



# The CHACHALACA

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1

31 JANUARY 2007

## ED SEZ

Sorry I'm late with this Chachalaca, but I just got busy. Then I held off for the SPI Wildlife event. But couldn't find room to include my picture! I was there, though, as were several other TMNs. Frank gave his Backyard Habitat presentation twice. The Berrys were there for the nature conservancy and Deb Holliday and Beth Wargo helped me with the RGVCTMN booth. Linda McGonigle did a great job of organizing the whole show, as well as setting up our display. Very impressive.

We started a new TMN class on the 7th of February. There are seventeen members in the class. My impression is they will be a group to watch. They have a good mix of experiences and they are going to be valuable collectively and individually. Let's welcome them at our next general meeting.

This Chachalaca is the twelfth issue we have produced. The first issue was published in May of 2004, dated 30 April. Three years! They have gone by quickly. I have been especially pleased as editor, because this newsletter is truly a community effort.

Everything that has appeared in the Chachalaca was submitted by the membership and reflect their interests and participation. It has been fun.

If the foregoing sounds like a farewell speech, I have hit the right note. This will be my last turn as editor. We are fortunate. I have found a well-qualified replacement.

Deb Halliday will be your new editor. I am sure she

## RGV MASTER NATURALISTS

This chapter is an affiliate of the Texas Master Naturalist program jointly sponsored by Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

### Officers

<b>President</b>	<b>Walter Evans</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Frank Wiseman</b>
<b>Administrative Secretary</b>	<b>Virginia Gonzalez</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Deanna Schaeffer</b>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Mary Bindner</b>

### Standing Committees

<b>Education/Adv. Training</b>	<b>Donna Berry</b>
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Dorothy Greaney</b>
	<b>Jorge Garcia</b>

### Public Relations / Communications

**Kathy Sheldon**

will bring a fresh outlook to the Chachalaca that will enhance its appeal and presentation.

I do not need to wish her luck. If the membership supports her as well in the future as they have supported me in the past, she won't need luck.

I thank you all for providing me with the opportunity and material to publish our newsletter, the *Chachalaca*!

**Leo Garrett**

## ***A Note From The Prez***

:We held a meeting On Tuesday Jan. 9 ,2007 to show the world and ourselves that our efforts are rewarded and recognized by ourselves. The true impact of our efforts could be seen most clearly in the eyes of a man named Andy from Laguna Vista. To tell the story I must start from the beginning.

My wife told me that one of our members who lives in Laguna Vista needed help to plant a butterfly garden in a city park. We both agreed that that would be a good way to spend a Saturday morning. Donna and I had shovels so all we needed was water and breakfast before we met the other member at the park. We arrived early and parked at the park ( a very peaceful and attractive location) but the supplies and other member was there waiting. The member showed us where to work and what she wanted done. A few minutes later, 2 other members showed up with shovels and fell into work doing what was needed. This is where Andy and two other people came out of the homes that surround the park. They had shovels and hoses and advice and a willingness to work that warmed my heart.

I now know that we are in a community of willing workers for improvements to our environment. We must be the spark plug that starts the fire in all the communities of the RGValley! It is our job to set the stage and provide the platform but it is very clear to me that the community where we live will provide the willing hands to save our natural world for the next generation..

**Walter Berry/**

## **RGVCTMN To Be Featured In Feb. TPW Magazine**

**Heads up TMN members.** Our local member, Eileen Mattei, will have an article in the February issue of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine. She describes her trials and tribulations and joys of learning to become a Texas Master Naturalist. There will be a complete description of her take on the classes, field trips and other outings and volunteer work she did to certify as a Texas Master Naturalist with our chapter. Pictures, taken by Larry Ditto, will accompany the article.

## ***Ramsey Report Update***

Ramsey workers have been busy since the New Year started. Besides the usual pruning, trimming and general maintenance work in the park's areas where our gardens are located, we have established four new garden spots along the upper Arroyo Trail.

Two are called Elm Ridge I and II. These were basically started in the fall of 2006 and have now been added to with more plantings. We cleaned up two areas which we have named Fiddle Wood Hill and Clay Snake Hillock. We put in a total of 302 plants what included many rescued cacti and other native plants. Included in these were Fiddle Wood, Verbenas, Tom Thumb Cactus, Lote Bush, Lantanas, Palo Verde, Balloon Vines,

Manfredas, Mexican Button Bush, Tube Tongue, Native Hibiscus, Lady Finger Cactus, Native Grasses, Skeleton Leaf Daisy, and others.

We owe a lot to our diligent volunteers and certainly thank each and everyone for their participation.

On a related note, we can report that Bob Archer has almost recovered from his broken arm, suffered while working at the park this past November. He will be back among the regular volunteers soon.

