



Nature Notes

Call the Nature Line (314) 935-8432 for meeting times & bird sightings
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SPRING BANQUET - TUESDAY, MAY 2

The Spring Banquet will be held on Tuesday, May 2. WGNSS member Doug Ladd will be our keynote speaker and a Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Jim Jackson. For more information about the event, always the highlight of the WGNSS year, see the inside of the back page of this issue. Note that reservation forms must be received by Monday, April 24.

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS TO EDEN COMMONS

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

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

APRIL 6 GENERAL MEETING - D. MENDELSON;

Following the brief annual meeting of the Society to elect new officers (see p. 2 of March issue for Nominating Committee's slate), WGNSS member 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 Big Bend National Park and adjacent areas. Come out and hear Chris; you'll learn how entomologists are assisting the effort to produce plants that will repel insect pests

and eliminate the environmental problems associated with the use of chemical pesticides.

Editor's Note - I was raised on a farm in Calhoun County in south Texas and observed the fight against cotton insects first hand. My father purchased insecticides by the BARREL, principally calcium arsenate, and lesser amounts of Paris Green, a copper/arsenic compound. These were dispersed as powders by mule/tractor-pulled spreaders, and later by small crop-dusting airplanes. These were successful against leafworms but were much less successful against boll weevils/pink bollworm larvae which devoured the inside of the cotton bolls, unreachable by externally applied insecticides. Cotton production in Calhoun County ceased 30-40 years ago because of insect problems. It is now making a comeback, likely because of the availability of genetically altered cotton plants that repel these insects.

For background information on the subject of cotton insect control, see "March of the Weevils, or How a Mexican beetle launched a hundred year attack on United States Cotton" in Natural History, Feb. 2006 issue. This article reports that calcium arsenate residue, toxic to invertebrates, fish, birds and mammals, and a known human carcinogen, is still present in many southern soils in which cotton has been grown.

A NOTABLE ANNIVERSARY

In January, 2006, Father Jim Sullivan began his 40th year of leading WGNSS botany walks. Father Sullivan and the late Arthur Christ began these walks in 1967. It's the dedication of its naturalists that makes WGNSS great. Incidentally, Father (Cont'd next page)

A NOTABLE ANNIVERSARY - CONT'D

Sullivan received WGNSS's Lifetime Achievement Award at the WGNSS 2005 annual banquet. (See the Botany Field Report in this issue.)

PUBLICATION BY MEMBERS - A. McCORMACK

Three WGNSS members were featured in the latest issue of the American Birding Association's national newsletter, "Winging It". Josh Uffman wrote an article on finding the Yellow-billed Loon, Anne McCormack wrote about finding the Townsend's Solitaire, and Randy Korotev provided his photo of the Townsend's Solitaire.

IN MEMORIAM - SUBMITTED BY MARJORIE RICHARDSON

Richard Clinebell, who received the Mickey Scudder Scholarship in Field Biology in 1990, died on Feb. 16, 2006. Richard's research application was entitled "Biology of Exotic Invasions in the Wade Tract, Thomas County, Georgia". He was pursuing a Master's degree at St. Louis University at the time of the award. In addition to his interests in plants, prairies, and pollinators, Richard was a folk musician. He will be missed by his many friends.

NOTE FROM JOAN ESSERMAN

Just thought WGNSS members might enjoy our website describing a recent to Costa Rica by my husband and Pat and I to band ruby throated hummingbirds in their winter habitat. The address is: <http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek060208.html> (Thanks, Joan - Editor)

FEBRUARY BIRD REPORT - Jim Ziebol and Yvonne Homeyer

Introduction - Now that landbird migration is underway, it's time to protect the birds from window strikes. Dr. Daniel Klemm was recently interviewed on National Public Radio. He stated that a billion birds die each year from building strikes. A very simple solution is to put masking tape in the form of an X in the middle of any glass window or door. Although birds cannot detect a glass barrier, they can see the tape.

