



APRIL 2020

Chapter News

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BILL AHLSTROM



Who could have seen this coming? Good question. There was a subtle inkling of something in the air at the end of February—a foreshadowing or maybe a foreboding. All eyes were on China—what was happening over there? It was out of character for China to share their problems with the world. Something BIG must be up. Something BIG was up for sure! A bug. A novel, unstoppable bug. South Korea fell, Japan, Iran, Italy, France, United Kingdom and then—BOOM—the U.S. The World Health Organization, after finally figuring out what the definition of a pandemic is, declared one (like it made a difference to what was already happening around the world). Sparing the details, here we sit in southeast Texas, following executive orders, mandates, and recommendations for Socially Distancing ourselves, washing our hands, sanitizing and disinfecting.

March came in like a lamb and left like a lion. I can't possibly list in the space allotted everything that has been cancelled, postponed, or converted to a virtual platform; however, the State TMN office has provided chapters with access to a Zoom license to conduct meetings and training, and we'll be trying to keep the chapter up to date.

SINCE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT VIRTUAL MEETINGS, the face-to-face

and Zoom virtual General Meeting on April 8th are cancelled. The next Zoom board meeting (virtual) will be on May 6th and the next Zoom chapter General Meeting will be on May 13th. More information will be coming.

Members of the Board will be trying to contact everyone by phone to make sure members are okay and to find out if there's anything you need or we can do for you.

We will continue to forward all information received from those at all levels in our chain of command, especially the Texas Department of State Health Services. Outdoor volunteer work is at a standstill right now, but there are some good AT opportunities available.

Send us an email and let us hear from you and what you're doing. Check your email, Facebook, and the TMN-COT website often for new postings. The State office and your chapter are working to provide educational programs and webinars to keep our minds active and gain AT hours.

Keep the faith and keep healthy; we WILL get together again.

Cheers.

Bill Ahlstrom is the president of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at ahlstrom@tmn-cot.org.

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<https://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 Dept. Texas Master Naturalist programs serve all people without regard to socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Masthead photo by Charles Jesse Miller Jr. taken at Quintana Island.

Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
Chapter News – April 2020

REMINDERS ...

1. **STAY HOME AND STAY SAFE!**
2. **April General Meeting CANCELLED; "see" you in May**
3. **Stay in touch; contact a Board Member if you need help**

Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter General Meeting and Advanced Training

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Via email meeting invite to Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service's ZOOM Pro license

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Snack Team: Barbara Burkhardt, Mary Helen Israel, Roy Morgan, Jimmy Salinas, Luanne Salinas, George Valadez, Bob Whitmarsh
9:00 AM – 9:45 AM	General Membership Meeting <i>[This meeting is approved for 1.00-hour volunteer time plus travel up to 1.00 hour]</i>
9:45 AM – 10:00 AM	Nature Notes Speaker: John Boettiger Topic: "Feral Hogs"
10:15 AM – 11:15 AM	Advanced Training Speaker: Chris Kneupper Topic: "History of the Forts Velasco" <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>

Chris Kneupper is a retired chemical engineer who has lived in Brazoria County for over 40 years. A charter member of the Brazosport Archaeological Society and long-term member of the Texas Archeological Society, Chris has participated in many excavations in the county and around the state.

He is also a member of the Sons of The Republic of Texas and the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter, and he sits on the board of the Cradle of Texas Conservancy. This latter entity has a long-term goal of financing and managing the building of a replica of the 1832 Mexican Fort Velasco, or the "first Fort Velasco." An organization that preceded the conservancy held land for the project for about 50 years.

Based on Chris' overlapping interests, he has recently done extensive research into the history and archaeology of the several forts that were placed at the original mouth of the Brazos River, in what is today known as Surfside Beach (formerly old Velasco). He has produced a lengthy historical report and is currently working with TMN-COT web page personnel to make the report and some obscure primary references available via the "Cultural History" web page. An "executive summary" has also been prepared as an MS-PowerPoint presentation, which will be used to make his presentation at the April General Meeting.

