

Naturalist Program Outlined By Parks Dept.

By Texas Parks & Wildlife
The Texas Master Naturalist Program is a volunteer driven and state directed program to help the citizens of Texas get involved in the outdoors.

Originally the program was slated to help train large metropolitan citizens to get back in touch with the natural world.

Since the early 40's, a shift occurred in Texas where more people are living in the urban areas of Texas and less in the rural.

Now with over 82 percent of the Texas populace living in urban areas, contact with the natural world is becoming more of an idea than a reality.

To tackle the ever-changing dynamics of Texas, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department alongside Texas Cooperative Extension and some 300 local partners continue to promote

and expand the Master Naturalist Program.

An individual gains the designation of Texas Master Naturalist™ after participating in an approved chapter training program with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction, obtaining eight hours of approved advanced training, and completing 40 hours of volunteer service.

Following the initial training program, trainees have one year in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training.

To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete eight additional hours of advanced training and provide an additional 40 hours of volunteer service coordinated through their local chapter.

Master Naturalist Volunteers get the training in a wide degree

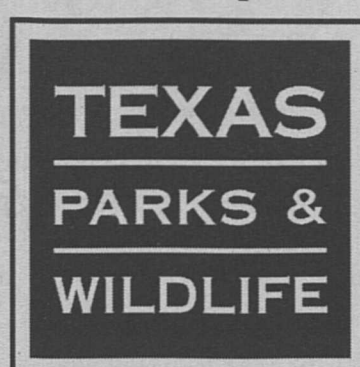
of outdoor and environmental management techniques and are able to help with projects supported by local partners and the state agencies.

The program benefits the individual by enabling them to help work with and manage Texas' natural resources in the present and for the future, and members gain achievement awards annually for completing their hours of service.

In 2005, two Texas Master Naturalist volunteers were recognized for completing over 5,000 hours of volunteer service.

They were awarded with a polished gold and diamond dragonfly pin (the symbol of the program), an official President's Volunteer Service Award Pin, a personalized certificate of achievement, and a note of congratulations from the President of the United States.

The program began in March



of 1997 in San Antonio and currently supports an estimated 2,950 Texas Master Naturalist volunteers in 41 local chapters.

The Texas Master Naturalist program continually expands so if there is not a chapter near you, contact the Texas Master Naturalist Coordinator or your local TPWD biologist or TCE county agent.

Since 1998, Texas Master Naturalist volunteer efforts have provided over 635,000 hours of service valued at more than \$10.1 million.

This service has resulted in enhancing 75,000 acres of wildlife and native plant habitats, reaching more than 1.2 million youth, adults and private landowners.

One member discovered a new plant species. The program has gained international, state, and local recognition with the Wildlife Management Institute's Presidents' 2000 Award, the National Audubon Society's 2001 Habitat Hero's Award, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's 2001 Environmental Excellence Award, Texas A&M University's 2001 Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence in Partnership, and in 2005 the U. S. Department of Interior's "Take Pride in America" award.

Most recently (October 2007), The Texas Master Naturalist Program was awarded the Educator of the Year award presented by the Texas Environmental Education Association.

Funding for the Texas Master Naturalist program is provided by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas Cooperative Extension.

To find out more about the Texas Master Naturalist Program, please visit <http://master-naturalist.tamu.edu/> for information about the program and to search for local chapters in your area.

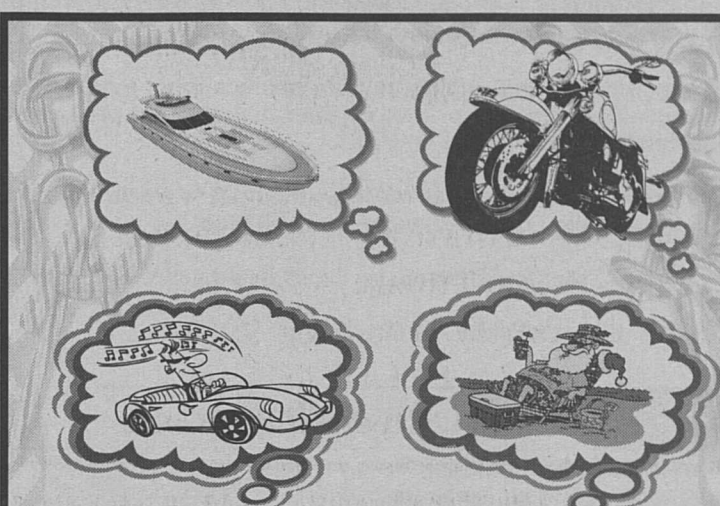
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On Saturday, November 7, students of Eclipse Tae Kwon Do competed in the Bluebonnet Invitational TKD Tournament in Brenham. All of the students from the Eagle Lake School placed first through third place in fighting and patterns and did an awesome job. Pictured from left to right, front row, Samantha Ferguson, Julian Barboza, Erick Barboza, Kaimin Dulany; middle row, Juan Barboza; back row, Carly Deal, Amanda Lovin, Master Clay Hosman and Diego Barboza.