Sightings - By the week-end of 2/25/26, as many as 49 pelicans were being seen at REDA (m.ob.). On 2/26 Kent Lannert led a Sunday trip to Baldwin Lake, where the group found several Ross's Geese, 6 Loggerhead Shrikes and 2 Short-eared Owls. Mick Richardson reported a flock of 24 Sandhill Cranes flying over Horseshoe Lake on 2/28. This is probably the largest number ever seen at one time in the St. Louis area. Blue-winged Teal were seen at Creve Coeur Lake on 2/23 (Dan Curran) and 3 at REDA on 2/25 (D. Becher, Sat. Group). On 2/12, Black Duck and Red-breasted Mergansers were observed at HL (FH). A pair of Wood Ducks and several Greater White-fronted Geese were found at HL on 2/15 (JZ). On the week-end of 2/25-26, Dan Kassebaum recorded 4 goose species and 19 duck species at CL. A Snipe was found at Baldwin Lake on 2/28 (MT). On 2/28, 25 Bonaparte's Gulls were counted at Baldwin Lake, MT, T. Berger). The first Franklin's Gull of the year was found at REDA on 2/6 (DR). A third-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull was observed at REDA on 2/12 (MT, Sunday Group). A Glaucous Gull appeared at REDA on 2/28 (JU). Loy Barber (Cont'd on p. 3, Col. 1)

NEW WGNSS MEMBERS - Randy Korotev, Feb. 27, 2006

Dan	Curran	206 Seawind Dr. Apt. B	St. Louis,	MO	63021
Wally	George	7101 Carriage Hills Ln	Cedar Hill	MO	63016
Sylvia	Hosler	1783 Anza Way	Tucson	AZ	85755
Esa	Jarvi	1703 Warmington Ct	Ballwin	MO	63021
Laura	Schaefer	805 S. Lafayette St	Millstadt	IL	62260
John T	Watson	837 English Ln	Belleville	IL	62223
Linda	Waugh	2148 Ballas View Dr.	St. Louis	MO	63122

Welcome aboard! We hope you'll join one or more of our interest groups and make your presence felt! If you have questions call one of the interest group leaders (see Administrative Page at rear) or call me at (314) 961-2494 - Editor

FEBRUARY BIRD REPORT - Cont'd

found a second-winter Thayer's Gull for the Saturday Group on 2/25.

A Red-shouldered Hawk and an adult Cooper's Hawk were found at BCA on 2/4 (J. Chain, Saturday Group). A beautiful adult Red-shouldered Hawk was seen on Lewis Road on 2/11 (JZ). Jack Cowan re-found the Harlan's Hawk at Katy Access on 2/6. Eric Schuette spotted a Rough-legged Hawk on the border of Lincoln and Pike Counties on 2/19. Merlin sightings included 1 at REDA on 2/5 (MT), 1 at REDA on 2/8 (CA), 1 at HL on 2/12 (FH), and 1 in FP on 2/27 (SM). By 2/26, 2 Great Horned Owls were being seen in TGP (DC). Dan Kassebaum located a Saw-whet Owl at CL on 2/4. On 2/3, at Calvary and Bellefontaine Cemeteries, Sherry McCowan and Jim Ziebol observed 2 Sapsuckers, 6 Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Cooper's Hawk, 6 Red-tailed Hawks and a Kestrel. Two Red-breasted Nuthatches were found in FP on 2/9 (SM). A Brown Thrasher was seen at the Mo. Botanical Garden on 2/5 during the Winter Backyard Bird Festival (JM, JU). Another Brown Thrasher was reported on 2/12 at MTC (SM). A Gray Catbird was found at BCA on 2/26 (DR). On 2/26, a Pine Warbler was heard on Allenton Road behind Six Flags (MB). A flock of 60 Yellow-rumped Warblers was present at HL on 2/27 (JZ). A Yellow-throated Warbler, confirmed by Joe Pinnell, wintered at the Florissant home of Mike Hill. On 2/23, 6 Swamp and 20 Song Sparrows were observed in FP (SM). On 2/5, Clarence Zacher reported a Field Sparrow in FP. About 30 American Tree Sparrows were found at REDA (SM/JZ). Mike Brady reported 2 Harris's Sparrows at Little Creve Coeur Lake on 2/26. The Saturday Group, led by David Becher, found 15 Purple Finch and Harris's, Swamp, Field, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows at BCA on 2/11. A Lapland Longspur was observed along Confluence Road on 2/4 (J Chain, Saturday Group) and one was also seen there on 2/12 (MT, J Moe). About 100 Great-tailed Grackles and 40 Rusty Black-Birds were still present at Seeburger/Dwyer/Church /roads on 2/12 (SM).

