



**BEXAR  
AUDUBON  
SOCIETY**  
SAN ANTONIO, TX



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National Audubon Society  
newsletter contest — large  
chapter division

Volume XXII, No. 7  
December 2004

**BEXAR  
TRACKS**

*Thursday, December 9, 2004, Chapter Meeting*

Come celebrate!

# Annual Holiday Party and Election of New Officers

The December meeting will be a potluck dinner held at 6:30 p.m. at the home of President Susan Hughes, 825 E. Guenther St. **Please bring a covered dish to share and a “white elephant” holiday gift to exchange for fun.** Beverages will be provided. **RSVP to Susan Hughes at 210-822-4503.** Easy directions will be provided if a phone number, snail mail address or e mail address is left on the message machine. Basically, it’s south of South

Alamo near Guenther House/Pioneer Mills and the Blue Star Art Gallery.

We have much to celebrate with the opening of the new Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. This year will include election of new officers. We can strengthen the bonds that unite us, restore some balance to our lives, renew old friendships while making new ones and generally have a splendid time. Ya’ll come.

## November 11 recap

# Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

Iliana Pena, provided us with an update on the status of the center. In fact, this was the third presentation of the day – she is actively getting out information to the community to try to generate interest in partnering with the MLAC. The National Audubon Society has 37 centers across the country but each one is community-based to reflect local community needs. For now, the center is doing OK and has a \$176,000 operating fund. She’s very excited that folks from the new Toyota plant have taken an interest in the center; their volunteers are especially enthusiastic and efficient! Even the CEO has volunteered! Toyota has endowed two other centers nationally. Other organizations which have been receptive to getting information have been Alcoa, Tesoro, and KB Homes. The audience’s eyebrows went up after hearing about KB Homes, but Iliana said that they had just finished the first development subject to the tree ordinance, and she said they did a good job. They’ve also been involved in getting presentations on native plants and xeriscaping to their homebuyers. They’ve expressed interest in hearing about cluster housing.

The MLAC has already made an amazing amount of progress, especially since the lease with SAWS was signed

only in April. MLAC has already graduated its first class of 25 docents (July 12 – Sep 6). Another class will start in January – please volunteer (visit their website [www.tx.audubon.org/mitchell.htm](http://www.tx.audubon.org/mitchell.htm)). The MLAC has hosted more than 300 visitors – which involved 200 volunteer hours just since October. Iliana then made an announcement that pleased everyone in the audience. They will name their annual volunteer award after one of the docents who recently died, the Thomas Cleaver prize.

Iliana showed some slides of the transformation of the Leeper House Visitor’s Center sitting on bare ground in mid-June, to a beautifully landscaped grounds. Thanks to Charles Bartlett, who donated the landscaping plan, and other planning committee members, Patty Leslie Paztor, Judit Green, and Mark Husfield, the \$30,000 project took just 9 weeks with more than 100 volunteers giving over 600 hours of work. In August, the brand new plants were 4-inches high. Thanks to SAWS’ compost, they are now lush and inspiring visitors to use drought tolerant plants in their own gardens.

Another one of the projects that is currently under way, is the development of curriculum for local kids to

**Continued on page 3 - MLAC**

## BEXAR AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter of the National Audubon Society

P. O. Box 6084, San Antonio, TX 78209  
210-822-4503

### GOALS

The Chapter's primary goals are to promote species and habitat conservation and environmental education in the community.

### OFFICERS

President	Susan Hughes . (susan@wordwright.com) . 532-2332
Vice Pres.	Harry Noyes ..... (harrynoyes@satx.rr.com) . 490-3124
Treasurer	Betty Minyard ..... (mink@texas.net) ..... 344-6128
Secretary	..... available

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Tony Wood	..... (tmcawood@aol.com) ..... 493-4684
Director	..... available

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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**Bexar Tracks** is your newsletter.  
We welcome your contributions.



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Visit Bexar Audubon's  
Web Site:

<http://www.BexarAudubon.org>

Visit San Antonio Environmental  
Network's Web Site:

<http://www.sa-naturecenter.org>

Suggestions and contributions are welcome.

Please contact Harry Noyes at  
[harrynoyes@satx.rr.com](mailto:harrynoyes@satx.rr.com)

To report a polluting vehicle:

1-800-453-SMOG

(1-800-453-7664)

or [www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/air/ms/smokingvehicles.html](http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/air/ms/smokingvehicles.html)

The only place I know where  
success comes before work is  
in the dictionary.

