



Nature Notes

Call the Nature Line (314) 935-8432 for meeting times & bird sightings
Journal of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, March 2006, Vol. 78, No. 3

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - Yvonne Homeyer

WGSS RECOGNIZED BY CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES - WGSS received a formal proclamation from the City of Webster Groves thanking us for our \$4,000 contribution to the Open Space Council "in honor of your commitment to protect green space in our community. On behalf of the Mayor and the entire City Council, we thank you for your continued dedication and generosity to conservation and the preservation of open lands." The funds were donated to the Open Space Council in connection with a project at the corner of Elm and Kirkham known as the Shady Creek Nature Sanctuary, a part of which is known as the Magner Woods in honor of Ernestine and Marshall Magner. Thanks to the generosity of WGSS members, family members and friends, over \$4,000 was raised in their memory.

ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTION OF OFFICERS - On April 6, there will be a brief annual meeting preceding the regular program, at which time members will vote on a Slate of Candidates for 3 officer positions. The Slate consists of Ann Earley, President; Jane Walker, 1st Vice President; and Kimberlie McCue, 2nd Vice President. (See separate article about the election.)

MAY BANQUET TO FEATURE DOUG LADD. Doug Ladd will be our keynote speaker at the Banquet on Tuesday, May 2. His presentation will focus on Missouri grasslands. Doug will be doing a book signing for the new 2nd edition of Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers. Jim Jackson will be honored as this year's recipient of the WGSS Lifetime Achievement Award. In this issue you will find a reservation Form for the Banquet and program. We look forward to seeing you there!
(Cont'd p. 2, col. 1)

MARCH 2 GENERAL MEETING - Yvonne Homeyer

"Birds and Butterflies of New Mexico and the Chiricahuas," 7 PM, St. Louis County Library Headquarters on S. Lindbergh across from Plaza Frontenac. Jim Ziebol and Yvonne Homeyer will present a video of their trip this past July to New Mexico and southeast Arizona. Highlights include a Dipper at close range, several hummingbird species, Verdin, Black-throated Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Gambel's Quail; Pine White, Dull Firetip, Tailed Copper, Arizona and Ares Metalmarks, Atlantis Fritillary, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Fulvia Checkerspot, Leda Ministreak, Sylvan Hairstreak, several species of Blues, and numerous skipper species; plus Flame Skimmer, Apache Spiketail, Marbled Whiptail, Yarrow's Spiny Lizard, and Striped Plateau Lizard. This program is co-sponsored with the North American Butterfly Association (NABA-St.Louis)

SPRING BANQUET - TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2006 - Margy Terpstra

The Spring Banquet will be held on Tuesday, May 2. WGSS member Doug Ladd will be our keynote speaker. Doug is Director of Conservation Science for the Missouri Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. He has been involved with conservation planning, natural area assessment, management, restoration, and research for more than twenty-five years, with particular emphasis on vegetation, ecological restoration and fire ecology. Doug's topic will be "Grassland Redux - The genesis, character, destruction and rebirth of our tallgrass heritage". Doug is also the author of Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers, first published in 1995, which has been described as the "ultimate
(Cont'd on p. 2, col. 2)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER (Cont'd)

WGNSS JOINS TAUM SAUK COALITION -

The Taum Sauk region extends from Taum Sauk to Johnson Shut-ins State Park and includes Proffit Mountain where the Ameren UE reservoir was located that gave way on Dec. 14, 2005, destroying Johnson's Shut-ins. In 2001 Ameren UE proposed to build a second series of upper and lower pumped storage reservoirs on nearby Church Mountain, which Ameren UE owns, but the company withdrew its application after opposition by the Taum Sauk Coalition. There is reason to believe that Ameren UE intends to resurrect the project involving Church Mountain, a scenic area in the Taum Sauk region that is currently undeveloped. The Board of Directors has unanimously voted to join the Taum Sauk Coalition; other members include Missouri Parks Association, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Sierra Club and St. Louis Audubon. The goal of the Taum Sauk Coalition is to obtain permanent protection for Church Mountain and the adjoining lands along Taum Sauk Creek by asking Ameren UE to donate these lands to the State of Missouri in partial restitution for damage caused to state resources by the December reservoir collapse.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - Yvonne Homeyer

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the following Slate of Candidates for a two-year term beginning in May, 2006:

President	Ann Earley
1st Vice President	Jane Walker
2nd Vice President	Kimerlie McCue

The election will be held at 7 PM on Thursday, April 6, during the annual meeting of members that precedes the program scheduled for that evening. It will be held at the St. Louis County Library Headquarters on S. Lindbergh. All WGNSS members are invited to attend the annual meeting and election of officers.

The Nominating Committee consisted of Jack Harris, Jim Ziebol, and Yvonne Homeyer. I would also like to thank our two outgoing Board members, Dr. David Mendelson (1st. Vice President) and (Cont'd next column)

Margy Terpstra (2nd Vice President). For the past two years, David has organized our Thursday programs. Thanks to his efforts, we have had the opportunity to hear from a variety of knowledgeable and interesting speakers. Margy Terpstra has planned the last two holiday parties at the Green Center and the 2005 and 2006 May Banquets at Eden Commons. We owe both of these dedicated Board members a big "thank you" for their loyal service and we wish them well.

SPRING BANQUET - MAY 2 - M. Teprstra (Cont'd)

field guide to wildflowers of the Midwestern tall grass prairies". The revised and expanded second edition (272 pp.), published in fall 2005, features an easier-to-use organization including several new species, as well as the addition of new chapters on prairie restoration and common prairie weeds. Doug will be selling autographed copies at the banquet. Also, the remaining books from the donated birding library will be sold at silent auction.

Receiving this year's Lifetime Achievement Award will be Jim Jackson, a dedicated WGNSS member, a talented naturalist, author, conservationist, and birdwatcher.

There are a few changes this year. Eden Commons now has its own catering company, Designing Chefs, who will prepare our buffet. WGNSS will provide wine, beer, and soft drinks for the event. Coffee and tea will be provided with the meal. A vegetarian option is also available. Just be sure and put a "V" after your name on the reservation form (on the inside of the last page of this issue).

RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY, APRIL 24, AT THE LATEST. Seating is limited, so send in your reservations early.

Editor's Note - See the February issue of Nature Notes for the list of books available in the Silent Auction. Also note that you can purchase books ahead of time. Follow the procedure outlined to make sure the ones you want don't escape, and avoid long lines on that evening. See p. 3, col. 1 for travel directions to Eden Commons in Webster Groves.

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS TO EDEN COMMONS

Eden Commons is located at the intersection of Lockwood and Bompart in Webster Groves. To get there:

- 1) From 40, east to Hanley Rd.; south on Hanley (which becomes Laclede Station Rd.); right on Big Bend; right on E. Lockwood; left on Bompart; enter from Bompart.
- 2) from I-44, east on 44; Exit at Elm Ave. (Exit 220); left on S. Elm; right on Big Bend; left on Bompart; enter from Bompart

APRIL 6 GENERAL MEETING - D. Mendelson

Thursday, April 6, at the County Library Hdqtrs., on Lindbergh Blvd. across from Plaza Frontenac, 7 PM. Following the brief annual meeting of the Society to elect new officers, Christopher R. Brown will present an overview of insect biology, accompanied by elegant slides. Chris is a well-known Monsanto entomologist who designs genetically altered plants resistant to specific insects. Chris is one of the authors (with Ted MacRae) of a recent article in Nature Notes on collecting rare beetles in the Big Bend National Park and other nearby areas. The interesting experiences of this intrepid pair are described in the article "BIRDS & BUGS: A Nexus in Texas". (See Jan. 2006 issue of Nature Notes for the last installment of this major article.) Come out and hear Chris; you'll learn how entomologists are assisting the effort to produce plants that will repel insect pests and how genetically modified plants are revolutionizing agriculture as well as eliminating the problems with chemical insecticides.

