

# Target Talk

TEXAS HUNTER EDUCATION NEWS



Quarterly Newsletter

Summer Issue 2018

No. 162

*Mission: To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

## Coordinator's Column



In this issue, we once again honor those of YOU who have enjoyed success this past year – involvement in the program! Thanks to ALL of you for your hard earned efforts! Though we recognize only a handful, YOU will be next -- as we compile a rich, productive history in the Texas Hunter Education Program. Johnnie Smith, Outreach & Education Director, puts it well in his message on the next page, "You care!" and thanks for that!

I recently attended the **International Hunter Education Association-USA** ([ihea-usa.org](http://ihea-usa.org)) meeting in Anchorage, AK, along with fellow staff members **Randy Spradlin (W TX)**, **Monica Bickerstaff (N TX)** and **Heidi Rao (SE TX)**. **Dallas Seavey** (Center), along with one of his "4-time Iditarod Champion" sled dogs, served up an outstanding keynote address about his focused efforts and accomplishments. His lessons on leadership & teamwork inspired all who heard his story! Many THANKS and accolades go to Ginamaria Smith, AK Hunter Education Coordinator, and her staff/volunteers! "Alaska did not disappoint in hosting the annual conference. Well done!"

## Hunter Education Calendar



### SAVE THESE 2018/19 DATES!

- **July 23-25<sup>th</sup> – Student Air Rifle in Schools (SARS) – POSTPONED to Nov/Dec 2018**
- **Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> – Dove Season & Fall Hunter Education Season** Begin! Teach & Go Hunt!
- **Sept 8<sup>th</sup> - Wildlife Management (101)** - Kerr WMA - [brock.minton@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:brock.minton@tpwd.texas.gov)
- **Sept 14-15<sup>th</sup> – Lonesome Dove Festival** Karnes City - [brock.minton@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:brock.minton@tpwd.texas.gov)
- **October 19-21<sup>st</sup> – Disabled Youth Hunt** - San Angelo - [randy.spradlin@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:randy.spradlin@tpwd.texas.gov)
- **October 20-28<sup>th</sup> – NSCA Championship** – S. Antonio – [morgan.harbison@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:morgan.harbison@tpwd.texas.gov)
- **Nov. 2-4<sup>th</sup> - BOW 25<sup>th</sup>ANNIVERSARY** - Brownwood - [heidi.rao@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:heidi.rao@tpwd.texas.gov)
- **Apr. 26-28<sup>th</sup> 2019 Hunt. Ed. Inst. Conf.** SOUTH TEXAS – [steve.hall@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:steve.hall@tpwd.texas.gov)

## Message from the Outreach & Education Director, Johnnie Smith

Our Texas Hunter Education program trained over 57,000 students in fiscal year (FY) 2017 and should match or exceed those numbers for FY 2018. Our success is made possible through the tremendous efforts of our hunter education instructors. Simply put, we could not reach and train current and future Texas hunters without YOU! But the story doesn't end there. Your impact reverberates throughout the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas in expected and unexpected ways.



Hunter Education graduates have a new and deeper understanding of how their choices and actions positively affect the management of Texas' wildlife and habitats. Clear messages of Hunter Education resonate far beyond hunters and hunting. They can be heard in the swish-thump of arrows taking flight and finding their mark downrange in Texas National Archery in the Schools trainings and shoots, where many young folks get their first introduction to a lifetime of outdoor adventure. One can hear Hunter Education themes in the voices of teachers and students enjoying a Project WILD activity and learning about the carrying capacity of a deer herd and the role of predators in controlling their numbers. In our Explore Bow Hunting/Bow Fishing, Shooting Sports, and Target Range Grant programs, one hears the same themes of responsible harvest, improvement of shooting skills, respect for the land/landowner, and of portraying sportsmen and women in a positive light. Your message reaches across everything we do in Outreach and Education and is integral to the very existence of TPWD.

You are hunters, conservationists, spokespersons, representatives, doctors, lawyers, teachers, white collar, blue collar, and self-made. You represent such an amazing array of diverse experiences and life skills yet share a powerful commonality. YOU CARE ... and are willing to take the time to explain why, and how, you care ... to anyone who will listen. THANK YOU for who you are and for what you do when the whole world is watching, and when no one is watching. You make the outdoors better!