~ Vidal Sassoon ~

## BENEATH THE GAVEL

It has been a pleasure serving as your president for the past three years — my second tenure in this position during the past decade. Thank you for that opportunity. I am proud of the reputation Bexar Audubon retains within our community and the programs, communications, and activities that we sponsor and produce.

We are in a period of transition, however, as our relationship with National Audubon Society evolves. We must become more self-reliant financially, since our portion of NAS's dues share is minimized. Several options are available to us: we could institute chapter-only memberships, separate from or in addition to your regular NAS membership; we can seek grants for specific programs (but these are difficult to acquire for day-to-day operating expenses, such as the newsletter); we could institute a subscription fee for the newsletter; we could depend upon an annual appeal to our members for direct financial support. None of these options would be as predictable as the dues share we used to receive from NAS, but since that is drying up quickly, we must consider these and other alternatives.

At present we serve between 1200 and 1300 members, who are automatically joint members of NAS and BAS. If we moved to chapter-only memberships, we would cease automatic service to all NAS members who do not explicitly and separately join the chapter. In particular, this would mean that you would not receive the Bexar Tracks newsletter if you were not a chapter member. This would not affect your other NAS member benefits. NAS may assign you to the chapter as a member in our covered area, but we would not include those members in our regular mailing list. You could still access our website, read the newsletter electronically, etc., since our programs are open to the public — so long as we can afford to keep the chapter functioning and offering programs and services.

It would be helpful to your chapter leadership to know how you feel about Bexar Audubon Society and the role we play in your community. Would you be willing to provide separate support to sustain the chapter? Would you be willing to subscribe to the newsletter to cover costs? Would you include Bexar Audubon Society in your charitable giving? Would it concern you if the chapter ceased to exist?

I continue to believe that Bexar Audubon's voice in the community is an important one for dialog on environmental issues, for consensus building, and for information dissemination. I believe we represent you well on issues of concern to conservationists. I and our other board members — current and incoming — and our stalwart cadre of volunteers believe that we play a role that is not otherwise filled. As we daily face more and more challenges to our ecological integrity and health, this role will increase in importance if we are to remain — or become — a sustainable community.

If you agree, please let us know. You can phone 210-822-4503, e-mail [president@bexaraudubon.org](mailto:president@bexaraudubon.org), send mail to PO Box 6084, SATx 78209-0084, and/or attend our annual member meeting and holiday party on December 9 (publicized in this newsletter).

The questions are important and well worth a few moments of your time to reply.

We wish you all a healthy and joyous holiday season. Please join us on December 9. Please let us know how you feel about our future.

-All the best,  
Susan Hughes

# Stewards of the earth

learn about nature. Iliana is visiting with area science teachers, curriculum administrators and others about what the local needs are. Soon she will be recruiting prospective education committee members. Their goal is to have a curriculum to offer by Fall 2005. They have 3 programs that are already being put to use, including Learning Birding Basics. Local colleges and school districts are also taking advantage of the area.

Another item that is currently being developed is a Habitat Management Plan. Not only are they getting help from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, but there are 60 experts from the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence here in San Antonio who have offered their help. Iliana made a plea for all who visit the center and the grounds to make sure to report your observations. A very important part of the development of the habitat plan will be the input from citizen scientists. Since Mitchell Lake is a disturbed area, it will be fascinating to see how it reverts to its natural state. While some visitors may rue the passing of the lush Bermuda lawn, Iliana is eager for the natives to return and with them, birds like quail and others.

One way that you can help the center is by going to their website, [www.tx.audubon.org/mitchell.htm](http://www.tx.audubon.org/mitchell.htm). If you are a customer of SAWS and have high-flow toilets, they will give you a high quality low-flow toilet (up to two worth \$150 each!) and donate \$25 to MLAC to boot! By the time you get this newsletter, there should be a form to download that you can use to apply to SAWS for their water conserving program and do MLAC some good, too!

*-Jill Sondeen*



Representatives from different faiths gave their overview on the role of their religious beliefs in the conservation of the environment.

Chris Brown led off. He is well-known in our area as an environmental organizer and water-conservation consultant. He has a degree in theology and is active in San Antonio's Mennonite church, and presented the Anabaptist values and "living more with less." Their view of environmentalism is that stated in Psalm 24, "The earth is the Lord's." We are stewards of the earth.