YEAR 2005 TOTALS REPORT

No additional entries for the "Two Hundred Club" have been received since the last issue. I'll welcome reports from additional birders, but as of the moment Joe Eades still leads the pack with 293 species for the 50 mile radius St. Louis Birding area. Current 2005 club members are: Joe Eades - 293; Jackie Chain - 263; Rose Ann Bodman - 253; Dick Coles - 249; John Solodar - 241; Dottie Herwig - 224, and Paul Bauer - 209

WHAT'S AHEAD

- Apr. 5 - WGNSS Board Meeting
- Apr. 6 - WGNSS General Meeting/Officer Election;
Program - Christopher Brown on Genetically Altered Insect Resistant Plants
- Apr. 16-22 and Apr. 23-30 - Colorado Grouse Trips
- May 2 - WGNSS Annual Banquet, Eden Commons
Program - Doug Ladd on Our Tallgrass Heritage
- May 13 - Birding Big Day (Form Groups Now!)
- May 21 - Entomology Group Meeting
- Future Bird/Botany Walks - See p. 16-17

LATE FEB./MARCH DATES

- WGNSS Board Meeting - 7 PM, Mar. 1, Conf. Room, 15th Floor, University Club Tower
- March General Meeting - Mar. 2
- Hawks in Flight - Ziebol/Homeyer - Feb. 27
- Entomology Group Meetings - Feb. 27, Mar. 12
- Bird/Botany Walks - p. 16-17

IN THIS ISSUE

- President's Corner - p. 1
- March 2 General Meeting - p. 1**
- Spring Banquet - May 2 - p. 1**
- Directions to Eden Commons - p. 3**
- Election of Officers - p. 2**
- April 6 General Meeting - p. 3**
- Year 2005 (200 Club) Totals Report - p. 3
- Fall Entomology Speakers - p. 4
- Announcements, Other Organizations - p. 5**
- January Bird Report - p. 5
- Botany Field Report - p. 7
- New State Conservation Area - p. 11
- New State Park in Bootheel - p. 11
- Publications by Members - p. 11
- Members in the News - p. 11
- Riverlands Checklist - Additional Birds - p. 11
- Orchard Farm CBC Count - p. 12
- Report on Feb. 1 Board Meeting - p. 13
- Historian's Corner - p. 13
- Group Activity/Walk Schedules - p. 16-18**
- Mike Flieg Grouse Trips - p. 16
- Banquet Reservation Form - p. 21**
- WGNSS Officers and Staff - p. 19-20
- Nature Notes Deadline/Mailing Schedule - p. 20
- Need Directions - See Feb. 2006 issue, p. 21

FALL ENTOMOLOGY SPEAKERS – Rich Thoma

The entomology group had a great series of speakers in the fall of 2005. In addition to the Show and Tell meeting (September), three WGNSS members gave presentations on varying subjects including the White Spotted Assassin Bug, the endangered American Burying Beetle and the taxonomy of Membracids. A short review of each presentation follows:

In October, George Winkler, retired St. Louis Zoo entomologist started off the fall season talking about the White Spotted Assassin Bug, *Platyeris biguttata*. In this case, Assassin Bug is very appropriate, for this insect nearly killed George several years ago. One moment, he was cleaning the Assassin Bug insect cage at the zoo and the next, at least from George's point of view (actually it was many hours later), he was waking up from a hospital bed. George nearly died that day. He had gone into anaphylactic shock, from an allergic reaction to a bite from this species of insect. We learned that many people are allergic to insect bites and stings and that these individuals must take special precautions. One of the precautions is for these people to carry an EpiPen at all times, to be used after being bitten or stung. The antidote prevents the person from going into anaphylactic shock and has saved many lives. In addition, we learned about the life history of *Platyeris biguttata* and about its care at the St. Louis Zoo.

The subject for the November meeting was on endangered species. Jane Stevens, St. Louis Zoo Curator gave a talk on the work she has done to find and study the endangered American Burying Beetle, *Nicrophorus americanus*. We learned that to date this beetle has been found in scattered locations all around the Midwest. The beetle has been found in Arkansas, Ohio and Kansas but not Missouri. Jane believes the species will be found somewhere in Missouri. It is only a matter of time. We learned a lot about the life history of this beetle and speculation why it has become endangered. Jane described her efforts to locate the beetle in Missouri using bait only an American Burying Beetle could love. We also learned about the efforts of the St. Louis Zoo to raise a colony of these beetles for eventual release back into the wild.

Our final topic for the fall season dealt with taxonomy. Other than butterflies, insect identification can be very difficult. Ted MacRae, Monsanto Entomologist, talked about one family of insects, Membracidae, and convinced us that this group was just as easy to identify as butterflies. We learned that Membracids have a pronounced pronotum (the dorsal side of the insect) that is used for identification. The pronotum comes in a variety of shapes and colors, which are often unique enough for a species identification. Ted talked about the changing taxonomy of this family. Based on the latest scientific data, the order Homoptera (of which the Membracids were one family) no longer exists and all its members are now part of the order, Hemiptera. We also learned about the life history of Membracids and speculated on why the pronotum comes in so many shapes and colors. In addition, Ted created a field guide to Missouri Membracids and gave a copy to all that attended the meeting. With this guide, one should be able to identify most of the Membracids found in Missouri.

To many people, each of the talks given at each of the entomology meetings this fall might have been considered dangerous (White Spotted Assassin Bug), gruesome (American Burying Beetle) or dull (Membracid Taxonomy). Yet each of our speakers presented a lot of information in a way all could enjoy. Each speaker added an excitement to the subject so that it was easy to learn. I almost wanted to bring an American Burying Beetle home as a pet after listening to Jane's talk. Jane truly feels, her subjects are just as important to the world as some of the other charismatic feathered and furred endangered species. George's talk gave everyone a greater appreciation of the potential danger to human health, many insects could represent. Knowing the dangers is a good way to avoid them. We learned about the vast diversity of shapes exhibited by insects by looking at one family of insects, the Membracids. Ted gave us the tools to be able to identify the different species of Membracids found in Missouri.

Entomology talks during the winter of 2006 look to be just as exciting. Five talks are lined up for the winter and spring of 2006. The first will be on parasitic wasps and their importance as insect control agents. The second talk will be on butterfly conservation in the prairies of Missouri. The third will take place at the butterfly house in Faust Park. We will learn about butterfly farming and how it is helping third world economies. Our guest in April will present his experiences as a Medical Entomologist talking about his travels in both Afghanistan and Africa. The last speaker will look to the future, talking about the uses of the internet for entomologists. If you are looking for something out of the ordinary, an entomology meeting is the place for you to be.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

St. Louis Zoo/Academy of Science of St. Louis

Wednesday, March 15, 7:30-9 PM

Man the Hunted: A New Look at Human Evolution

Dr. Donna L. Hart, Anthropology Department, UM-St. Louis

Anthropologist and author, Donna Hart, argues that our human ancestors—the ones who lived between seven million and a few hundred thousand years ago—were probably subject to high rates of predation from mega-carnivores (such as saber-toothed cats and giant hyenas), huge raptors, snakes, and crocodiles. Predation may, in fact, have been the catalyst that spurred our evolution into the large-brained, socially adept, complex-communicating beings we are today. In “Man the Hunted: Primates, Predators, and Human Evolution,” author Donna Hart, along with fellow anthropologist, Dr. Robert Sussman, study fossil hominids and living nonhuman species to lay the groundwork for a new theory of human evolution, “Man the Hunted.”

FREE ADMISSION. Held in the Living World, North side of zoo. Free parking in the north lots.