## 2018 Annual Conference Highlights

The **2018 Annual Hunter Education Instructor Conference** held at Camp Judeae Young, Wimberley, was a success! BIG THANKS to all instructors who attended and to the **Texas Hunter Education Instructor Association** who hosted and funded the conference. Special thanks to hunter education instructors, THEIA treasurer- **Denise Harmel-Garza**, Texas Agrilife Extension, and **Julie Clark**, Austin Gun Club, who put forth a HUGE effort planning conference details/logistics. THEIA board members chipped in big! Thanks to TPWD staff, **Eddie Kleppinger** and **Kristy Willis** for assisting THEIA with registration. **Lindsay Hodgdon**, THEIA president, and his board presided over the conference agenda to make sure everyone had a great time and enjoyed networking.

It was great to see **Terry Erwin**, longtime Hunter Education Coordinator (retired) and **Kathy** and **Keith Powell**, who served the program for several decades. They came to "crash the party & see ole friends," as Kathy put it!

Thanks to Keynote Speaker, **Dr. Robert Norton** and his wife, **Carol**, and to PLATINUM sponsor - **Kalkomey Enterprises** ([Hunter-ed.com](http://Hunter-ed.com)); GOLD sponsors - **Sean Hensley** ([TexasHunterEd.com](http://TexasHunterEd.com)), **Henry Repeating Arms**, **Sig-Sauer**, **Lonesome Dove Fest Committee**; SILVER sponsors - **Academy**, **Leupold**, **David Richards**; and BRONZE sponsors, **IHEA-Mexico & Maria Araujo** (TPWD International Relations), **Texas State Rifle Association** (Vicki Huyge, Executive Director), **Texas Youth Hunting Program** (Bob Barnette, N TX Regional Director) and the **Texas Archery in Schools Program** (Theresa Meyers).

## TX Volunteer Instructor of the Year



**Clinton Narcisse, Jr., Humble** - According to Heidi Rao, SE TX Hunter Education Specialist, Clint excelled in 2017 in increasing diversity and inclusion efforts in hunter education, offering more classes, serving as TYHP hunt master and getting more involved in youth hunting program efforts, being available to other instructors, attending more workshops and special events, and serving as lead instructor for the 11th annual SCI-Houston-sponsored Hunter Education Course in July for nearly 200 students. He helped Rao teach a new instructor course and host a "Meet 'N Greet" at Bass Pro in Katy. Narcisse has overcome several personal/physical setbacks to get even stronger in both his spirit and his health, *"all to the benefit of the kids within his community and city!"* **THANKS & MANY CONGRATS!**

**SOUTHEAST TX - Cheryl LeJune, Houston** - LeJune teaches an "Intro to Hunting", two "Intro to Firearms" & a Hunter Education Course for women at each BOW (spring & fall). She is very active for all outreach events

each year in the Greater Houston area including *Take Me Outdoors-Houston* and Laser Shot exhibit at the Houston Rodeo. Rao said, "Cheryl always steps up when called upon to give presentations on behalf of hunter education such as at Lone Star College or Central Market Cooking Schools. She is a huge asset to our program in SE Texas!"



## SOUTH TEXAS - John "Jack" Thompson, San Antonio

Thompson became a hunter education instructor in 2007 and bow hunter education instructor in 2014. He serves as an Area Chief in Bexar County, where he has served two terms as President of the South Central Texas Hunter Education Instructor's Association. "Not only does he remain active

in hunter education," said Brock Minton, S TX Hunter Education Specialist, "but, he also continues to volunteer for outreach events and attend

advanced workshops offered throughout the state." Minton added, "Other Area Chiefs in and around the San Antonio area look to Jack as the "go-to-guy" on updates for information and events." Congratulations Jack!



**WEST TEXAS - Kathy Glass, Eola** - According to Randy Spradlin, W TX Hunter Education Specialist, "Kathy only teaches a couple of classes on average each year; however, she does a lot for the program in so many other ways." Glass served as a

TYHP Regional Coordinator and conducted 11 hunts this past year. She took over for Jeanette Story to lead "Daughters Day at the Range" after Ms.

Story's passing. She assists her very active team partner, Gary Glass, who just earned his Shotgun incentive award for all of his activity in the hunter education program. "She is one of the busiest persons I know, and yet I can count on her whenever I need her," Spradlin continued. THANKS Kathy!