A typical day at REDA on 2/12 included 500 Snow Geese, 103 Trumpeter Swans, 14 species of ducks, 40 Pelicans, 2 Great-blue Herons, 25 Bald Eagles, 3 Harriers, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 2 Kestrels, 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull, 2 Carolina Wrens, and 1 Lapland Longspur (MT, Sunday Group).
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ASPIRATION

My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel--it is, before all, to make you see.

Joseph Conrad - 1897

WHAT'S AHEAD

May Board Meeting - None
WGNSS Annual Banquet - May 2
Birding Big Day - May 13
Entomology Group Meeting - May 21
Future Bird/Botany Walks - See p. 18-19

APRIL DATES

WGNSS Board Meeting, 7 PM, April 5, Conf. Room, 15th Floor, University Club Tower
WGNSS General/Annual Meeting, April 6
Entomology Group Meeting, April 23
Botany Walks, Mondays, p. 19
Bird Walks, Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays, p. 18 and 19.

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FEBRUARY BIRD REPORT – Cont'd

A typical day for Debbie Trowbridge at BCA and Katy Access on 2/5 included 1 Horned Lark, Western Meadowlarks, Towhee, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 2 White-throated Sparrows, 5 Purple Finch, 2 Goldfinch, 2 Carolina Wrens, many Chickadees and Titmice, 2 Red-shouldered Hawks, Song Sparrow, 2 Cackling Geese and many Cardinals, Robin and Starlings.

Backyard Birds: Connie Alwood had two Great Horned Owls in his Ferguson yard. Clarence Zacher saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on 2/24 at his home. Dick Coles had 2 Pine Siskins at his home on 2/18.

Contributors: Connie Alwood, David Becher, Torrey Berger, Mike Brady, Jackie Chain, Dick Coles, Dan Curran, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, Kent Lannert, Jim & Charlene Malone, Sherry McCowan, Jeannie Moe, Mick Richardson, David Rogles, Eric Schuette, 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.

BIRDING BOOKS OF INTEREST - Jim Ziebol and Yvonne Homeyer

The following three books, all published in 2005, may be of interest to you. 1) *The Devil's Teeth* is the story of the Farallon Islands, located about 30 miles west of San Francisco, and the hundreds of thousands of seabirds, including gulls, alcids, and petrels that breed there. It's also the story of an acclaimed ornithologist, Dr. Peter Pyle, the author of *The Field Identification of North American Birds*, the bird bander's bible. It's also the story of "the sisters", gigantic female great white sharks that come to the Farallons in the fall to feed on juvenile elephant seals and sea lions. 2) *The Grail Bird* by Tim Gallagher recounts the search of two determined men for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. It tells the history of the species from the 1800s to the last confirmed sighting in the 1940s. This book is also about believability. In 1955, ornithologist John Terres saw a pair of Ivory-bills in Florida and he chose not to report them because he didn't want the criticism and the ridicule of his contemporaries. 3) *The National Geographic Complete Guide to North American Birds*. This is one of the best reference books to appear in many years. It contains the illustrations from the original NatGeo field guide, as well as many photographs. There is at least a half-page of text for each species. This book is well worth taking a look at.

ANOTHER BIRDING BOOK OF INTEREST - Jim Adams

The Fish Hawk Osprey – Stephen D. Carpenteri, Northwood Press, Minnetonka, Minnesota, 135 pages (1997). All you'll ever want to know about the Osprey.

OTHER BOOKS I'VE ENJOYED RECENTLY – Jim Adams

The Western Paradox, a Conservation Reader – Bernard De Voto, Yale University Press, New Haven, 552 pages (2001)

The volume brings together ten of DeVoto's essays on Western conservation issues, along with his unfinished conservation manifesto, *Western Paradox*, never before published. In reviewing the book, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., states "This is the fascinating record of DeVoto's crusade to save the West from itself...."

El Nino, Unlocking the Secrets of the Master Weather-Maker – J. Madeleine Nash, Warner Books, 340 pages (2002)

In this saga of scientists and civilians, award-winning *Time* magazine science writer Nash reveals the mysterious sources of El Nino and its far-reaching effects on the lives of people around the world.

The Fly in the Cathedral – Brian Cathcart – Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 308 pages (2004)

How a group of Cambridge Scientists won the international race to split the atom, which the book likens to hitting a fly in a cathedral with a bullet. Interesting narrative of events of 1932, the "miracle year" of British physics.

Guns, Germs, and Steel, The Fates of Human Societies – Jared Diamond – W. W. Norton Company, New York, 518 pages (2005).