MEMBERSHIP DATA REPORT by Dave Brandes, Data Manager

Congratulations to those achieving awards or recertification as of March 31:

Recertification

John Boettiger	Roy Morgan
Jackie Hicks	Elizabeth (Jo) Myers
Anna King	Herb Myers
Georgia Monnerat	Mary Schwartz
Bob Whitmarsh	

500 Hour Milestone

Jackie Hicks
Mary Schwartz

4000 Hour Milestone

Chris Kneupper

Impact Data YTD—31 March 2020

1622 Adults 5340 Youth 6962 Total

Hours Totals* YTD—31 March 2020

4483 Hours VT 921 Hours AT

A Message from State Rep Connie Stolte...

Dear Cradle of Texas Chapter members,

I wanted to make sure that all of you are aware that you can subscribe to a statewide Texas Master Naturalist email service.

The **Texas Master Naturalist Listserv** is a resource for Master Naturalist members, chapters, sponsors, advisors and Master Naturalist affiliates to share information and resources specific to the Texas Master Naturalist Program. The listserv is provided as a service to our Texas Master Naturalist Program Members and supporters.

This is a great way to stay connected with the Texas Master Naturalist statewide program. I highly encourage everyone to subscribe.

To subscribe [click here](#).

I hope everyone is healthy!

What's Open*...and Not (as of April 2)

- **OPEN:** Area National Wildlife Refuges, Brazoria County Parks (not Brazos River, or Resoft except Sat. & Sun.), Quintana Neotropic Bird Sanctuary
- **CLOSED TO VEHICLES:** Brazoria Beaches

* Follow suggested precautions if you go



At the March General Meeting, Membership Director John Boettiger (third from left) presented 2020 recertification pins to Don Dabathier, Kathy Pittman, Phil Huxford, Kathleen Purvis, and Barbara Yoder; not pictured: Susan Falcone-Potts, and Kim Richardson.



Above: Vice President Mickey Dufilho (right) presents John Boettiger with a 2500-volunteer-hour pin.

CRABS ON THE BEACH By Peggy Romfh

Crabs are some of the most common species seen along the beach. Some are live, but others are 'beach wash ashores'—crabs that have died. Sometimes you see the whole crab, and other times just the carapace ends up on the beach. The exception is the Ghost Crab, which inhabits the beach and front of the dunes. Known by the distinctive holes it dives into, Ghost Crabs number in the thousands along the beach. Below are some crabs that we have frequently found on Quintana Island.



PORTLY SPIDER CRAB

Walks forward rather than sideways; hundreds of carapaces are found washed ashore when the crabs molt



SPECKLED SWIMMING CRAB

With its last pair of legs converted to swimming appendages; is distinctive with white spots on the carapace



STONE CRAB

Mud crab with a distinctive, large, white-tipped claw that is harvested for eating; the crab regenerates the claw



CALICO BOX CRAB

A small box crab with distinctive reddish-brown spots on the carapace



ATLANTIC GHOST CRAB

Scurries sideways across the sand; related to Fiddler Crabs—juveniles are spotted like sand



MOTTLED PURSE CRAB

Small crab with a round, plump body



BLUE CRAB

A swimming crab; the last pair of paddle-shaped claws are called swimmerets. This large male (9-inch carapace) was crawling along the shoreline. Females have orange-tipped claws



SURF HERMIT CRAB

Lives in Gastropod shells; short, stubby claws; left claw slightly larger than the right

THE *VERY* END OF THE (Bobcat Woods) TRAIL

Oron Atkins and Crew are Very Much “On the Rails” at Bobcat Woods Trail

As reported last month, the final section of boardwalk was rebuilt; however, handrails also needed to be replaced. Oron Atkins, Chip Sweet, Tom Taroni, and Dick Schaffhausen spent part of their COVID-19 isolation working at the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge, finishing work on the handrails right before all non-essential work at the refuge was halted. Read Oron’s report and photos below.