**CENTRAL TEXAS - Thomas "Buck" Seitz, Austin** - Seitz formed a new teaching partnership with Cabela's in Buda and continued his long time partnership teaching at the Austin Rifle Club in Manor. Between the classroom (Buda) and Online + Field Course (Manor) versions, he earned the



5th most teaching points in the state behind DFW and Houston area instructors -- far greater in Central Texas than other efforts. "I've worked with Buck a long

time," said Steve Hall, Hunter Education Coordinator, "But, I've never seen him this driven in providing coursework -- especially in the fast-growing Central Texas region." Thanks, Buck, for all you have achieved in 2017. Keep it up!



**NORTH TEXAS - Area Chief, Brent Heath, Waco** (shown here in blue shirt and asking a question at the recent Tree Stand Instructor Certification workshop) - Heath has been an Area Chief Hunter Education Instructor since 1988 and Bow Hunter Education Instructor since 2011. According to N TX Hunter Education Specialist, Monica Bickerstaff, "Brent has been instrumental in coordinating mentors for mentored hunts held at Lake Waco and Navarro Mills and has conducted multiple hunter and bow hunter education student and instructor courses throughout the year." She added, "He is always willing to assist as needed and is our go-to in the Waco area." THANKS Brent, for all you in Northcentral TX!



## Hunter Education Partner of the Year

### The Texas Trappers & Fur Hunters Association

TTFHA has just completed its 25th year SILVER anniversary of continued support for TPWD's hunter education program by providing educational programs and trapping workshops for instructors. They have fielded numerous calls and requests for landowner problems and calls from TPWD staff and game



wardens needing service or a trapper education opinion from grassroots trappers. They have also assisted in reviewing trapper education material at the national and state levels.

**PHOTO:** (From R to L) Randy Spradlin, Heidi Rao, Monica Bickerstaff, and retired HE Coordinator, Terry Erwin, joined Brock Minton (L) to present the PARTNER award to Keith Jackson and his wife, Tasha, who accepted on behalf of TTFHA and other longtime supporters & instructors, Jim Brooks, and Earle Blakney. THANKS for your many years of service and support!

## Hunter Education Team Award

### Grand Prairie Gun Club

**PHOTO: Ron Wisdom**, shown here teaching archery, was part of the successful Grand Prairie Gun Club Hunter Education Instructor TEAM in 2017. Unfortunately Ron passed in 2018, but the team has vowed to continue his *call to duty* at the facility built with TPWD Target Range Grant Funds.



## Partner Award Cont. ... Grand Prairie Gun Club

Instructors of the Team include **Joe Cawthon III, Suzy Duffek, Jim Markle, Richard Bailey, Steve Jung, William Flynt, William Knight, Will Stilley, Robert Stone, and Frank Horak, Sr.** Many others have served the team over the years, as well. "This team is striving to overcome multiple challenges with which they've been faced over the past five years including the passing of a hunter education legend, Jan Heath, to the recent passing of Ron Wisdom and Richard Bailey's wife, Patricia "Ma" Bailey." Bickerstaff choked back tears during her presentation of the award, "Her passing came as Richard was teaching a Muzzle Loading 101 course for us in March." Bickerstaff continued, "This is the quality of hunter education instructors and teams that we have in Texas -- to persist even as loved ones pass on..." Despite such setbacks and the struggling health of their current leader, Jim Markle, club members have continuously stepped up to assist with events such as the recent Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas Annual Convention field activities, hosted multiple advanced and 101 workshops and conducted many hunter education courses throughout the year. Go TEAM!

## Game Warden of the Year Award



**Game Warden Albert Flores, Ingelside** - Flores became a game warden and Hunter Education Instructor in 1990 and is currently very active as a national instructor for Conservation Leaders for

Tomorrow (CLfT); Texas Outdoor Women's Network (T.O.W.N.) – Rockport; and Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society. He has conducted game laws presentations for countless hunter education courses and workshops as well as served as a guide for many Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) youth hunts. Albert also volunteers his time introducing and finding young people places to hunt year-round. He assisted with game processing during a hunter education presentation at the Texas Master Naturalist Conference in 2017 as well as served up wild game for various hunter education functions including the Hunting for Conservation workshop. Game Wardens in Albert's area look up to him for advice and leadership -- as does the rest of the hunter education instructors. Thanks Albert -- keep going above and beyond!

