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

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

Texas Master Naturalist programs serve all people without regard to socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MIKE



Family: Any group of persons related by blood; a social or domestic group. This is the time of year we celebrate as families. We give thanks for the ones we have and remember the ones we have lost.

The members of our Chapter share a special bond which makes us a family. We share the love of the

outdoors, the fellowship with each other and the overwhelming desire to leave this place a little better than we found it.

This year our members have rescued prairie plants, looked for turtles, raised Bluebirds and cleaned beaches just to name of few things. We have also touched the lives of thousands of local children and introduced many of them to the wonders of Mother Nature. Who knows what seeds have been planted in these fertile little minds? We do what we can with no reward other than the peace of mind that volunteering rewards you with

We have celebrated the many members this year that have reached the 4000+ hours of volunteer service. We have some about to reach the 5000 and 10,000 hours. Ours is a Chapter of over achievers! As we go forward to the end of the year we have the December General meeting with fellowship starting at 9:30 followed by chapter business and some good eats. The Eleventh Hog Wild Holiday Feast will follow the close of the General Meeting.

Please enjoy the Holidays and be safe and careful. Be thankful for this freedom we enjoy and say a prayer for those that are defending our freedoms in places far from their families.

Happy Holidays

—Mike

Mike Mullins is the President of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at mcmprm@embarqmail.com

ELECTION OF 2015 OFFICERS

By Neal McLain, Editor

The Cradle of Texas Chapter will hold its annual election for officers and directors at the December General Meeting. We will elect officers and directors for the following positions to serve during calendar year 2015:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Training Coordinator
- Membership Coordinator
- State Representative

See Page 2 for the slate of officers nominated by the nominating committee. Nominations will be accepted from the floor.

The new officers will assume their positions at the conclusion of the election. Our current President Mike Mullins will automatically move to the position of Past President.

Mike is looking forward to moving into his new position.



Mike's friend Athena, shown here with Mike, is looking forward to assisting Mike with his new duties.

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting
Wednesday, December 10, 2014
AgriLife Building, Angleton**

9:30 AM - 9:50 AM NOTE LATE STARTING TIME	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Joycelynn Grigson, Neal McLain Plus bonus goodies other members would like to bring
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (tentative)	General Meeting Agenda: Election of Officers for 2015 Holiday Party (bring some goodies to share, if you wish). <i>This business part of this meeting is approved for Volunteer Time.</i>

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

By Barbara Burkhardt, Nominating Committee Chair

The nominations committee offers the following candidates for the 2015 TMN-COT Board of Directors. Voting will take place during the December 10 general meeting. The nominations committee was comprised of Barbara Burkhardt (Chair), Barbara Bruyere, and Gerald Forrest.

President



Dave Brandes

Vice President



Leo Novak

Secretary



Linda Sluis

Treasurer



Gerald Forrest

Membership



Jerry Eppner

Training



Roy Morgan

State Representative



Ed Barrios

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Coordinator

As of November 29, 77 members have submitted time sheets with a total of 10,009 hours of Volunteer Time. The chapter has now accumulated a total of 147,289 hours of Volunteer Time since inception.

While a number of timesheets have come in recently, we still lack a few “first-timers”. The sun is setting on us. Time to buckle down and get'er done.

At the December general meeting, members getting recognition will include:

- **Recertifying:**

Howard Allen
Justina Dent
Jerry Krampota
Georgia Monnerat
Lorna Witt

- **Reached 250-Hour benchmark:**

Neeta Allen,
Jeanne Manry
Leo O’Gorman

Well done.

So if you haven’t turned in a timesheet yet for 2014 or haven’t done so in quite a while, now would be an excellent time to do so. If you were really hoping you could recertify for 2014, but are finding yourself short on Advanced Training hours, several of our members have reached that goal using the webinar-based advanced training that we instituted this year. Go to the website, pick a pre-approved webinar (pre-approved is important), take the course, record the completion certificate number and record the AT on your timesheet in the webinar column. How simple is that?

Also, our chapter requires that you submit a timesheet each year to remain active. Several folks are remiss in that area. Failure to do so two years in a row can result in removal from the chapter roster. So let’s get them in.



www.Vecto.rs - 24640

2014 AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE



Matagorda Co. Mad Island Marsh	Monday, Dec.15, 2014
Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR	Wednesday, Dec.17, 2014
San Bernard NWR	Friday, Dec. 19, 2014
Brazos Bend State Park	Saturday, Dec. 20, 2014
Freeport	Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014
Brazoria	Saturday, Jan. 3, 2015

Details:

Go to website <http://tmn-cot.org>

Click on Bird Counts

Click on Calendar

SIX 2014 INTERNS EARN CERTIFICATION

ANGLETON – October 8, 2015. Six members of the Intern Class of 2014 have certified as Texas Master Naturalists. At its monthly meeting held here today, Roy Morgan, Training Coordinator, awarded each recipient with a certificate of achievement and a lapel pin to mark the event.