Chip Sweet and Tom Taroni

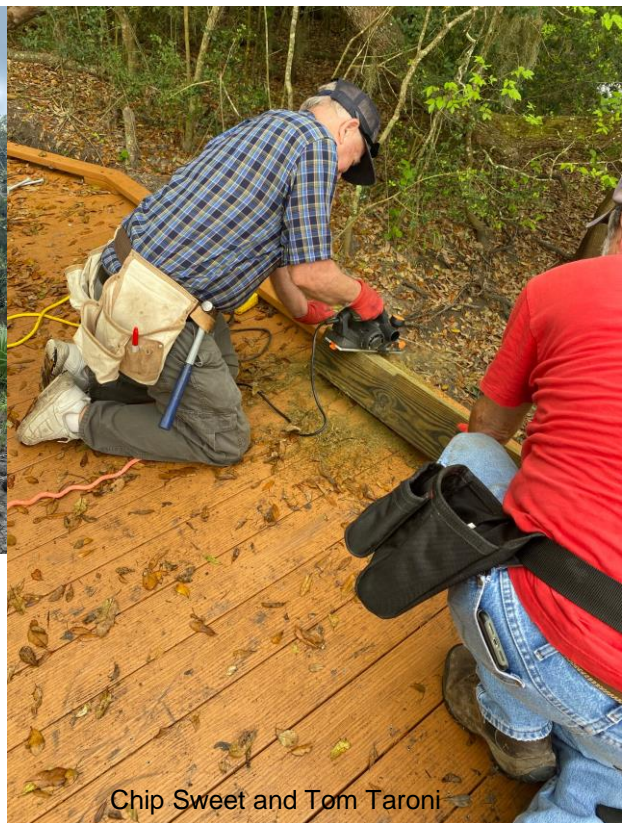


Chip Sweet and Tom Taroni

Trail Update 3-19-20—Tom Taroni, Chip Sweet, Dick Schaffhausen, and I worked on the slough-crossing handrails today. We installed handrail posts and top caps on the north side of the Cacklebur Slough walk bridge. All post installations were time consuming and proved a challenge. Using a planer, each post had to be custom fit to the saddle supports due to the varying vertical/horizontal angles involved. However, the fruits of our labor resulted in a strait, plumb and sturdy handrail. We plan to address the south side handrail support posts tomorrow.



Tom Taroni



Chip Sweet and Tom Taroni

Trail Update 3-20-20—Tom, Chip, and I worked on the handrails again today. With a short day planned, we began construction on the south side of the walk bridge and were able to get six handrail posts installed. As with the north side, each post had to be custom fit at bottom so posts would be plumb and square to the boardwalk. Though sounds of thunder were in the area and a few rain drops fell, we completed our work without weather disruption.

Continued next page

THE *VERY* END OF THE TRAIL *Continued from page 5*



Trail Update 3-21-20—Tom, Chip, and I completed the handrail structure today. Fortunately for us the rain held off one more time, allowing us to stay out of the mud. All that is left to do on the handrails is to overlay the top rail with composite material, which is the plan for Monday.



Chip Sweet and Tom Taroni



Tom Taroni and Chip Sweet

Trail Update 3-22-20—Tom, Chip, and I completed the overlay of the handrails today. Today's effort essentially completes the "boardwalk proper" phase of the project. Fortunately, we finished, as Curtis Jones informed us that this was the last workday until further notice as refuge employees were being sent home due to COVID-19 precautions.

BRAZORIA COUNTY HISTORY: THE COLUMBIA ROSENWALD SCHOOL

By Neal McLain

Two recent articles in national publications have drawn my attention to Rosenwald Schools. The winter issue of *Preservation*¹, a publication of The National Trust for Historic Preservation, contained an article about a Rosenwald school in North Carolina. The February 3, 2020, issue of *The New Yorker*² featured an article about the preservation of African-American History. Both articles cite the history of Rosenwald schools and their co-founder, Julius Rosenwald, part owner and leader of Sears, Roebuck and Company during the 1930s.