## Professional Educator of the Year



**Principal, David Baxter, Spring ISD** - Baxter has been in the HE program for 20+ years. As Heidi Rao said during the awards ceremony, "He was at my first Instructor training and has been an active school administrator ever since." As a principal and leader in several schools

where he has lived, he continually offers hunter education classes and constantly encourages his staffs to get certified as instructors. He gets everyone he knows involved in the Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) and has served as a TYHP Hunt Master, guide and "Pied Piper" bringing "busloads" of kids every year on hunts, many times after he has personally trained them in hunter education. Rao continued, "He always offers his assistance during workshops and special events, and steps up to offer his school as a host location for events and new instructor training." She added, "David is truly passionate about getting the youth excited about the outdoors and he dedicates both his professional and personal lives to future generations!" THANKS, Dave, for all that you achieve!



David Baxter demonstrates how to properly skin and butcher deer into quarters for participants at the "TYHP Super Hunt" held each year near Fredericksburg for 60 young hunters, their parents, volunteers, guides and landowners (200 in all).

## THEIA Honors Bob Boswell



**Bob Boswell, Georgetown**, received the prestigious "TD CARROLL" Award from Texas Hunter Education Instructor Association (**THEIA**) **President, Lindsay Hodgdon**, at the recent Hunter Education Instructor Conference. Named after the first Hunter Education Administrator in Texas, the award recognizes exceptional efforts on behalf of the non-profit organization, and it is their top award.

Boswell has served as president of the Texas Hunter Education Instructor's Association (THEIA) and as a longtime Area Chief instructor, now in Georgetown. Currently, he and **Duke Walton** traverse the state setting up hunter education and wildlife outreach events and youth hunts at Bob's ranch on behalf of THEIA, such as the recent NASP Statewide Tournament with over 2,200 youth and their parents. He was honored as a "Gallery of Guns" National Instructor in 2017 to go with his three decades of service as a hunter education instructor in Texas. He is the Hunting and Wildlife Director for the Texas State Rifle Association (TSRA), where he continually promotes hunter education to the TSRA membership. Hodgdon said, "Bob has always been there for our organization and this award is overdue." He continued, "But we are now correcting that and honoring him for his many years of service ...THANKS Bob!



## Turkey Hunting 101 a Success!



**By: Monica Bickerstaff, N TX Hunter Education Specialist** - **Lance Brooks, Lewisville**, was ecstatic when learning he was drawn for a spring turkey hunt on public land on Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands' WMA. New to turkey hunting, Brooks began learning all he could about pursuing spring turkey. Brooks learned about, and planned to attend, the **Turkey Hunting 101** Workshop that I scheduled for February 3, 2018 at Lake Ray Roberts – Johnson Branch. Much to his chagrin, Brooks contracted the flu and was unable to attend. Not to be dissuaded, Brooks reached out to me to ask if I would be willing to meet with him to share information presented during the workshop and my knowledge gained in pursuit of spring turkey. My husband, "LD", also a Texas Hunter Education Instructor, and I met with Brooks one Saturday morning during *Cabela's Spring Turkey Classic*. Armed with his newly acquired knowledge, and resources distributed during the workshop, Brooks left our get together and drove straight to the WMA to scout the pastures he would be hunting. Brooks located gobblers that very evening! Additional scouting resulted in Brooks locating what he thought to be a turkey track. He captured the image and shared it with me seeking my opinion – it was tough to tell for sure.

Four days into the 2018 spring season, Brooks shared the ultimate photo – that of him with his first turkey harvest – a testament to our Hunting 101 Workshop goals! Brooks plans will be trying his hand at mounting his bird's wings and fan – knowledge gained from a taxidermist's booth while at Cabela's. Brooks is hooked!

## ORS & HE Regional Staff Support



**Morgan Harbison**



**Monica, Heidi & Randy**

- **Monica Bickerstaff** - North TX HE Specialist  
[monica.bickerstaff@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:monica.bickerstaff@tpwd.texas.gov) - **DFW**  
972-263-1219 w; 469-601-8349 c
- **Brock Minton** – South TX HE Specialist  
[brock.minton@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:brock.minton@tpwd.texas.gov) – **Corpus Christi**  
361-825-3249 w; 361-944-3617 c
- **Heidi Rao** - Southeast TX HE Specialist  
[heidi.rao@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:heidi.rao@tpwd.texas.gov) - **Houston**  
713-829-1377 w/c
- **Randy Spradlin** - West TX HE Specialist  
[randy.spradlin@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:randy.spradlin@tpwd.texas.gov) - **Abilene**  
512-923-3509 w/c
- **Morgan Harbison** – Central TX HE Specialist  
[morgan.harbison@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:morgan.harbison@tpwd.texas.gov)  
512-413-0194 w/c – **College Station**
- **Steve Hall**, Statewide Hunter Ed Coordinator  
[steve.hall@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:steve.hall@tpwd.texas.gov) – **Austin**  
512-389-8140 w; 512-550-7330 c
- **Eddie Kleppinger**, Hunter Ed Admin Assistant  
[Eddie.kleppinger@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:Eddie.kleppinger@tpwd.texas.gov)  
512-389-8142 w (MAIN CONTACT in Austin)