Front row, from left: Certification recipients Ken Sluis, Linda Sluis, Christina Hartman, Breana Kitchen, Larry Kirby. **Not shown:** Hope Cepak. **Back row:** Mike Mullins, President and Roy Morgan, Training Coordinator.

PHOTO GALLERY UPDATES

by Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

May you all enjoy the beauty that surrounds us in Brazoria County during the holidays and throughout the year!

Poinsettias – Not Just for Christmas

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA



Photo Source: www.ncagr.gov

WILD POINSETTIA



P. Romfh, Sea Center Texas, 06/2011

TOOTHED LEAF POINSETTIA



P. Romfh, Hwy35/Brazos River, 07/2014

The traditional **Christmas Poinsettia**, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, is a native of Mexico, where it grows as a 10-15 foot tall shrub. The showy colored parts of poinsettias are actually colored bracts. The yellow flowers, or *cyathia*, are in the center of the bracts. The plant is known in Mexico and Guatemala as "*La Flor de la Nochebuena*" (Flower of the Holy Night, i.e., Christmas Eve). Poinsettias were introduced to the USA by botanist Joel Roberts Poinsett in 1828.

Two poinsettia species native to Texas are **Wild Poinsettia** and **Toothed Leaf Poinsettia**. Both bloom in the summer. **Wild Poinsettia** or Fire on the Mountain, *Euphorbia cyathophora*, grows to a height of 2-3 feet. It is found both in the Midwest and across the South. **Toothed Leaf Poinsettia** or Toothed Spurge, *Euphorbia dentata*, grows in ditches and prairies and along railroad tracts and other disturbed sites. Although considered a noxious weed in some states, the beauty of the flower deserves a second look.

There are 98 species of Euphorbiaceae (Spurge Family) in the USDA plants database. Among the valuable products of the family are rubber, castor and tung oils, and tapioca. The milky sap found on most Euphorbiaceae will irritate the membranes of the eyes and mouth. Eating leaves can cause vomiting and diarrhea.

Snow – Not Just in Winter!



Photo Source: insideoutart.co.uk



Photos by P. Romfh, Brazoria County, 08/2013



Photo by Jerry Eppner, Brazoria NWR, 02/2014

Snow on the Prairie, *Euphorbia bicolor*, brightens ditches and fields in Brazoria County in late summer, looking a bit like a field of snow. This Euphorbiaceae also oozes a white sap if the stem is broken.

Snow Geese, *Chen caerulescens*, fill the skies and refuges with noisy honks and squawks in winter. Voracious eaters, they may damage habitat such as the uprooted field of Olney bulrush seen at San Bernard NWR near the viewing tower last winter. The geese often congregate in enormous flocks that take instantly to the air when signaled by lookout birds. The dark morph of the species, seen in the photo at left, is also known as the blue goose.

EXPLORING BRAZORIA COUNTY – SURFSIDE MUD FLATS AND SALT MARSHES

Photos and Stories by P&P Romfh

From a satellite view, the mud flats along Bluewater Highway east of Surfside are nestled between the Intracoastal Waterway, Drum and Christmas Bays, and the Gulf of Mexico. From an on-the-ground view, what first appears as a flat wasteland of stunted plants, mud, and tidal pools explodes into a sea of color in fall and provides a smorgasbord for visiting bird and animal species. We enjoy photographing along the mud flats throughout the year, and there is always something new to see.



Mud flats near Kayak Launch Site, Bluewater Highway East of Surfside

Mud flats, also known as **tidal flats**, are coastal wetlands that form when mud is deposited by tides near bays and estuaries. High tides and storms, as well as overspray, provide a salt concentration in the soil that allows only **halophiles** (salt-loving) species to flourish.

Summer Wings on the Mud Flats - July, 2013



The common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) lands on the dry mud while the reddish egret (*Egretta rufescens*) does his fishing dance at the edge of Drum Bay.



Fall Colors – Texas Style November 2014



Top Row: Turtleweed (*Bastis maritima*), Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), Lavender Thrift (*Limonium carolinianum*)
Bottom Row: Annual Seepweed (Seablight, *Suaeda linearis*), Creeping Glasswort (*Salicornia depressa*), and Eastern Pygmy Blue (*Brephidium pseudofea*). At right: Annual Glasswort (*Salicornia bigelovii*). Note that larva from the Pygmy Blue butterflies consume glasswort, saltbush and other salt-tolerant plants that grow along the coast.

Tockonhono Naturalist

KIRBY RAPSTEIN AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS WILLIAM T. HORNADAY GOLD MEDAL

By Chris Kneupper and Scott Dick

Long-time TMN-COT member and former Chapter president **Kirby Rapstein** has been granted a special award by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) - the **Hornaday Gold Medal**. The award was formally presented at the closing campfire of Camp Karankawa's "Fall Camp" on the evening of 24-Nov-2014.