North American Butterfly Association/Missouri Native Plant Society

Wednesday, March 22, 7:30 PM

Bare Bones Gardening for Butterflies and Hummingbirds Using Native Plants

WGNSS Member Chip Tynan of the Missouri Botanical Garden

Members may be familiar with Chip's “Garden Q&A” column in the Saturday Lifestyle section of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Held at Powder Valley Nature Center. Directions: From the intersection of Interstates 44 and 270, take Watson Road to Geyer Road. Turn north on Geyer for 200 yards to Cragwold Road. Go west on Cragwold for one mile to the nature center entrance on the right and follow the road to the parking lot. Enter the building through the left entrance.

JANUARY BIRD REPORT - Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer

Sightings: A Pied-billed Grebe was present in FP during most of January (SM). On 1/15, Frank Holmes reported 2 Cormorants at HL and one was seen at REDA/Ellis Bay on 1/19 (DC). As many as 125 Trumpeter Swans were in the REDA area on 1/7 (CM). On 1/2, 2 Tundra Swans were seen at REDA (DB, RAB). Four Ross's Geese were observed at Creve Coeur Mills Road on 1/3 (NB) and 8 were seen at REDA/Teal Pond (DR). All four species of geese (Canada, Cackling, Snow and Greater White-fronted) were found at Suntan Beach on 1/4 (CM), and at HL on 1/15 (FH). On 1/1, Joe Eades estimated 1,000 Pintails at King Lake/BK Leach; he also observed more Greater than Lesser Scaup at REDA. On 1/15 in Lincoln County, Yvonne Homeyer, Sherry McCowan and Jim Ziebol reported 10,000+ Snow Geese and 8 Ross's Geese in flight, over 1,000 Pintails at BK Leach, and 18 Bald Eagles. On 1/17, 200+ Pintails, 150 Ring-

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JANUARY BIRD REPORT (Cont'd)

necked Ducks, and 20 Redheads were seen at HL/203 side (JZ). Both Lesser Black-backed and Iceland Gull were reported at REDA on 1/1 (CA). Dick Coles found an adult California Gull at REDA on 1/19. The first 2 Bonaparte's Gulls of the year were seen at HL on 1/29 (FH, JZ).

On 1/11, Sherry McCowan watched a Bald Eagle soaring over Soulard. Bald Eagles on the nest were observed at three locations in January: Peruque Creek on 1/5 (CM), Hwy. 143 on 1/5 (FH), and CC on 1/21 (PH). Eight Turkey Vultures were present at BCA on 1/19 (JL, Thursday Group). On 1/14, 3 Black Vultures were observed in Ste. Genevieve County (JE, J&CM). On 1/31, Sherry McCowan watched a N. Harrier eating prey at HL. Connie Alwood reported a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Great Horned Owl at LCCL on 1/7. A dark-morph Western Red-tail was observed on Bruns Road on 1/22 (SM, JZ). On 1/21, a Harlan's Hawk was seen at the Katy Trail Access by Kraig Paradise, Mark Paradise and Jeannie Moe. On 1/8, Josh Uffman relocated the Prairie Falcon at Winfield Dam. Another Prairie Falcon was seen at REDA on 1/21 (J&CM). The Thursday Group reported 2 Peregrines at REDA on 1/12 (J Chain). On 1/6, Shawn Clubb found Barred Owl and Krider's Hawk at LCCL. The Thursday Group observed 2 Barred Owls on the Pine Trail/BCA on 1/19. Another Barred Owl was present at BCA on 1/25 (J&NS). One Great Horned Owl has returned to the stable area in TGP and was seen regularly (SC, MR, YH, RAB, J Chain). Mike Brady located a Long-eared Owl and a Great Horned Owl at LCCL on 1/3. Short-eared Owls were reported from REDA on 1/5 (JU), 4 on 1/5 (Bill Boesch), and on 1/7 (DB). Two covies of N. Bobwhite were found at LCCL on 1/7 (CA). Sixteen Eurasian Collared Doves were seen in Granite City (FH). Fish Crows apparently wintered at CSP (D Bozzay). Sapsuckers were reported from FP on 1/4 (SM), at CSP on 1/12 (Thursday Group), and at SNR with a Hairy on 1/16 (J Chain, RAB). Phoebes were observed on 1/1 in Jefferson County (MP) and on 1/27 near CSP (DH). On 1/3 at FP, Sherry McCowan observed Red-breasted Nuthatch, E. Towhee, and a Fox Sparrow. On 1/28, a Winter Wren and a second-year Bald Eagle were seen at Cliff Cave Park (SC). Another Winter Wren was seen at LVT on 1/13 (RAB). A Marsh Wren was reported at LCCL on 1/3 (MB). The Townsend's Solitaire, originally found on 12/28 by Anne McCormack, was still present at Meramec Community College in early February (m. ob.). John & Nancy Solodar found a Hermit Thrush at BCA on 1/25. A Loggerhead Shrike was seen along Hwy. 30 near High Ridge on 1/27 (DC) and another shrike was seen at Peabody Coal on 1/31 (J Chain, RAB). At Notre Dame H.S. in south county, Mark Peters counted 7,935 Robins flying north at dusk on 1/6, and on 1/12, he counted 153,000 Starlings and 14,000 Robins. A Catbird seen near BK Leach on 1/8 was a very good find (JU). On 1/21, the Malones found an E. Towhee at BCA. An Orange-crowned Warbler was reported at LCCL on 1/3 (JU, CB). On 1/26, 5 Swamp Sparrows and both Kinglets were seen in FP (SM). Forty Savannah Sparrows and 30 Horned Larks were found at Confluence Road on 1/13 (SM, JZ). A Field Sparrow was a good find at BCA on 1/22 (JU). On 1/29, one Harris's Sparrow was seen at HL (YH) and another at Lake 6/BCA (JE). Fifteen Western Meadowlarks were present at Katy Trail Access on 1/22 (JU, SC) and they were still being seen at the end of January. On 1/11, 75 Great-tailed Grackles and several Rusty Blackbirds were seen at

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JANUARY BIRD REPORT (Cont'd)

Seeburger & Church Roads (DR, CM). On 1/21, the Barkers found 2 Pine Siskins at Katy Trail Access, and 40 were seen there a short time later (J Moe, KP, MP). Between 8-10 Purple Finch were being seen at Fallen Oak Trail/BCA in the last half of January (m. ob.).

Backyard Birds: Josh Uffman found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in his Ferguson yard on 1/3. Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen on 1/1 at Mark Paradise's home and on 1/17 at Connie Alwood's feeders. A Brown Thrasher was present at Kraig Paradise's north county home on 12/20. On 1/19, Jack Harris reported a Red-shouldered Hawk at his south county home. A pair of Great Horned Owls was heard calling at Margy Terpstra's Kirkwood home; also seen were a Coyote and an albino squirrel. On 1/22, a Sapsucker was found at Anne McCormack's home. Yvonne Homeyer heard a Song Sparrow singing in Brentwood on 1/30.

Contributors: Connie Alwood, Nick Barber, David Becher, Torrey Berger, Rose Ann Bodman, Dennis Bozzay, Mike Brady, Chris Brown, Jackie Chain, Dick Coles, Joe Eades, Pat Harrison, Dottie Herwig, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, John Loomis, Jim & Charlene Malone, Sherry McCowan, Jeannie Moe, Kraig Paradise, Mark Peters, Mick Richardson, David Rogles, John & Nancy Solodar, Margy Terpstra, Josh Uffman, and Jim Ziebol. An asterisk means "documented". Please submit sightings by the last day of the month to Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372) or Yvonne Homeyer (homeyer@earthlink.net).