**Brock Minton**



**Steve Hall & Eddie Kleppinger**

## Troy Harrison Reaches Hall of Fame



Heidi Rao, SE TX Hunter Education Specialist, awarded **Troy Harrison, Pasadena**, his Hall of Fame Award and *Academy*® Gift Card in May. Troy has been extremely active since he joined the ranks in 2011. Having served as a military and law enforcement officer for the past 25 years, his experiences have helped him transition to hunter education. He stated, "The ethics conversation that begins each class is popular with the students as they are submerged in discussions they can relate to in their lives, but also as hunters." Troy is often contacted after the class by parents with a sincere "thank you" for the way he related to the students.

He currently teaches at Bass Pro Shops, Pearland, and has also held classes at Gander Mountain, Academy, Wal-Mart, Sports Authority as well as other private locations. Troy is employed full time as the Chief of Police in Shoreacres, Texas, a position he has held since 2012, and has been a police officer since 1989. Before law enforcement, Troy served in the United States Marine Corps. He is married to Kathy, who is also a volunteer instructor, and they have two sons, Donovan and Dalton. One is a police officer, one is a United States Marine. Congrats, Troy, and THANKS for your family's service in the military and as volunteers for TPWD!



## BOW to Celebrate 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

2018 Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop,  
November 2-4, Texas 4-H Center, Brownwood, Texas  
(where it began!)

## Hunting for Conservation



Workshop Held April 17-18th at Camp Young Judea

**Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLFT)** is a professional and university student training program orienting folks with little or no knowledge of hunting and conservation to a week-long Hunting 101, Hunter Education and Wildlife & Conservation primer, including an actual hunt. As part of CLFT, Texas Parks and Wildlife held its second "short course" entitled **Hunting for Conservation** for 40 non-hunting employees and partners that work with hunters. The workshop covered history of hunting and conservation, hunter's role in wildlife management, hunter education and basic hunting and shooting sports concepts. Three quarters of the participants took advantage of learning how to shoot shotgun, handgun and/or rifle -- putting some of their new found knowledge to practice. Thanks to **Ricky Bangs**, Dripping Springs ISD, for making the opportunity available at their *Hog Heaven* facilities.

## JOIN THEIA & IHEA-USA TODAY!

**TEXAS HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR ASSOCIATION** is the "Friends Group" for the TPWD Hunter Education Program supporting YOU -- the TEXAS Hunter Education Instructor! The **INTERNATIONAL HUNTER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION – USA** was established to support state programs.

JOIN TODAY at: [www.texastheia.org](http://www.texastheia.org)



## R3 – Get Used to the Acronym!

Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation



R3 Symposium in Lincoln, NE, May 2018

It was a first of its kind event for 325 professionals from state and federal agencies, conservation groups, NGOs and the outdoor industry -- I believe it is akin to what Ding Darling, Aldo Leopold and others faced 100 years ago with the declines in species and habitats in the United States. This time around, it is the gradual decline in hunting and even target shooting, activities that fund conservation efforts (one of the primary solutions from the deliberations a century ago). It is the *call to action* for conservation.

Instead of being pessimistic about the declining rates of participation, the mood was one of optimism of what should be done the next 100 years to sustain the hunting and target shooting heritage (in turn, sustaining the North American Conservation Model). "Think Tanks" of today are focused on overcoming the threats and barriers that face us -- but doing so together! Increased participation will be based on partnerships, access, relevance, target marketing, media awareness, diversity and new technologies.

In Texas, we are drafting a R3 State Action Plan that links to the National R3 Plan. TPWD will certainly pass along and involve YOU in those strategies best suited towards OUR collective efforts. Hunter education has been integrally involved in R3 at the grassroots level, and will continue to play a major role in accomplishing future successes.