Another new area that the crew has worked on will be called Medicinal Ridge.

This area overlooks the Arroyo Colorado near the edge of Ed Carey Dr. Here we hope to have only medicinal native plants to show the public. The Medical Alliance of Harlingen has been donating time and money to help with this area. Dick Roesler has been especially helpful in clearing and mulching the area. We have selected at date of Saturday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> for a planting day and hope many of our TMN volunteers come out to help.

**Frank Wiseman**

### **Master Naturalists Recertify**



On January 9, 2007, the Rio Grande Valley Chapter held its annual Recertification Award Ceremony. Fifty-two members met the requirements set forth by the State organization which is to give back to the community a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service and do 8 hours of advanced training. Each member received a Prickly Pear Cactus State Pin dated 2006.

Crystal Salinas and Susan Thompson, Class of 2006, completed all the requirements to become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist. When certifying, each member is given a certificate from the state, gold name tag, state dragonfly pin, and chapter emblem pin. Garry Ehrlich certified in May 2006 but went home to Oregon before our graduation ceremony and was given his certificates at the meeting as well.

Other members receiving milestone pins were:

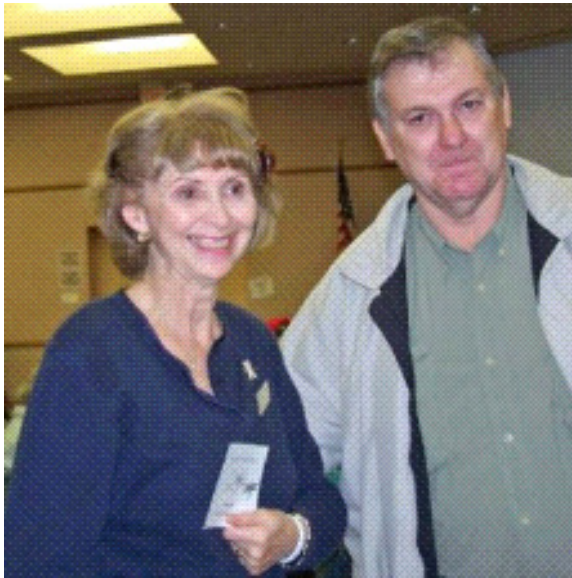
100 hour pins: Javier de Leon, Connie Garcia, Alta Monroe, Suzanne Ostos Mounsey, Kaileen Reynolds, Jolaine Lanehart and Suzanne Herzing.

250 hour pins: Peggy Knopp, Kathy Sheldon, Jolaine Lanehart, Dave Moulder, Licha Paz, Maxwell B. Pons

The state pin for 2007 recertification will be a Shrimp pin. Everyone is eligible for this pin even if they did not certify this year. Our recording period starts on January 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on December 31<sup>st</sup>.



## ***Milestone Pins!***



***Peggy Knopp—500***



***Suzanne Mounsey—100***

### **These RGVCTMN members earned Milestone Hours Pins for 2006**

#### **Presented at the meeting:**

Javier de Leon - 100 hrs  
Connie Garcia - 100 hrs  
Peggy Knopp - 500 hrs  
Dave Moulder - 250 hrs  
Suzanne Ostos Mounsey - 100  
Licha Paz - 250

#### **Not at the meeting:**

Suzanne Herzing 100  
Jolaine Lanehart - 100 & 250 hrs  
Alta Monroe - 100 hrs  
Max Pons – 250  
Kaileen Reynolds – 100  
Kathy Sheldon – 500