Abbreviations: Busch Conservation/Wildlife Area, BCA; Carlyle Lake, CL; Clarence Cannon, CC; Forest Park, FP; Horseshoe Lake, HL; Little Creve Coeur Lake, LCCL; Lost Valley Trail, LVT; Marais Temps Clair, MTC; Riverlands, REDA; Shaw Nature Reserve, SNR; Tower Grove Park, TGP; World Bird Sanctuary, WBS.

BOTANY FIELD REPORT – George R. Van Brunt

December 5, 2005 Botany Field Trip

This trip was arranged by Dave Alspaugh, a regular in the botany group, and a relative of our hosts, Zenas and Sally Blevins. We met at the Blevins farm in Franklin County, Missouri. The morning was partly sunny and bitterly cold; when we arrived at 10:00am the temperature was about 14°F and when we left at 1:00pm it was about 20°F. The hardy botanists included Zenas Blevins, Nels Holmberg, Jack Harris, Wayne Clark, Dave Alspaugh, Rex Hill, Del Johnson, and George Van Brunt.

The first part of our walk was through a seepy area of field and woodland. The ground was very wet with spring water, not completely frozen despite the temperature. This area is periodically grazed by cows which affects the plant species present. We identified *Elymus virginicus* (Virginia rye grass), *Andropogon virginicus* (broom sedge), *Panicum anceps* (beaked panic grass), *Panicum virgatum* (switch grass), and *Tridens flavus* (purple top) in the field. At the edge of the field we found *Alnus serrulata* (smooth alder) and *Campsis radicans* (trumpet creeper). The fruits of trumpet creeper were present and are shaped like a green bean, about a foot long, and brown in color. In the wooded area we found *Eupatorium perfoliatum* (perfoliate boneset) which only grows where there is standing water at least 9 months of the year. Other wet loving species were *Platanus occidentalis* (American sycamore), *Populus deltoides* (cottonwood), and
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BOTANY FIELD REPORT (Cont'd)

Cornus amomum (swamp dogwood).

Next, we moved away from the wet area onto a cherty sandstone hillside. Here we picked up leaves and acorns from the forest floor and identified them to give ourselves clues about the identity of nearby trees. Then we looked at tree shape and bark characteristics to make our identifications. Oaks were plentiful. We identified *Quercus alba* (white oak), *Quercus stellata* (post oak), *Quercus muehlenbergii* (chinquapin oak), *Quercus imbicaria* (shingle oak), and *Quercus marilandica* (blackjack oak). We also found *Frangula caroliniana* (Carolina buckthorn), *Carya ovata* (shagbark hickory), *Carya texana* (black hickory), *Zanthoxylum americanum* (prickly ash), and *Amelanchier arborea* (serviceberry). We came across some glade areas that were heavily overgrown with red cedar trees (*Juniperus virginiana*) but nevertheless found *Opuntia humifusa* (common prickly pear), *Lobelia spicata* (spiked lobelia), and *Rudbeckia missouriensis* (Missouri coneflower).

The highlight of the day was the many large frost flowers we found in the forest. When the temperature falls low enough, the stems of a few species of plants split and water is slowly forced out by capillary action. The water freezes into ribbonlike formations, each with a unique shape. If you are interested in reading a Missouri Conservationist article on frost flowers please go to www.mdc.mo.gov/conmag/2000/10/2.htm All the frost flowers we saw today were made by *Cunila origanoides* (dittany). The frost flowers prompted a flurry of photography by the botanists.

In closing, I want to thank Wayne Clark for lending me a pencil to take notes. I have never tried writing at 14°F and I didn't know that a ballpoint pen doesn't work at that temperature; none of the three pens I brought would write. This article would not have been possible without that pencil.

December 12, 2005 Botany Field Trip

The winter botanists, Father Sullivan, Rex Hill, Wayne Clark, Jim Roe, Yvonne Roe, Kathy Thiele, Del Johnson, Sue Schoening, Jack Harris, and George Van Brunt, met at 9:30am at the Katy Trail, Weldon Spring Memorial Conservation Area, St. Charles County. The sky was overcast and the temperature was about 40°F. We first walked east along the edge of a corn and soybean field between the Katy Trail and the Missouri River. Later, we looped around and returned via the Katy Trail. One interesting observation we made was that any plants that were still green, and there were quite a few, were very low to the ground. The dark soil absorbs heat and the few inches next to the ground is a warmer, more protected microclimate than farther from the ground. Also, whenever it snows, the ground hugging plants will be completely covered up and insulated by the snow. This allows these plants to stay green and carry on photosynthesis through much of the winter. Among the plants that were still green were *Alliaria petiolata* (garlic mustard), *Stellaria media* (common chickweed), *Conium maculatum* (poison hemlock), and *Polymnia canadensis* (leaf-cup). We discussed the sharp defense many plants have evolved to defend against browsing herbivores. Now that the leaves are gone, prickles, thorns, and spines are more evident. **Prickles** are modified hairs and thus can be found anywhere on a plant that has them, even on leaves. We found prickles on *Solanum carolinense* (horse nettle), *Rubus allegheniensis* (common blackberry), and *Rubus occidentalis* (black raspberry). **Thorns** are modified branches and occur at nodes in leaf axils. We observed thorns on *Gleditsia triacanthos* (honey locust). Triacanthos means "three thorns" and honeylocust has many thorns which have two side branches, giving three sharp points. **Spines** are modified leaves or stipules (leaf-like appendages at the base of a leaf petiole) and occur at nodes on stems. We found spines (Cont'd next page)

BOTANY FIELD REPORT (Cont'd)

on *Robinia pseudoacacia* (black locust). Father Sullivan gave us instruction and many "tests" on identification of woody plants by their buds and stems. We identified *Juglans nigra* (black walnut), *Acer saccharinum* (silver maple), *Diospyros virginiana* (persimmon), *Cornus drummondii* (rough-leaf dogwood), *Rhus glabra* (smooth sumac), *Prunus serotina* (wild black cherry), *Carya illinoensis* (pecan), *Populus deltoides* (eastern cottonwood), *Acer negundo* (box elder), *Quercus macrocarpa* (bur oak), and *Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky coffee tree). People have used Kentucky coffee tree beans (which, uncooked, are poisonous) to make a substitute for coffee (no caffeine though). This legume, however, is no relation to the commercial coffee tree which is in another family (Rubiaceae). A couple of other interesting observations included a *Capsella bursa-pastoris* (shepherd's purse) in bloom and a *Cirsium discolor* (field thistle) measured by Wayne Clark to be 12 feet 3 inches tall and 1 and 3 quarters inches in diameter at the base. Curious as to how one measures the height of such a tall plant so precisely, I asked Wayne how he did it. He confided that the plant was lying down.

December 19, 2005 Botany Field Trip

The WGNSS Botany Group met at the St. Louis Zoo where we studied not only plants, but insects and birds. The zoological botanists were Father Sullivan, Jack Harris, Rex Hill, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Del Johnson, Sue Schoening, John Oliver, Laura Evans, Michelle Lee, and George Van Brunt. Michelle Lee is a professional botanist who grew up in St. Louis but now lives in California. She was here visiting relatives during the holidays. Laura Evans is a professional photographer who volunteers at the zoo, leading groups on walks. She is often asked "what plant is that?", and so, came with us to get some help identifying plants at the zoo.