This book, a Pulitzer Prize winner by a professor of geography at UCLA, explains why the people of certain continents succeeded in invading other continents and conquering or displacing their peoples. This is a new edition, to which a chapter on Japan has been added.

Washington's Crossing – David Hackett Fischer – Oxford University Press, New York, London, etc. – 564 pages (2004)

Another Pulitzer Prize winner. Describes a pivotal moment in American history, the incredible crossing of the icy Delaware by George Washington on Christmas night, 1776, and the capture of Trenton, an event that ultimately led to the recapture of New Jersey from British occupation and "saved" the American Revolution. Describes the background and execution of this heroic and "bet the store" event in great detail, an event that wrecked the British strategy of state by state subjugation of the rebellious colonies and put the British on the defensive. Many details never before published.

BOTANY FIELD REPORT – JANUARY 2006

January 2, 2006 Botany Field Trip

We met at Babler State Park in St. Louis County as Father Sullivan started another year of leading the WGNSS Botany Group field trips. Father Sullivan and the late Art Christ started the

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botany walks in 1967. Present to start off Father Sullivan's 40th year were Jack Harris, Rex Hill, Nathan Pate, Wayne Clark, Jeannie Moe, Nels Holmberg, Jane Deschu, Rick Deschu, June Jeffries, Penny Bush-Boyce, John Oliver, and George Van Brunt. Considering that the day started with tornado sirens at 5:20am, we had wonderful January weather. By the time we met at 9:30am, the sun was shining in a partly cloudy sky with a temperature of 53°F. We drove to the north end of the park and walked along a service road and then went "off-road" through the woods. The temperature fell slowly through our 2 hour 45 minute walk and the sky became very overcast. It started to rain just as we finished the walk.

Father Sullivan continued his instruction on winter plant identification. We identified *Quercus velutina* (black oak) with its hairy buds and *Morus rubra* (red mulberry) which has leaf scars surrounded by a raised edge like a saucer. We also identified *Corylus americana* (hazelnut) with its male catkins and a very large specimen of *Celtis occidentalis* (hackberry). Father Sullivan pointed out that the way to distinguish the large vines of *Ampelopsis cordata* (raccoon grape) from *Vitis aestivalis* (summer grape) is that the raccoon grape bark is much more deeply incised than that of the summer grape. We saw lots of the invasive vine *Celastrus orbiculatus* (round-leaved bittersweet) growing on bushes and trees. At this time of year it is leafless but has bright red fruits (arils), sitting on their split yellow covers. In some places we discovered that the vines were high in the trees by noticing a large number of the yellow sepals on the ground beneath. Ferns we identified included *Asplenium platyneuron* (ebony spleenwort), *Polystichum acrostichoides* (Christmas fern), and both forms of *Botrychium dissectum* (grape fern). *Botrychium dissectum* f. *dissectum* (cut-leaved grape fern) has deeply incised leaves while *Botrychium dissectum* f. *obliquum* (grape fern) leaves are not as deeply cut. *Dissectum* and *obliquum* are properly called forms rather than varieties because the same plant may exhibit each kind of leaf in different years. Green plants close to the ground included *Phacelia purshii* (Miami mist) and *Fragaria virginiana* (wild strawberry) as well as the aforementioned ferns. We identified *Verbesina alternifolia* (wingstem) not only by the "wings" on the stems but also by its globular shaped seed-heads. A couple of specimens of *Hypericum prolificum* (shrubby St. John's wort) had last year's long, thin, brown leaves, last year's fruit, and some new, small, green leaves.

January 9, 2006 Botany Field Trip

We assembled at 9:30 am at Packwood County Park in St. Louis County. Our walk began under partly cloudy skies and ended under cloudy skies; the temperature ranged from the mid 30's to the upper 30's. Accompanying Father Sullivan were Jack Harris, Dave Alspaugh, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Rex Hill, Jeannie Moe, Nels Holmberg, John Oliver, and George Van Brunt. Carl Darigo met us in the parking lot before the walk. Wayne Clark brought a dried, polypore fungus from his yard that was about the size of a large pizza. There was some discussion and photography of this specimen.