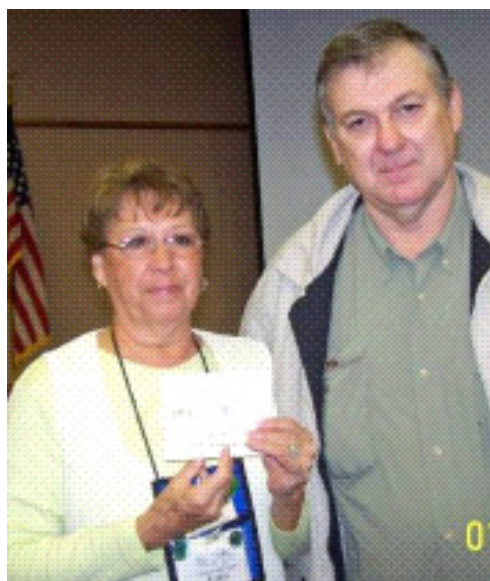
## ***More milestone Pins!***



***Connie Garcia—100***



***Dave Moulder—250***



***Licha Paz—250***



***Javier de Leon—100***



## ***Excerpt from the Annual Report.***

1. The total number of volunteer service hours conducted from the chapter's inception to date.  
29,737.5
2. The total number of volunteer service hours conducted in 2006.  
8,406
3. The total number of volunteers trained in your local chapter to date.  
154
4. The total number of volunteers trained in your local chapter throughout the year 2006  
24
5. The total number of Advanced Training hours obtained by your chapter volunteers throughout 2006.  
1,781.50
6. The total number of Advanced Training hours obtained by chapter volunteers to date.  
6,691.50
7. The total number of youth and adults reached with Direct (see 7a) and Indirect (see 7b) outreach and education projects:  
102,823
- 7A. Direct Outreach and Education (actual hands-on, classroom instruction)  
In 2006: 23,525  
From inception to date:  
33,428
- 7B. Indirect Outreach and Education (booths, displays)  
In 2006: 79,298  
From inception to date:  
110,120
8. The total acreage impacted through your NEW (in 2006) chapter projects (This includes prairie restorations, wildscapes, landowner management plans/consultations, park enhancements and restorations initiated for the first time in 2006)  
4,041
9. Total miles of trails improved or developed through new projects (initiated for the first time) in 2006. 8

### **Raffle Winners Picked at General Meeting**

The RGVCTMN held its general meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Winners for the annual raffle were picked. Winners selected by a random drawing by participant Crystal Salinas and Walter Berry were as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Prize. Cannon Digital Camera, Jesse Pfiesser from Blanco, Texas

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Homelite Weed Eater, Paul Baicich, from Oxon Hill, Maryland

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Two Native Plant Books by Dr. Alfred Richardson, Dave Moulder, RGVCTMN Member.

Winner for selling the most tickets for the raffle was Susan Steffner. Prize: \$75 gas card from Wal Mart.

Note: The 2nd Prize winner donated the Weedeater to the chapter for use on our projects.



**Crystal Salinas** draws the winning tickets!  
Over 1700 tickets were sold.

## Invaders of Texas

Our chapter has the opportunity to help slow down the spread of invasive plant species and reduce their ecological and economic damage. On March 24 and 25, 2007, Damon Waitt from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas will conduct the Invaders of Texas Volunteer Workshop for our chapter and members of the community that would like to sign up.

By participating in this program we can help locate the invaders and get the information to those who can do something about it. Trainees will receive expert training to identify and track important invaders in our area.

This two day training will provide you with 10 hours of advanced training. After the training your field work, travel time and the time you enter your information into the database will count as volunteer service.

To attend this program you'll need to go to this website: [www.texasinvasives.org](http://www.texasinvasives.org)

Go to the menu bar on left, click on: **Citizen Science > Become a Citizen Scientist**

Download and read "**Being an Invaders Volunteer**" on the Citizen Scientist Toolkit page.

Download and submit a completed **Volunteer Interest Form** electronically to Donna Berry by March 10, 2007. Training will be held on Saturday, March 24 from 9 – 4 p.m. and on Sunday, March 25 from 9 a.m. – 12 noon.

You will be notified by email if your registration is accepted. Class size is limited to 30 participants per workshop and registration is on a first come first served basis. So be sure and register early!

A \$10 fee will be collected at the workshop to cover lunch and refreshments. All other materials will be provided. Class size is limited to 30 participants. If you have a GPS unit and/or digital camera, bring them with you

## Members Honored

Linda McGonigle, past-President, and Leo Garrett, Newsletter Editor & Chapter Technology were honored at our January meeting for outstanding commitment and service to our chapter. Both Linda and Leo were in the Class of 2004 and have been very active members since they started their training.



One of the first ideas Leo came to the Board about was setting up a listserv so we could have better communication with members since the area our chapter serve is so large. This has been a great tool to get volunteer and advanced training opportunities out to the membership. The listserv has also been used to help with plant, bird and insect identification and there was once a discussion on dealing with woodpeckers and how to keep them from pecking on someone's home. The next project Leo took on was setting up and producing our total E-newsletter. This gave us another tool to communicate and share our accomplishments with all of our members.

Linda was appointed to the Board of Directors for the chapter as Vice President in 2005 to fill the vacant position on the board. In just a few months she was voted by the Board to fill the spot of President when the current president resigned. She served our chapter with professionalism representing us at the opening of Ramsey Park as a World Birding Site and other public functions. She set a wonderful example for all members by her dedicated volunteerism especially working with Sea Turtle, Inc.

Both Linda and Leo were honored with gifts from the chapter for their hard work to make this a successful chapter.





## **New Class!**

Seventeen members of the new class gathered at the Amigoland campus to start this year's training cycle.

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NATURALISTS

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