The sky was sunny but the temperature was in the mid-teens so we elected to begin at the Monsanto Insectarium. There we not only went through the display hall studying many insect species, but also visited the tropics in the geodesic flight dome, the Mary Ann Lee Butterfly Wing. There were many tropical plants in the dome which we were able to identify as to family or even to genus but not to species. Two large butterflies were attracted to Jack's hand lotion and settled on his hand. They extended their probosci, and fed on his hand. After our tour of the Insectarium, we left the tropics and went back out into the cold and walked the River's Edge Exhibit. Evidently most of the animals were smarter than we since they stayed inside. The cheetah was the only animal we saw there. The plants, however, were very interesting. As in the Insectarium, many of the plants were exotic and we could not identify the exact species. One species we did identify was *Magnolia grandiflora* (southern magnolia), a shiny-leaved evergreen tree that hints at the means by which plants evolved flowers. The leaves of this magnolia spiral around the stem and this spiral pattern continues in the terminal flowers (which weren't present). The sepals, petals, stamens, and carpels spiral too. The flower, thus, appears to be a modified leaf structure. We also saw *Rhus hirta* (staghorn sumac), so named because the ends of the bare branches were covered with velvety hairs similar to the velvet on a deer's growing antlers. *Aralia spinosa* (devil's walking stick) was identified by its enormous leaf scars that extend three fourths of the way around the stem and by its many sharp prickles. *Viburnum opulus* (European high-bush cranberry) had bright red fruits which, when crushed, have an odor not unlike smelly socks. *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus* (coral-berry) fruits were still uneaten despite looking very tempting with their beautiful coral color. Other plants we identified were *Rhus aromatica* (fragrant sumac), *Euonymus fortunei* (wintercreeper), *Sambucus canadensis* (elderberry), *Chasmanthium latifolium* (inland oats), *Ailanthus altissima* (tree-of-heaven), *Hibiscus lasiocarpus* (rose mallow), and *Callicarpa americana* (beauty berry). At the end of our River's Edge walk we were all cold, so some of us elected to leave, and the rest trekked to the bird house to warm up and study ornithology.

(Cont'd next page)

BOTANY FIELD REPORT (Cont'd)

December 26, 2005 Botany Field Trip

The hardy winter botanists met at 9:30am at Matson Hill Park, a new St. Charles County Park. This was the first visit to this park by the WGNSS botany group which included Father Sullivan, Jack Harris, Jeannie Moe, Nancy Clark, Wayne Clark, and George Van Brunt. The sky was heavily overcast, the temperature in the low 30's, and the ground wet after a night of drizzle. The park has steep topography, loess soil, and is located near the Femme Osage Creek.

Our walk started downhill on a north-facing slope where Father Sullivan continued his weekly instruction on winter identification of woody plants by buds and twigs. *Amelanchier arborea* (serviceberry) can be identified by its greenish, long, sharply pointed buds, while *Fraxinus quadrangulata* (blue ash) can be identified by its stem wings which give the stems a quadrangular appearance. *Asimina triloba* (pawpaw) has long, thin, terminal buds which remind one of an artist's paintbrush. *Lindera benzoin* (spicebush) has opposite buds which are globular in shape, while *Celtis occidentalis* (hackberry) has small buds, tightly appressed to the stem. *Ostrya virginiana* (hop hornbeam) has very tiny leaf scars on its twigs. *Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood) has purplish twigs and *Cornus drummondii* (rough-leaved dogwood) has reddish twigs. We noted that *Staphylea trifolia* (bladdernut), *Asimina triloba* (pawpaw), and *Lindera benzoin* (spicebush), which normally would be found only at the bottom of a hill, were also growing near the top of this hill. We attributed this to the deep, rich soil and northern-exposure which mimicked more typical bottomland habitat. Green plants that we discovered included *Corydalis flavula* (pale corydalis), *Phacelia purshii* (Miami mist), *Botrychium dissectum* f. *dissectum* (cut-leaved grape fern), and *Aplectrum hyemale* (Adam-and-Eve orchid). In fact, there were so many Adam-and-Eve orchids on our walk, we thought the trail should be named the Adam-and-Eve Trail. Some dried herbaceous plants we identified included *Blephilia hirsuta* (pagoda plant), *Menispermum canadense* (moonseed), *Uvularia grandiflora* (bellwort), *Phryma leptostachya* (lopseed), *Solidago nemoralis* (gray goldenrod), and *Dasistoma macrophylla* (mullein foxglove). Finally, the highlight of this trip was the exciting discovery of a St. Charles County record species. Sharp-eyed Nancy Clark noticed two small fruiting plants almost buried in the leaf litter and called Jack Harris' attention to them. Jack made a tentative identification of *Allium tricoccum* (wild leek). Father Sullivan made the definitive identification of *Allium burdickii* (wild leek), formerly named *Allium tricoccum* var. *burdickii* (also called wild leek). This is a rare plant in Missouri, having previously been found in only five widely scattered counties (DeKalb, Mercer, Jefferson, St. Francois, and Dent). Steyermark's *Flora of Missouri* (George Yatskievych, 1999) describes the habitat of this species as "mesic bottomland and mesic upland forests, mostly on rich, northfacing lower slopes of ravines, valleys, and bluff bases, mostly on calcareous substrates". This is an exact description of the habitat in which Nancy found these specimens.

Addendum

Mosses are sometimes difficult to identify in the field without a microscope so various members of the botany group collect small samples and give them to our expert, Carl Darigo, to identify. It usually takes a few weeks to get the results. I just received this report on some mosses collected at Matson Hill Park.

"Mosses - *Plagiomnium ciliare*, *Atrichum altecristatum*, *Anomodon attenuatus*, *Brachythecium laetum* & *Entodon seductrix*. The *Plagiomnium* is a St. Charles County record and will save for MO. The *Atrichum* is not a record, but MO has only 1 collection from St. Charles County, so would like to save. The other 3 species are very common." That makes two St. Charles County records in one day!! What a field trip!!

NEW STATE CONSERVATION AREA

The LaBarque Creek Conservation Area will be open to the public sometime this year. The 505 acre area, once considered as a possible national park, features breathtaking sandstone formations, colorful mosses, and crystal clear waters. The new area is in the northwest corner of Jefferson County, south of state Highway F. (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Feb. 9, 2006, p. D1)

NEW STATE PARK IN BOOTHEEL

Morris State Park was officially dedicated October 8. It is located in an area of southeast Missouri known as Crowley's Ridge, a unique geologic formation of low hills in the Mississippi River floodplain. A two-mile loop hiking trail offers a glimpse of the park and the forests of Crowley's Ridge. The day-use park is open from dawn to dusk and is located five miles north of Campbell on Route WW in Dunklin County. (*Missouri Resources*, Winter 2006, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 14)

PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS

By Barbara Perry Lawton: *Water Gardens, Pools, Streams and Fountains* (\$19.95), Meredith Books, just released. A book on the parsley family will be published by Timber Publishing later this year. Barbara says that she's writing again for the *Post-Dispatch*—articles will appear once or twice a month on Saturdays. Barbara was chief compiler of the WGNSS 75th Anniversary Booklet and has four other books listed on the WGNSS Author List. (And she's the editor/consultant for the WGNSS Brochure revision project, now in progress! Aren't we lucky!)

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

The Dec. 16-21, 2005 issue of the *Webster-Kirkwood Times* carried a feature article entitled "The Delicate Beauty of a Snow Crystal". The article included several pictures of these delicate objects. It described a hobby of a WGNSS member, Rick Walters of Webster Groves, which is nature photography. And one of his favorite subjects is individual snow flakes. Yes, it can be done, and Rick's pictures prove it. But you'll have to ask him how he gets a flake to stand still without melting so it can be photographed; my perception is that snowflakes are small, fragile and short-lived.

Rick is a practicing dermatologist with an office in Webster Groves. He, and his wife and a son, attended the Holiday Party at the Green Center, and some of you may have met them there. Some of Rick's spectacular pictures were on display. Photography of snow flakes is nature study with a special flair. We're fortunate to have such a talented individual in our Society.