The William T. Hornaday Awards are a series of awards presented by the BSA for service in conservation and ecology. The program is designed to encourage learning about natural resource conservation and the environment, teach sound stewardship of the natural resources and the environment, and recognize those who are outstanding in this field. The **William T. Hornaday Gold Medal** is a national level award presented to adult Scouters who have provided significant leadership in conservation on a national or regional basis over a period of at least twenty years. No more than six are awarded nationally, and only about 50 such medals have ever been awarded.



Kirby is a long-time fixture in the Bay Area Council of Boy Scouts – which includes Brazoria and Galveston counties. With over 55 years of service to the BSA, he has served in almost every Scouting capacity. (Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, Wood Badge Scoutmaster, Scoutmaster Fundamentals Director, District Chairman, Council Executive Board, etc...) However, it is in the area of environmental stewardship and conservation that he has excelled and is best known for.

Besides serving as both a Camp Director and Program Director at Summer Camp, Fall Camp and Winter Camp; Kirby has served as the Nature Director and a merit badge counselor teaching all of the conservation merit badges the BSA has to offer at all three of these camps since the late 1960's. He has also maintained his availability as a conservation merit badge counselor on both the District and Council rosters. During his tenure Kirby conducted hundreds of nature tours at Camp Karankawa for bird watching or flora and fauna identification. He was also a member of the first William T. Hornaday weekend event in Bay Area Council.

*Kirby Rapstein*

Kirby's son Kirby, Jr. is an Eagle Scout and Kirby himself has been recognized with the following awards: District Award of Merit - First Capitol District (1979), Silver Beaver (1982), Vigil Honor - Order of the Arrow (1985), District Award of Merit - Cradle of Texas District (1993), Herman Swift Award – Cradle of Texas District (1995), Distinguished Scouter – Cradle of Texas District (2000, 2012), District Chairman's Award - Cradle of Texas District (2001), Lone Star Scouter Award - Cradle of Texas District (2003), James E. West Fellow (Heritage Society), Honorary Lifetime Board Member of the Bay Area Council.

Kirby's dedication to the conservation movement and conservation education is no less impressive outside of Scouting as it is in Scouting. He is also active in the following:

Brazoria County Master Gardeners: Has volunteered at Sea Center Texas (Lake Jackson), Brazoria Heritage Foundation Annual Spring Celebration (Brazoria), Alvin Resoft Park Festival (Alvin), Texas Independence Day Celebration (West Columbia), Austin Town Festival (near Angleton).

Volunteer: Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Annual Spring Migration Celebration at San Bernard NWR (over 15 years), Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (Lake Jackson), Matagorda County Birding Nature Center (Bay City).

All volunteer educational presentations at the above listed locations include attendance by both school children and the public at large.

William Temple Hornaday was a noted American zoologist, conservationist, taxidermist and author. In 1874-79, he made collecting expeditions for Wards National Science Foundation to Florida, the West Indies, South America, Ceylon, Malaya and Borneo. In 1880, Dr. Hornaday founded the National Society of American Taxidermists and in 1882 was named the Chief Taxidermist of the Smithsonian Museum, a position he held until 1890. In 1896, he became the first director of the New York Zoological Garden (the Bronx Zoo), which, under his supervision, became the largest and finest zoo in the world, retiring in 1926 at age 72. Dr. Hornaday was the President of a conservation group called the Campfire Club in 1905 as well as the President of the American Bison Society from 1907-10. He and others are widely credited with saving the American bison and the Alaskan fur seal from extinction. An early supporter of the Boy Scouts, he began an awards program in 1915, which he named the Wildlife Protection Medal. Its purpose was to challenge Americans to work constructively for wildlife conservation and habitat protection.

Dr. Hornaday's beliefs and writings are a major reason conservation and ecology have long been an important part of the BSA's program. After his death in 1937, the award was renamed in Dr. Hornaday's honor.

CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Mike Mullins, Sweeny
Vice President/Program	Peggy Romfh, Houston
Secretary	Becky McClendon, Lake Jackson
Treasurer	Gerald Forrest, Damon
State Representative	Ed Barrios, Lake Jackson
Past President	Barbara Burkhardt, Lake Jackson
Acting Training Coordinator	Roy Morgan, Lake Jackson
Membership Coordinator	Jerry Eppner, Lake Jackson
Volunteer Service Coordinator	Pete Romfh, Houston
Advanced Training Coordinator	Tom Morris, Lake Jackson
Outreach Coordinator	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Chapter Host	Jerry Krampota, Alvin
Webmaster	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Class of 2014 representatives	Joycelynn Grigson, Angleton Breana Kitchen, Richwood
Chapter Advisers	Connie Stolte (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department) John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension Service)
Newsletter Editor	Neal McLain
Newsletter Writers	Barbara Burkhardt, Jerry Eppner, Chris Kneupper, Neal McLain, Mike Mullins, Peggy Romfh,
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MASTER NATURALIST EMAIL LISTS

TMN-COT Chapter list

- Instructions http://tmn-cot.org/Email_Lists/index.html
- 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