As in recent weeks, Father Sullivan continued his instruction in winter plant identification. Noteworthy additions to previous lessons were the identifications of the red twigs and red buds of *Acer saccharinum* (silver maple), the chambered pith of *Juglans nigra* (black walnut), and the three ridges extending down from the leaf scars of *Populus deltoides* (eastern cottonwood). We
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identified many of the same plants that we have in past weeks, both those that are currently green and those that are dried herbaceous plants. Some dry herbaceous plants that we hadn't seen recently included *Boehmeria cylindrica* (false nettle), *Diodia teres* (rough buttonweed), *Verbena stricta* (hoary vervain), and *Froelichia gracilis* (cottonweed). We also saw the native *Celastrus scandens* (bittersweet) which can be distinguished from the introduced *Celastrus orbiculatus* (round-leaved bittersweet) by its fruit husks (pericarp). The husk of *Celastrus scandens* is orange and that of *Celastrus orbiculatus* is yellowish. We identified *Arabis laevigata* (smooth rock cress) which has a lengthy replum. The replum is the partition between the two compartments of the fruit of plants in the mustard family (Brassicaceae). After the valves split open and the seeds are dropped, the replum persists. We identified the native *Euonymus atropurpureus* (wahoo), and Nels demonstrated the edibility of the fruit of *Celtis occidentalis* (hackberry). We found the fruits of *Cuscuta* sp. (dodder), a parasitic plant, on the stems of the highly invasive *Lespedeza cuneata* (sericea lespedeza). We were happy to see the *Cuscuta* parasitizing this host.

January 16, 2005

We met on this unseasonably warm January morning at Greensfelder Park; the temperature under sunny skies at 9:30am was in the 40's and by 1:00 pm it was 60°F under cloudy skies. Although we met in Greensfelder, we spent most of our time botanizing in the neighboring, southern part of the Rockwoods Range Conservation Area. In the absence of Father Sullivan, who was on retreat, Nels Holmberg was our leader. Accompanying Nels were Jack Harris, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Rex Hill, Dave Alspaugh, Jeannie Moe, Dick Russell, John Oliver, and George Van Brunt. We started down the Greenrock Trail to Roundhouse Memorial and then went "off-trail" up and down hills.

We spent considerable time finding, discussing, and identifying samples from the forest floor. These included acorns, nuts, and leaves. We identified *Carya texana* (pignut hickory) by its fruits and nuts and *Quercus velutina* (black oak), *Quercus rubra* (northern red oak), *Quercus alba* (white oak), *Quercus stellata* (post oak), and *Quercus macrocarpa* (bur oak) from their acorns. In addition to our study of the forest litter, we identified other dormant or dried plants. *Rhus aromatica* (fragrant sumac) bears catkins which will produce flowers in early spring. Jack identified a grass called *Elymus hystrix* (bottlebrush grass). *Ilex decidua* (deciduous holly) had a few red berries that had not yet been eaten, while *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus* (coral-berry) still has many attractive, uneaten coral-colored fruits although they are beginning to dry and wrinkle. What will eat these fruits and distribute their seeds and when? Not only did we study these remnants of last year's growing season, but we saw evidence of the coming growing season. During the course of our walk, we observed that there were many small (less than a foot in height) *Frangula caroliniana* (Carolina buckthorn) plants that had fresh green leaves. One *Lindera benzoin* (spicebush) had flower buds that looked like they were ready to burst open. *Arabis laevigata* (smooth rock cress) plants had new green leaves hugging the ground. Three green fern species we identified were *Asplenium platyneuron* (ebony spleenwort), *Pellaea atropurpurea* (purple cliffbrake), and *Polystichum acrostichoides* (Christmas fern). Nels identified a *Rhodobryum ontariense* (rose moss) whose leaves open much wider than most mosses.

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January 23, 2006 Botany Field Trip

Meeting Father Sullivan at the Busch Conservation Area Visitor Center were Sue Schoening, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Jack Harris, Kathy Thiele, Marlene Bopp, Thane Bopp, Nels Holmberg, and George Van Brunt. After everyone had arrived, we drove a few miles from our meeting spot to the Lewis and Clark Trail in the Weldon Spring Conservation Area. There, we walked about a mile and a half, under cloudy skies, on steeply cut terrain, botanizing all the way.