RIVERLANDS CHECKLIST – ADDITIONAL BIRDS - Jim Ziebol

A few years ago, Charlene Malone created a bird checklist for Riverlands. Since then, additional species have been observed there. Jim Ziebol is attempting to create a supplemental list. He is already aware of the following additional species: Sandhill Crane, Mute Swan, Cackling Goose, Whimbrel, Prairie Falcon, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, (Cont'd next page)

RIVERLANDS CHECKLIST – ADDITIONAL BIRDS (Cont'd)

Black-throated Blue, Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Tanager, Painted Bunting and Great-tailed Grackle.

The following species could occur at Riverlands. If you know of any sightings of the these birds, or any other species that is not on the printed checklist, please contact Jim Ziebol at 314.781.7372 or Yvonne Homeyer at homeyer@earthlink.net. Thank you!

Clark's Grebe	Red-eyed Vireo
Black Vulture	Philadelphia Vireo
Eurasian Collared Dove	Blue-winged Warbler
Screech Owl	Golden-winged Warbler
Whip-poor-will	Prairie Warbler
Chuck-will's-widow	Bay-breasted Warbler
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Pine Warbler
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Blackpoll
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Mourning Warbler
Least Flycatcher	Connecticut Warbler
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Kentucky Warbler
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Canada Warbler
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Hooded Warbler
Hermit Thrush	Worm-eating Warbler
Cedar Waxwing	Blue Grosbeak
Yellow-throated Vireo	Spotted Towhee
Blue-headed Vireo	Henslow's Sparrow
Bell's Vireo	Lark Sparrow
	Harris's Sparrow

JANUARY CBC AT ORCHARD FARM (AREA 9)- Jackie Chain

Birds seen in order of Seasonal Check List of St. Louis Area:

Canada Goose 6	White-breasted Nuthatch – 1
Scaup species – 2	Golden-crowned Kinglet – 1
Red-tailed Hawk – 4	American robin – 15
Am Kestrel- 6	Northern Mockingbird – 3
Ring-billed Gull – 3	European Starling - 50
	American Tree Sparrow – 5
Rock Pigeons – 30	Song Sparrow – 2
Mourning Dove – 17	Dark-eyed Junco – 55
Downy Woodpecker – 4	Northern Cardinal – 6
N Flicker – 17	House Finch – 1
Blue Jay – 4	Am Goldfinch – 60
Chickadee – 1	House Sparrow – 4
Tufted Titmouse – 3	

Total species – 24

Total individuals – 279

REPORT ON FEB. 1 BOARD MEETING – Editor

A draft of proposed ‘Guidelines for Announcements in *Nature Notes*’ was reviewed. This write-up will complement a ‘Policy for Advertisements in *Nature Notes*’ at the Jan. 4 Board Meeting. A few minor changes were proposed for the Guidelines. The write-up will be reviewed for final approval at the March Board meeting.

Progress reports were presented on preparations for the annual banquet at Eden Commons, on the search for projects to be funded with the Holcim Award, and the 2006 Nominating Committee’s activities.

The Board voted to join a coalition of Environmental Groups being formed to promote the donation of Ameren’s Church Mountain property to the State’s DNR as compensation for the devastation of the Johnson Shut-Ins State Park by the recent failure of its Ameren’s Taum Sauk Reservoir dam. The Church Mountain property abuts the site of the former reservoir.

The Board voted to support and make a donation to the Midwest Ecology and Evolution Conference (MEEC), a conference organized, attended, and funded by graduate students at universities in the Midwest. St. Louis University will host MEEC’s the 26th annual conference on March 17-19, 2006.

A Treasurer’s report was presented by Randy Korotey. It was reported that donations to the Ernestine and Marshall Magner memorial fund are still coming in.

Reports were received from representatives of the Society’s several interest groups. It was reported that the Townsend’s Solitaire is still with us, making appearances on a regular schedule at the Meramec College Campus. (Should WGNSS install a feeder and water supply at the bird’s tree so he-- or she-- can stay there full time and be viewed more easily??)

HISTORIAN’S CORNER

A Tale of Two Brothers (Cont’d from the February 2006 issue)

Last month this column dealt with Harold O’Byrne, the older of two brothers who are prominent stars in the early WGNSS firmament. This month’s column deals with Harold’s younger brother, Stuart. Unlike the article about Harold, this month’s story had to be developed from scratch. I got helpful inputs from Katherine Frein, who knew Stuart as a young man; from Marge and Jim Ruschill who stayed in contact with Stuart over the years; from Paul Bauer, who gave me a description of Stuart’s house on a New Mexico hill top; and Wayne Clark who gave me the address and telephone number for Stuart listed in the Feb. 2005 roster of the St. Louis Astronomical Society (SLAS). According to Wayne, Stuart was made a Life Member of SLAS when he left St. Louis for New Mexico in the 1960’s. William Brandhorst also reported on a telephone visit with Stuart made just prior to the 75th Anniversary dinner of WGNSS in 1995. He reported at the banquet that Stuart (87 at the time) was clear-minded and in good health. See *Nature Notes*, Jan. 2006, p. 4.

I rounded out this anecdotal information by checking the indexes of the complete (Cont’d next page)

HISTORIAN'S CORNER (Cont'd)

Nature Notes file prepared in 2005. There was much additional information in these indexes, not only in the group activity sections but in events recorded in the People, Administrative, Miscellaneous, and Meetings/Banquets sections. The indexes provided reference to the numerous articles penned by Stuart and to his activities during the 35 or so years of his active association with WGNSS. In some cases I checked the referenced N.N. items for elaboration. What follows is a synthesis from all sources

Stuart was born in 1908 into the same household as his older brother Harold. His father would have inspired Stuart to become a student of the natural world, as he did for Harold. (See Marshall Magner's obituary of Harold in N.N., Feb. 2006, p. 4). After Stuart's father died, Lulu O'Byrne, the mother of Harold and Stuart, and her two sons moved into an apartment on South Kingshighway where she probably lived until she moved in with Stuart and his wife after they acquired a home in Webster Groves.

The first job that Stuart is known to have held was as a transporter at Barnes Hospital. He wheeled people in and out of operating rooms. It is speculated that this job was obtained for Stuart by Dr. Otto Brandhorst, then a medical dean at Washington University, and jobs were very hard to find during the early years of the Great Depression. Dr. Brandhorst, WGNSS president 1931-32, and extremely active in WGNSS, would have recognized the precocity of Harold and Stuart. Stuart was unhappy with this menial job, which offered no intellectual challenge. According to Katherine Frein, this lack of challenge was Stuart's motivation for immersing himself so deeply in WGNSS.

The N.N. record confirms rapid growth by Stuart "in wisdom and stature". He spoke on Radio station KSD in November 1940 and was introduced (at age 32) as "the most outstanding astronomer in St Louis area." He made good progress in other areas as well. He married May Brinkmeyer, then WGNSS Botany Chairman, in June 1942 (at age 34). A daughter, Jean, was born to the couple on March 23, 1943. Some time later he moved into a house in Webster Groves at 501 East Pacific, the only local home he is known to have occupied. His mother, Lulu, was living with the O'Byrne family in this home when she died on March 21, 1951.

As added evidence of improved economic status, in the late forties or early fifties the O'Byrne family began taking "annual" vacations; including one 3600 mile trip to California in 1950. In May 1961 Jean O'Byrne received a "merit scholarship", which suggests that she inherited her parents' good genes. The last appearance of Stuart in *Nature Notes* was in November 1974, when he submitted an article about watching a chipmunk steal bread secreted by a nuthatch.