We have a restored Rosenwald school here in Brazoria County, located in West Columbia near the Columbia Historical Museum. I co-wrote an article about it for the October 2009 issue of *Chapter News*³. It was partially written by Teena Maenza, then editor of the weekly newspaper *The Brazoria County News*⁴.

Following is an updated version of that article, beginning with a narrative by Teena Maenza.

The Columbia Rosenwald School, located in downtown West Columbia behind the Columbia Historical Museum, was originally built in 1921, and for nearly thirty years it served as the center of education for African American children in the East Columbia community. It is one of over 5,300 Rosenwald Schools built between 1913 and 1932. In Texas, 537 Rosenwald Schools were built, but today only about 40 are known to still exist.

The story of Julius Rosenwald and his efforts to ensure an adequate education for the black children of the rural South is a fascinating chapter of history. Education for black children, especially those in the rural South, was practically nonexistent in the early 1900s. The responsibility for education fell to the churches, and the quality varied widely. Classes were held in churches or lodge halls, wherever space could be found.

Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and the nation's foremost black educator, took up the cause of providing a more consistent education for these children. To help in

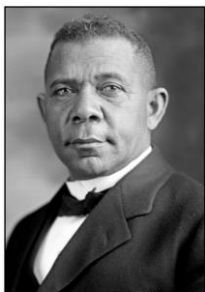


Photo: Wikipedia
Booker T. Washington

achieving this goal, Washington turned to some of the top philanthropists of the day. One of those men was Julius Rosenwald.

Rosenwald was born in Springfield Illinois in 1862, the son of German Jewish immigrants. He dropped out of school at age 17, but after an apprenticeship in his uncle's clothing business, he soon opened the mail-order strategies and satisfaction-guaranteed policy that turned Sears into an American institution—and made Rosenwald himself one of

the wealthiest men in America.

Rosenwald was already involved in numerous philanthropic efforts when he met Washington, but after their friendship began, building schools became his primary focus.

Any community desiring a school had to contribute matching funds. Not only did the black segment of the community have to donate, but also the white segment as well, and the local school had to take ownership and oversee education of the children. The Rosenwald Fund contributed one-third of the amount needed to build a school and strictly monitored every aspect, from teacher/student ratio to the color of the paint on the walls.

The Columbia Rosenwald School was built on a pier-and-beam foundation, about five feet off the ground, because of its proximity to the Brazos River. Students attended the school until 1948, when it was closed, and its students were moved to schools in West Columbia.



Photo: Neal McLain

Columbia Rosenwald School during restoration.
West Columbia, Texas, August 2009.



Photo: Wikipedia
Julius Rosenwald

Continued next page

BRAZORIA COUNTY HISTORY: THE COLUMBIA ROSENWALD SCHOOL

Continued



Students at Columbia Rosenwald School
Photo courtesy of Teena Maezna; original photographer unknown. Date unknown.



The building as it appeared after it was sold for use as a hay barn. For many years it was visible from State Highway 35, a few miles east of West Columbia.
Photo courtesy of Teena Maezna; original photographer unknown.

Ownership of the building was transferred to the Columbia Historical Museum in July 2002. The following August, the West Columbia City Council gave the Museum permission to have the building moved into a city park behind the museum.

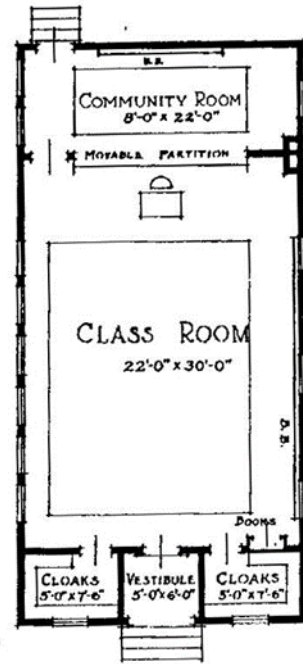


Moving day
Photo: Teena Maenza

The Design of the School Buildings

Under specifications set down by the Rosenwald Fund, most Rosenwald Schools were built according to a similar floor plan. Each school was to include a vestibule, a classroom, a community room, and two cloakrooms. The buildings were designed to have large windows on the east side (to admit morning sun) and small high windows on the west side (to block afternoon sun).