As we have all winter, we practiced identifying woody plants, dried herbaceous plants, and green plants. We saw many of the same species reported previously. We saw a grape vine, probably *Vitis aestivalis* (summer grape), that still had some grapes, although they had dried and turned to raisins. We identified it as a species of *Vitis* because the fruit clusters were longer than wide, while a close relative, *Ampelopsis cordata* (raccoon grape), has fruit clusters wider than long. We also identified the green leaves of *Carex albicans* (white-tinge sedge), *Aplectrum hyemale* (Adam-and-Eve orchid), *Chaerophyllum procumbens* (wild chervil), *Geum canadense* (white avens), and *Claytonia virginica* (spring beauty). As noted on previous field trips, these were all closely hugging the ground. Father Sullivan mentioned that he had seen an Ozark witch hazel in bloom near the parking lot at Busch. So after we finished our walk on the Lewis and Clark Trail, we drove back to Busch to look at *Hamamelis vernalis*. This plant is a relative of the sweet gum tree (family Hamamelidaceae) and normally flowers at this time of year. And interesting flowers they are, with 4 ribbon-like petals and a very sweet smell! This shrub prompted a flurry of photography by the winter botanists.

January 30, 2006 Botany Field Trip

A small group of hardy winter botanists became tropical botanists on this field trip. No, we didn't go to Ecuador or Costa Rica, although that would have been nice. We met in the lobby of the Ridgway Center of the Missouri Botanical Garden. Accompanying Father Sullivan to the orchid show were Jack Harris, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Carl Darigo, Dave Alspaugh, John Oliver, and George Van Brunt.

The Orchidaceae, the largest of all plant families, has evolved relatively recently and spread to every continent except Antarctica; they can be found in lowland areas and at high altitudes. Orchid flowers are bilaterally symmetrical, having 3 petals and three sepals, and in most orchids the sepals are as showy as the petals. It is the median petal, or lip, which is the fascinating key to the orchid's reproductive life. The lip, also called the labellum (Latin for lip), takes many different forms, has many colors and patterns, and often has a spur. The lip serves as an attractant for the pollinator. Many orchids are specialized for one pollinator, having the "right" dimensions, shape, color and odor to attract the pollinator. Pollinators for various orchid species include bees, flies, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. Orchid seeds are very tiny, being composed of only a few cells. The tiny seeds have no endosperm, or food supply, and disperse like dust on the wind. To germinate, each seed needs the help of a specific fungus. Missouri has about 40 species and varieties of orchids, while the Botanical Garden has about 8000 individual orchid plants representing about 2500 species, varieties, and hybrids.

After spending about an hour studying orchids, we then spent another hour in the Climatron, after which, we spent some time in the Shoenberg Temperate House. After the last couple of months of mostly brown plants, it was good to see lots of green, purple, red, blue, yellow, white, orange, and many shades in between.

BEETLE BITS: THE “BEAUTIFUL” TIGER BEETLE

By Ted C. MacRae

For most of the quarter-century that I've been studying insects, two groups of beetles – jewel beetles (family Buprestidae) and longhorned beetles (family Cerambycidae), woodboring beetles collectively – have been my primary focus. Despite the popularity of both groups with collectors, there is still much we don't know about them – basic things like where they occur, what plants they feed upon, or even how many species are out there. Dozens of new species continue to be discovered every year from across the globe. Most of them live in the tropics, where habitat loss caused by ever-increasing human pressure outpaces our ability as biologists to describe its flora and fauna. But even in relatively well-studied North America, new species are being discovered on a regular basis, including from our own backyard (see my article in the April 2004 issue of *Nature Notes*: “A new beetle for Missouri – With a Twist!”). My own studies have increasingly focused on understanding beetle host plant associations, and as a result most of my field efforts involve retrieving infested wood from native habitats and rearing the larvae to adulthood in my “laboratory” (i.e., garage). This has proven to be a highly effective, albeit laborious, collecting method that has generated literally hundreds of new host plant records and greatly improved our knowledge about the geographic distributions of these beetles.