N.N. issues include few references to Stuart after the mid fifties, as compared to a veritable "flood" in earlier years. Presumably this happened because he also joined the St. Louis Astronomical Society (SLAS) and worked as hard there as he had done earlier in WGNSS. In 1962 (Feb. N.N.) he was identified as Director of the U. S. Satellite Station in St. Louis. (This was the Sputnik era). This is the only employment reference for Stuart in the entire *Nature Notes* file. His contributions to SLAS must have been significant, because he was awarded a Life Membership when he left St. Louis. The indicated timing of his "disappearance" (at age 66) from the local scene suggests that his departure was a "retirement" move.

Stuart and May moved to Silver City, located in the southwest corner of New Mexico.
(Cont'd next page)

HISTORIAN'S CORNER (Cont'd)

Silver City adjoins the mountainous Gila National Forest, and Stuart took his telescope with him (according to Mrs. Frein). He and May settled down in a hill top home in the area, where (according to Paul Bauer), Stuart could scan the sky in all directions and the atmosphere was unobscured by dust, haze, or the "lume" of lights from large cities. He spent his retirement years there enjoying his life-long passion, astronomy. The last news about him was from the Ruschills, who reported that about two years ago he was in a nursing home and in and out of hospitals. An attempt by the writer to call him at the telephone number given in the Feb. 2005 SLAS roster was unsuccessful—"the number is no longer in service." And there is no other telephone listing for him in New Mexico. I fear that we must write "finis" to a remarkably long and fulfilling life that will always loom very large in WGNSS annals. (Stu's wife, May, died a few years ago, an Alzheimer victim. Nothing is known about the whereabouts of their daughter Jean.)

Stuart's contributions to early WGNSS are legion;. I've mentioned a few selected examples below. A complete list of his writings and activities would be beyond the scope of this article. For more information, refer to the *Nature Notes* file indexes for 1929-1974. The written record of his WGNSS activities begins with his establishment (at age 21) of its journal, *Nature Notes*. This monthly journal was intended as a substitute for the weekly program announcement sheets issued during the first ten years of WGNSS. He served as N.N. editor in 1929, 1930, 1931, 1939, and 1949. He served as WGNSS 1st V. P. in 1932/33, president in 1933/34, and 1st VP again in 1935/36. . He also served the WGNSS Nature Study Lodge on the Ranken Estate (on the part now occupied by Beaumont Scout Reservation) as Librarian, Museum Director, and Geology Curator. He also served WGNSS at various times as leader of the of the Astronomy and Geology Groups. He applied his analytical abilities to analysis of bird data gathered by WGNSS groups to correlate species with habitat, seasonal factors, etc. He constructed a planetarium for use by the Webster Schools. He demonstrated unexpected skills as a cartographer and geographer by preparing a four-part report on the Ranken Estate that included a topographic map, a drainage study, and a list of the flora and fauna of the estate. (N.N., 1/39, 2/49, and 3/49) In 1935 he accompanied Marshall Magner on a WGNSS-sponsored two-man expedition to New Mexico (the first of two such WGNSS-sponsored expeditions) to gather specimens for the Lodge Museum (N.N. 1/35). They collected hundreds of specimens, mostly plants, some of which were later identified by Missouri Botanical Garden botanists. In 1935 Stuart and V.L. Stones surveyed a cave on the Ranken property and Stuart published a cave map (N.N. 10/47). His wife, May, also served WGNSS in many capacities, including Botany Chairperson, N.N. Editor in 1952 and 1953, and as chair of numerous ad hoc committees..

In the opinion of the writer, Stuart had an IQ in the genius range. His initial astronomy articles in N.N., written while in his very early twenties, covered such erudite topics as double stars and stellar magnitude scale. This kind of knowledge so early in life bespeaks teen years spent in study of astronomical subjects. In 1937 he authored a four-part article on star colors as related to star temperatures and characteristics. There no indication in the *Nature Notes* file that he had formal training or mentors who could have helped him. The esoteric knowledge evident in his writings had to be acquired by self-study. He was an amazing yet reportedly a very personable individual. I'm sorry I never had had the chance to meet him!

Webster Groves Nature Study Society
GROUP ACTIVITY/WALK SCHEDULES
 March 2006 Update

ORNITHOLOGY – SATURDAY Bird Walks – David Becher (314-576-1146)
 (If destination not given, it's "Where the Birds Are". Always bring lunch.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Place</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Mar. 11	North side of County Library	8 AM	Becher
Mar. 18	Teal Pond Parking Lot	8 AM	Becher
Mar. 25	North side of County Library	8 AM	Becher
Apr. 1	North side of County Library	8 AM	Becher
Apr. 8	Hampton Lake, Busch Wildlife	8 AM	Becher
(Exit from US 40 at first exit- Rte. 94- after crossing Missouri River and follow signs)			
Apr. 15	North side of County Library	8 AM	Becher
Apr. 22	Tower Grove Park	8 AM	Becher
(Take Kingshighway south from US 40, left on Magnolia, first right to enter park, then right past tennis courts and stable to first picnic area on right.)			
Apr. 29	Castlewood State Park	8 AM	Becher
(From Manchester Rd. go south on New Ballwin Rd. to Kiefer Creek Rd. and follow signs east to park. Meet near boat launch)			
May 6	Weldon Springs Wildlife Area, Lost Valley Hiking Trail	8 AM	Becher
(Rte. D in St. Charles Co. west of Busch Wildlife Area)			
May 13	WGNSS Birding, Big Day	8 AM	Becher
May 20	Gray's Summit Arboretum	8 AM	Becher
(From St. Louis take I-44 west to Gray's Summit exit. Turn left across highway. Turn right onto service road and immediately left into Arboretum. Meet at entrance to Brush Creek Trail)			
May 27	North side of County Library	8 AM	Becher

ORNITHOLOGY – THURSDAY BIRD WALKS – Jackie Chain – Leader (314-644-5998)

Meeting time is 8:30 AM on Thursdays at Des Peres Park. Call Jackie for more information.

ORNITHOLOGY – SUNDAY BIRD WALKS

(New birders are **cautioned** to dress for the weather. Bring binoculars if you have them.)

March 5, 2006	Busch Wildlife C. A.	8 AM	Bailey & Garcia
For more information, call Jim Ziebol at (314) 781-7372			
March 12, 2006	Horseshoe Lake Causeway	8 AM	Ziebol and Holmes
For more information, call Jim Ziebol at (314) 781-7372 or Frank Holmes at (618) 451-2127.			

(Cont'd next page)

March 26, 2006	Riverlands E.D.A.	8 AM	T. Berger
Meet at the Headquarters. For more information, call Jim Ziebol at (314) 781-7372			
April 30, 2006	Tower Grove Park	8 AM	Bailey & Garcia
Meet at Gaddy Bird Garden			
May 7, 2006	Riverlands E.D.A.	8 AM	C. Alwood
Meet at the Teal Pond Parking Lot			
May 14, 2006	Tower Grove Park	8 AM	S. McCowan
Meet at Gaddy Bird Garden			
May 28, 2006	Bușch C. A.	8 AM	T. Parmeter
Meet at Headquarters Parking Lot			

For more information about the four above events, call Jim Ziebol at (314) 781-7372

ORNITHOLOGY SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, February 27 – 7 PM at the Machacek Library, 6424 Scanlan, St. Louis. Program: “Hawks in Flight”, a video presented by Yvonne Homeyer and Jim Ziebol. Mark Peters, former Missouri Hawkwatch Coordinator, has viewed the video and was impressed. The public is invited. The library is at Watson and Scanlan between Arsenal and Fyler. The library itself is unusual because it’s underground. The library’s telephone number is (314) 2948. (Cont’d, next page)

BOTANY WALKS – Jeannie Moe – Co-Chair , Leader (636-946-9802) George Yatskievych – Co-Chair (314-577-9522) – Work Phone

Botany walks are now on Monday. The Botany group visits many of the same locations as the Bird and Butterfly Groups: Busch Conservation Area, Shaw Nature Preserve, the Missouri Botanical Garden, Babler State Park and Cuivre River State Park. Learning plants will help you learn butterfly host plants. Sign up for Botany Group E-mails from Jack Harris (jahar@mac.com) or 314-368-0655 and receive an E-mail every Sunday, sometimes earlier, about the next Monday’s trip.