In its original location, the Columbia Rosenwald School faced south, so the east windows are on the right side of the building as seen from the main entrance. In its new position south of the Columbia Historical Museum, the building has again been placed facing south.



Floor plan of the Columbia Rosenwald School in its new location south of the Columbia Historical Museum. This plan was typical of most Rosenwald Schools.

Floor plan courtesy of Teena Maezna.

FLOOR PLAN

Works Cited

- [1] Drueding, Meghan. "Rosenwald Reborn." *Preservation* Winter 2020: 11.
- [2] Cep, Casey. "Rescue Work." *The New Yorker* Feb. 3, 2020: 26-31.
- [3] Maenza, Teena and Neal McLain. "The Columbia Rosenwald School." *TMN-COT Newsletter* October 2009, Attachment 2.
- [4] West Columbia, Texas. *The Brazoria County News* has ceased publication.

THE SAN BERNARD

By Janice R. Edwards, 3 March 2020, *The Bulletin*; reprinted with permission

From purple martins to pirates, folklore and shrimp, the San Bernard River offers up its treasures in bountiful forms. We heard the purple martins were in the state early this spring and got our birdhouses up early, but they haven't shown yet. When the scouts of the flock start showing up, they take stock of what housing is available before the rest of their extended family follows.

I am always glad to see them because it means the end of gray days and the beginning of their cheerful good mornings. I just can't be "blue" when the martins are around. The little birds come back every year to the place [where] they were born, bringing with them their gifts of catching bugs and chirping cheerful songs. It almost seems like they take our "blues" on their backs (maybe that is what turns them purple) and take to the sky, carrying them off to who-knows-where, but always returning with a cheerful greeting. Once a purple martin family has accepted the housing arrangement you offer, they always return each spring, raising one or two clutches of babies, bringing even more life and joy to the river—and that, my friends, is just a little river treasure you can find if you look for it.

Pirate Jean Lafitte's Treasure

We live on a river that just oozes with treasure. I have already written about the pirate, Jean Lafitte. Legend has it that the famous pirate has left some of his treasure in the banks of the San Bernard. There are a couple of versions to this legend. Around the time Stephen F. Austin and company were colonizing this part of Texas, the Mexican government thought having a pirate on Galveston Isle was bad for their public image. So, they forced him to leave his home. Being the pirate that he was, he had a lot of gold to get off the island. He was known to take a strong-backed, weak-minded sailor in a skiff up various local rivers and relocate parts of his treasure. He'd make note of the location and bury the treasure—and the sailor.

Another version of this tale has one of Lafitte's captains sailing up the San Bernard River to escape the hurricane of 1816. In this version, the captain of the pirate boat knew the hurricane was going to be a bad one, so he ordered his men to bury the treasure to protect it from the storm. None of the pirates survived this storm, but the clue to where the treasure is hidden is said to be found in another one of Lafitte's treasure holds. The interesting thing about this version

is that it perfectly lines up with the evidence of the Theodosia Burr legend—that she was found in a wrecked pirate ship after a bad hurricane just up from the mouth of the San Bernard River by an English-speaking Karankawa Indian chief. The treasure on Theodosia's boat was supposed to have been great, but the Indian chief did not find it.

In one or two of the stories I've been told, some of Lafitte's treasure was buried at Music Bend in the San Bernard. That's where River's End is today. In fact, we live on Music Bend. While watching the silver trout jump in the river, it's nice to fantasize that there is still pirate's treasure near at hand, just waiting to be uncovered.

Music Bend

And the mysterious music heard at Music Bend is a local treasure. Legend claims that this music has a ghostly origin. The story of the music has been told orally and written about since Stephen F. Austin's colonists heard the creepy strains. There are numerous ghost stories associated with this music—all of them have a fiddler being mysteriously killed and dumped into the San Bernard.