NEWSBRIEFS

Continued from front page

Wharton County Junior College Recital is Dec. 8

The Wharton County Junior College will present The Music Majors Recital on Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Horton Foote Theatre. For more information call 979-532-6300. Admission is free.

CCF presents Christmas gala

A "Christmas Gala," a festive and elegant night of celebration, will be hosted by Covenant Hearts Women's Ministries at Christian City Fellowship (CCF) located on Hwy. 36 between Sealy and Bellville Fri., Dec. 11, at 6:30 p.m. The Gala begins with a wonderful catered meal and live music followed by a time of ministry. Pastor Vicki Hankins, who serves the congregation of Church In the City Metro Dallas alongside her husband, Michael, as Senior Ministers and has ministered internationally, will minister after the meal. For more information contact CCF at 979-885-3113 by December 6.

Chamber Christmas mall Dec. 12

The Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce presents Eagle Lake Parade of Lights and Christmas Mall, Sat., Dec. 12. The Christmas Mall will be from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the Chamber building, 303 Main St. Stop by and check out the food, drinks, crafts, jewelry and gifts. Community sing-a-long throughout the day. The parade starts at 6:45 with judging at 5:30 p.m. Entry forms for the parade, mall or sing-a-long may be found by visiting: www.visiteaglelake.com or by calling 979-234-2780.

Blood drive set for Dec. 12

Start saving your blood...We are having a blood drive! 'Tis the season of giving and Eagle Lake is replenishing the blood bank that has generously given blood to area residents. The drive will be held Saturday, Dec. 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. outside the Chamber Office, 303 Main St. The drive benefits Steven Meinecke and other area residents that have needed blood this year.

GED Classes slated in Weimar

Anyone interested in registering to take adult evening GED classes should call Jerry F. Hudec at 979-263-5829. Registration will be taken on a first-come first-serve basis. The dead line for registration for the Spring Semester is Monday, December 14. The adult GED classes is open to the public, and will meet at 6 p.m. every Monday and Tuesday. The GED registration must be completed before one can attend classes. There is no charge for the classes.

Garden Club reminder to citizens

The Eagle Lake Civic Garden Club would like to remind all citizens about their lighting contest. The time is now to get out and decorate. Garden club members will be out and about on Dec. 15 to choose first, second and third place.

Habitat For Humanity Orientation Jan. 9

Colorado County Habitat for Humanity (CCHFH) will host an Orientation for Prospective Homeowners on Saturday January 9, 2010 at 10 a.m. at the Wintermann Library. Families interested in learning how to become a Habitat homeowner should plan to attend. Call 979-732-5677 to reserve a seat.

Class 2010 Reunion plan underway

Plans are underway for our next Eagle Lake High School All Class Reunion in 2010. The scheduled date is October 8-10, 2010. Most events scheduled will be very similar to previous years. All classes are responsible for their respective Friday night get-togethers, parade down Main Street on Saturday morning at 10 a.m., visitation at community center with teachers and friends Saturday, and a dinner and dance on Saturday night. More information will be mailed to class members in the Spring 2010. If anyone has questions or suggestions, please contact Sidney Struss, Class of 1968 at 234-2020.

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EAGLE LAKE CIVIC GARDEN CLUB HOLIDAY TOUR OF HOMES

**SATURDAY, DEC. 5, 2009
10:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.**

TICKETS ARE \$20 EACH

Tickets available from any Garden Club member or at the Prairie Edge Museum the day of the tour.

Tour includes the homes of Donna Lou Thomas Kelly, Melvin and Rita Sunderman, Donnie and Anna Mae Wiese, David and Val Loveday, the Depot and the First Baptist Church.

Refreshments are included in the ticket price and will be served in the Tea Room at the First Baptist Church.

For more information - www.visiteaglelake.com

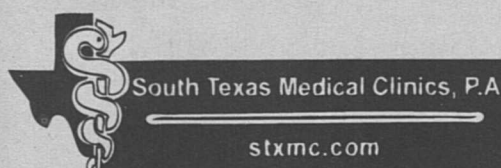
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