BOTANY GROUP TRIP (WITH MISSOURI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY) TO SOUTHEASTERN MISSOURI - Sunday, March 26. Trip to southeastern Missouri to see the federally endangered pondberry (*Lindera mellisifolia*) in flower. We will visit the Corkwood and Sand Ponds Conservation Areas, south of Poplar Bluff, where we may see other unusual plant species. For carpooling, meet at the commuter lot at I-55 and Reavis Barracks Rd. at 8 AM. Estimated driving time, 3.5 hours. Bring lunch and a beverage, also a change of shoes and socks in case of wet feet. (For more information, call George Yatskievych (314-577-9522, Work Phone)

ENTOMOLOGY GROUP ACTIVITIES – Rich Thoma, Chair (314-965-6744)

Sunday, February 26, 2006, 7 PM – “Rare Butterflies of Southwestern Missouri Prairies” will be presented by Phil Koenig, an active WGNSS member and considered to (Cont’d next page)

be one of St. Louis' premier Butterfly experts. This meeting will be held at Phil's home: 823 Lauralee Dr. in O'Fallon, Mo. (Tel. 636-281-1313) Directions: Take Highway 70 west to O'Fallon. Exit at highway K and Main Street. Go north on Main Street through O'Fallon. An important landmark to cross is the railroad tracks near the north end of O'Fallon. Once you've crossed the tracks look for a water tower in the distance. The next street you turn on is difficult to find but it is just before the water tower. Turn left on Towerwood Dr. After approximately 1/3 mile, make a right turn on Carolynjean Dr. Carolynjean curves around and becomes Lauralee.

Sunday, March 12, 2006, 7 PM – "Butterfly Production – From Farm to Flight House" will be presented by Mark Deering, Collections Manager and Curator of Butterflies in the Butterfly House in Faust Park. The meeting will take place at the Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House, 15193 Olive Blvd. in Chesterfield (636-530-0076). Be sure to enter by the front door for this evenings meeting.

Sunday, April 23, 2006, 7 PM – "Topics from the Developing World: One Entomologist's Military and Civilian Experiences" will be presented by John Greenplate, a Monsanto entomologist. John will speak of his experiences as a Medical Entomologist for the Army Reserve in Afghanistan and Africa. The talk will take place at the home of George Winkler, 20 Covington Ln., Olivette (314-993-1652).

Sunday, May 21, 2006, 7 PM – "Insects on the Internet" will be presented by WGNSS member Richard Thoma. The talk will take place at the home of George Winkler, 10 Covington Ln., Olivette (314-993-1652)

SPECIAL NOTICE SPECIAL NOTICE SPECIAL NOTICE

COLORADO GROUSE TRIPS (LEK-A-DAY) - Mike Flieg, WGNSS member and former Curator of Birds at the St. Louis Zoo, has been conducting these trips for 9 years. More than 250 birders have taken his trips. Target birds include Mountain Plover, Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspur, Rosey Finches, both Prairie Chickens, both Sage Grouse. Sharp-tailed and Blue Grouse and White-tailed Ptarmigan. The cost is \$1075 and includes transportation and lodging from Denver—food and drink are on your own. Trips begin on Sunday and end on Saturday. Open dates are April 16-22 and April 23-30. Contact Mike at 314-645-3356 or e-mail ornifolks@sbcglobal.net

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Jim Ziebol - Busch WA Breeding Bird Survey
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George Van Brunt - Botany Report Compiler
Sherry McCowan - Nature Line Coordinator

Call The Nature Line!

Call (314) 935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis Area and dates and times of bird and botany walks; there are occasional schedule changes. Please report any unusual birds to Sherry McCowan (314) 664-2381 and press "3" or wait for the prompt. You can also leave a message at the end of the Nature Line recording.

Nature Notes Deadline and Mailing Info.

The mailing party meets at the Oak Bend Library, 842 S. Holmes, Kirkwood, 10 AM-1 AM to prepare N.N. mailings. We could use your help! Call Marjorie Richardson (314) 965-8974 to volunteer. Deadline and mailing party dates for future months are given below.

NN Deadline	Mailing Party
Fri. 2/10	Tues., 2/21, 1:30-5 PM
Fri. 3/10	Mon. 3/20
Fri. 4/7	Mon. 4/17
Fri. 5/5	Mon. 5/15

Next Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 1, at the University Club Tower, 1034 South Brentwood. We meet in the conference room near the elevator on the 15th floor. The Board encourages members to attend. Come see your Board in action!

Publication Policy

Notices/Proposed Articles/Letters to the Editor must be signed to be considered. They will be considered for publication based on content and availability of space. Some editing may be done. Communications from non-member individuals or organizations must include the name and title (if any) of the sender along with a mailing address and telephone number. Send communications to the Editor, 35 Tulip Drive, Webster Groves, MO 63119. (Tel. 314-961-2494, E-mail dadams5084@charter.net.

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Society Objectives

The objectives of the Society are: to stimulate interest in nature study on the part of adults and children; to cooperate with other organizations in nature study; to encourage amateur research in the natural sciences; to promote conservation of wildlife and natural beauty. Open to all with an interest in nature.

Making Nature Notes Useful - S. L. O'Byrne

Nature Notes, the Journal of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, has long been published because of its utility in furthering the work of the Society. Its most important function is bringing the monthly program of the Society to the members....from June, 1948 issue of Nature Notes

86TH Annual Spring Banquet on Tuesday, May 2
Eden Seminary Commons In Webster Groves

Our annual banquet takes place on Tuesday, May 2. The social hour (wine, beer & soda provided) will begin at 5:45 p.m. Come meet Doug Ladd, our keynote speaker. Doug is Director of Conservation Science for the Missouri Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, a WGNSS member, and author. During the social hour, autographed copies of the new 2nd edition of Doug's book, Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers, will be available for sale. Also, the remaining books from the donated birding library will be sold at silent auction. A buffet dinner by Designing Chefs begins at 6:30 p.m. During the dinner program, our 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award winner, Jim Jackson, will be acknowledged. The presentation on "Grassland Redux" by Doug Ladd follows.

5:45 p.m. Social Hour and book sale
6:30 p.m. Dinner Buffet, Program with Award Presentation
"Grasslands" Presentation by Doug Ladd

Please reserve your place at the Banquet today by using the form printed below. Send your reservation form with a check made out to WGNSS for \$25 per person.

Refund policy: A full refund of your reservation cost of \$25 will be given if requested before Monday, April 24. After April 24, no refunds can be made.
Contact Margy Terpstra at 314-966-4582.

Reservations Cost: \$25 per person, must be received by
Monday, April 24

(Please note: NO reminder cards will be sent this year.)
Your check will confirm your reservation.

Send in the reservation slip below with your name and address to:

WGNSS Spring Banquet
c/o Margy Terpstra
1508 Greening Lane
St. Louis, MO 63122-2330

Questions? Call Margy at 314-966-4582

RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY, APRIL 24

I would like Spring Banquet Reservations for _____ persons

@ \$25 per person = _____

Please indicate a Vegetarian Meal Request by putting a V after the name.

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Call the Nature Line at 314-935-8432 for meetings and bird sightings

Membership categories (circle one):

Individual or Household.....\$20

For 1st class mail.....add \$8

Student.....\$10

March 2006

Please mail this form with check to:

Treasurer: Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook

Lane, St. Louis, MO 63132

Make check payable to Webster

Groves Nature Study Society