Rick Doucette was next and described the Catholic perspective. He is the associate director of the Office of Social Concerns of the Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio. Principles for a just world focus on protecting the life and dignity of people – sustainable life – and caring for God's creation. They promulgate showing respect for God's creation by being good stewards. Environmental degradation affects all people of the world for generations to come. The church is currently at a crossroads and is developing a new environmental ethic which will help Catholics understand the facts, teach respect for life and the environment, and encourage church members to explore their own lives to reduce the impact on and protect the environment as well as promote social justice.

Richard Grant, well known to us as the president of San Antonio Audubon Society, is the Minister of Pastoral Care and Senior Adults, First Baptist Church of San Antonio. He was the first of the speakers to bring up the concept of the Bible saying that man was put here for dominion of the earth – and promptly pointed out that

the concept is misinterpreted – we are stewards of the earth.

Next, Sarwat Husain gave us the viewpoint from the Muslim faith. She is the chairwoman of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Antonio, and the publisher of a national English-language Muslim newspaper. She started out by defining what Islam means – Islam means peace and total submission to God. It is a way of life. The Lord has made humans superior; we must take care of others and the world. The Koran teaches that animals, as well as plants, atmosphere, etc., are nations unto themselves. Taking care of your environment is a form of worship.

Marianne Kestenbaum is the executive director of Smart Growth San Antonio, and she provided us the viewpoint of the Jewish faith. She described some of the aspects on the Kosher laws – they prevent cruelty to animals: send the hen out of the henhouse before taking her eggs. There is required to be a green space around cities. Jewish law emphasizes that there must be productive use, sustainability, and balance.

Paul Moore described the Episcopal viewpoint, which he mentioned was similar to that of the Baptists. He is the pastor of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Killeen, and is also a falconer. Adam is a link between heaven and earth: dirt and God's breath. Jesus is God and man. Paul brought up that his relationship to his young falcon is like our relationship to others. At first, the bird feared Paul, probably thought that Paul was going to eat him. But now the falcon is learning to trust Paul. Paul learns from the bird about life, and the bird will live three times longer than if he were in the wild.

*-Jill Sondeen*

### Mark your calendar

Feb. 25-26 — 2005 South Texas Farm and Range Forum

### Upcoming Second Saturday Programs

December 11 — 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.  
Tuna, Nopales and More!

Local experts will share their knowledge of native plants and their uses by past and present people; family friendly.

### MITCHELL LAKE ACCESS



Birding trips to Mitchell Lake are still occurring. Call the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center at 210-628-1639 for information.



Earth Share of Texas represents the Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in

payroll deduction plans for charitable giving. For information, call 1-800-GREENTX or email <estx@earthshare-texas.org>.

### RECURRING EVENTS

San Antonio Audubon Society's Beginners' Birdwalk is held at 8 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. Visitors are welcome. There are binoculars to lend.

Meet at the Judson Nature Trail next to the Alamo Heights Swimming Pool on Viesca St. From the 5900 block of Broadway, turn west on Ogden to Greeley St., turn left one block, then right again to the parking lot on the left. More information at 210-342-2073.

### Window Birds

A birding friend of mine, a fellow Texan (from Houston) attending a university in Illinois, is studying birds hitting windows on her campus. She has started a list serve (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/windowbirds>) and is looking for others who would like to brainstorm possible ways to make tangible progress on reducing hits. If you are interested, please sign up for this list serve.

*-Bill Sain, Former BAS president  
Beavercreek OH*

### FIRST SATURDAYS INTERPRETIVE NATURE HIKES

December 4, 2004 — 9 - 11 a.m.

**FRIEDRICH PARK — 21395 MILSA, SAN ANTONIO**

*Reservations are highly recommended*, as the hike will not be conducted if there are no pre-registered participants. Call 210/698-1057. *Participants are limited to 15 per hike.* For groups of 8 or more please call to schedule a separate hike. *Meet at the restrooms near the parking lot in the park. A donation of \$2 is suggested.* Sponsored by San Antonio Natural Areas — [www.sanaturalareas.org](http://www.sanaturalareas.org).

Bexar Audubon Society, Inc.  
P. O. Box 6084  
San Antonio, TX 78209

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### Membership Form Chapter Donation Form National Audubon Society Bexar Audubon Society

Membership rates are:

**Student/Senior \$15      Basic \$35**  
**Introductory 1-year \$20 (2-year: \$30)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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For a new membership, mail this coupon and your check—payable to "National Audubon Society, Chapter W19" to:

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P. O. Box 6084  
San Antonio, TX 78209

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