jerry E. and Dave have been working on a way to prioritize projects. Sheets were handed out which describe the criteria for projects rankings. Because of the time restraint, the discussion was tabled until the March board meeting.

Ellis moved, Ed seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.
Meeting adjourned 5:05 p.m.

TO DO List:

- * **Ed—send out notice to COT membership.**
 - * **Neal—post on website calendar.**
- * **Ed send copy of Jerry’s presentation to BHB for inclusion in minutes.**
 - * **The P/P do not state that the general membership must be asked to approve board actions, only that they must be informed of the board’s actions. Ed will amend this section of the COT P/P to reflect change.**
 - * **Ed amend P/P to reflect addition of class representatives to board.**
- * **Ed furnishes Barbara with copy of Dave’s report for minutes.**

Respectively submitted:
Barbara H. Burkhardt, Secretary