There have been various scientific attempts to explain the phenomena, but no theory has become a definitive explanation. But I've heard the ghostly strains. If you hear the music, it'll make the hair on the back of your neck stand on end, and you'll find goose pimples inexplicably crawling up your arms. And the fact that the music still plays, and is still a mystery, is a treasure.

Shrimp and DuCross City

Back in the early days, River's End shrimpers often took 5,000 pounds of shrimp a day from these waters—a treasure, a fortune, in tasty morsels, seemingly in endless supply. But, too much of that fortune was withdrawn before deposits were made in the account, so it might take an open mouth, a little time and some river feeding to bring back that overdrawn account.

My husband, Roy, talks about a treasure he

Continued next page

THE SAN BERNARD *Continued from page 9*

experienced down here in the 1970s, when, if you were lucky enough to be invited, you could find yourself fishing in DuCros City. It was on the beach between the mouth of the San Bernard and Sargent—behind Cedar Lakes. In the late summer, DuCros City would be built each year, and by the weekend before Thanksgiving, it would be gone. Someone would bring in port-a-cans and travel trailers, while someone else would bring in food and libations, and a little fishing community would be born.

Fishermen would come in and enjoy time fishing, relaxing, eating fresh fish, shrimp and oysters, and telling the stories that only “old salts” could tell younger men. These moments were treasure. One vivid, golden moment was a memory of one of the

fishing elders. He spoke of a time when redfish were so plentiful that when the sun set over the Gulf of Mexico, the waters would turn gold from the tailing of the redfish. Gold in the water—untold treasure. But this was before the river closed the first time.

There’s still treasure at River’s End. Roy and I have been fortunate enough to get to know some of our neighbors. Some of them grew up here and have seen the glory days of our community, and some of them are newly transplanted. But best of all, they have endless stories to tell about this river, and every one of them is pure treasure, just like their friendship.

Write Jan in care of The Bulletin.

Email: john.bulletin@gmail.com. Snail mail: The Bulletin, P.O. Box 2426, Angleton TX, 77516.

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST 2020 ANNUAL MEETING and CALL FOR PROPOSALS



Planning for the 21st TMN Program Annual Meeting is well underway. As it is being held in Houston, the COT chapter is one of several “host” chapters involved in supporting the meeting. While registration is not yet open, information about the meeting is available at <https://txmn.org/2020-annual-meeting/>.

Also available on that page is a “Call for Proposals” posting that invites interested members to submit proposal(s) for sessions offered at the meeting. State is also seeking vendors, and an application is available on the webpage at <https://txmn.org/files/2020/02/Vendor-Info-and-Application-Form-2020.pdf>.



Photo by Charles Jesse Miller Jr.

Stay inside and
stay safe!

A NOTE FROM TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT ON THE CITY NATURE CHALLENGE...

Due to the rapidly changing situation around the COVID-19 virus, this year's City Nature Challenge will not be a competition, but rather a collaborative global effort in which we celebrate the healing power of nature and document our local plants and animals however we can.

Please Note: many previously-scheduled events have been or may be cancelled or changed in the coming weeks. The health and safety of our communities is a priority and we request that City Nature Challenge participants comply with the latest national, state, and local health guidance and regulations to slow and reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Source: https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/texas_nature_trackers/naturechallenge/

City Nature Challenge 2020

City Nature Challenge

Cities around the world will be competing to see who can make the most observations of nature, find the most species, and engage the most people in the 2020 City Nature Challenge.



Thousands of people from
across the globe will get
outside to look for nature in
their cities!

The 2020 City Nature Challenge takes
place in 2 parts

April
24 – 27

Taking pictures of wild
plants and animals.

April 28 –
May 3

Identifying what was
found.



More information at: <http://citynaturechallenge.org/>

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Master Naturalist Email Lists

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- 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.

Chapter News is published monthly on Monday before the General Meeting by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Thursday before the General Meeting. Send submissions by email to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.