In recent years, however, I've also grown quite fond of tiger beetles (family Cicindelidae). Another group of beetles popular among collectors (come to think of it, there aren't that many beetle groups that are not popular), they present quite a different study challenge compared to woodboring beetles. Voracious predators of smaller insects both as larvae and as adults, tiger beetle species are often restricted to specific natural communities such as sand bars, erosion cuts, muddy banks, forest litter, glades, prairies, and saline flats. Many species are fast runners and strong fliers, while others are quite adept at hiding in cracks and crevices or among vegetation. Most occur as adults only for a limited time during the season, and even in season may not be active if conditions of temperature, sun, and wind are not optimal. My interest in this group began as a result of writing a general interest article on some of the species found in Missouri for the *Missouri Conservationist* (June 2001 issue). These efforts have since expanded to a more formal, systematic study of all species occurring within the state (currently in progress in collaboration with fellow WGNSS-member and Monsanto colleague Christopher Brown). I must admit, however, a certain amount of enjoyment in collecting these beetles for the pure pleasure of it – the challenge of traveling to distant localities during a precise time-of-year and searching for specific habitats in hopes of seeing them in their native haunts. Success is never assured, but when it does occur, far greater understanding of the beetle and its natural history is achieved compared to just looking at pinned, preserved specimens neatly lined up in a drawer in some collection. There is also an element of ‘instant gratification’ in finding these beetles that is missing from collecting infested wood for rearing, where success may not be realized for another year or two while waiting for adults to emerge. Many interesting tiger beetles become active in the fall, a time when crisp smells, hints of color, and long midday shadows make for glorious time in the field. The “fall tiger beetle trip” is now an annual ritual, almost a diversionary farewell to a long, hot summer.

One highly desirable tiger beetle is *Cicindela pulchra*. This beetle has no common name, but its scientific name translates literally to “beautiful tiger beetle.” And what a beauty it

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(Beetle Bits: The “Beautiful” Tiger Beetle – Cont’d)

is! One of the largest species in the genus, its robust, cylindrical body is colored a striking iridescent red, with the elytra (wing covers), pronotum (neck) and head margined with a dark metallic blue, purple or green (for those with access to the internet, a beautiful photograph of the adult can be seen at http://entomology.unl.edu/nebraska_tigers/Cpulcra_home.htm). For years after receiving a specimen of this splendid species in trade I have wanted to see it in the wild, and last year I began efforts in earnest to do so. It occurs fairly commonly during spring and fall across Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and western Texas; however, an outpost population is known from the scenic Gypsum Hills of south-central Kansas. Published information indicates that adults occur in grasslands on eroded hillsides, where they utilize clumps of vegetation for cover. Ron Huber – the nation’s foremost tiger beetle expert – had suggested to me that I might be able to find the beetle at a Scenic Overlook on Highway 160 located 9 miles west of Medicine Lodge in Barber County, Kansas. Armed with this information, Chris Brown and I traveled to Barber County in September 2004. We had no trouble finding the Scenic Overlook, but an intensive search of the area revealed no beetles. There was additional habitat surrounding the Overlook that appeared promising, but these areas were fenced off. We did some quick searches near the fence borders, but without landowner permission, extensive searching much beyond the fences was out of the question. We drove further along the highway and explored some side roads and saw lots and lots of potential habitat – all fenced! It became clear that our searches would have to be confined to banks and cuts along roadsides. We spent the next two days in and around the area and collected a number of other tiger beetle species, but not a single *Cicindela pulchra* was seen. Not knowing if we were too early (we were on the early side of their known occurrence), or if it was too dry (the area seemed very dry), or if we simply had not located exactly the right habitat (tiger beetle distributions can be very patchy), we resolved to try again the following year.

This year, I planned another trip to Barber County in early October. Chris wasn’t able to join me this time (some silly excuse about his 1st wedding anniversary!), but WGNSS Entomology Group leader Richard Thoma was able to come. In the time since last year’s trip, I had made contact with a fellow from Washington – “Beetle Bill” Smith – who grew up near Barber County and whose parents-in-law still live there. Bill is a retired science teacher and a “carabidologist” – that is, he studies ground beetles (family Carabidae), a group of beetles closely related to tiger beetles (some carabidologists even consider tiger beetles a subfamily of Carabidae). Being from the area, Bill knew many of the local landowners, and being a carabidologist, he had secured their permission to collect beetles on their ranches as part of his own studies. Bill had previously found *Cicindela pulchra* on a nearby ranch and offered not only to take us there, but also to put us up for the night at his in-law’s house. Such hospitality could not be declined, so Rich and I left St. Louis one Thursday morning, arrived in Barber County early that evening, and enjoyed the delightful company of Bill and his wife, Janet. They even went so far as to fix us biscuits and gravy for breakfast the next morning before we headed out to the field.

The weather had been perfect earlier during the week, but a cold front the night before we left dropped nighttime temperatures into the low 40s. Overcast skies and a forecast high of only 60° left us wondering if we would find any insects at all, much less the sun-loving tiger beetles we came to see. We drove the 10 or so miles from the house to the ranch, and as we followed
(Cont’d, next page)

(Beetle Bits: The “Beautiful” Tiger Beetle – Cont’d)

Bill’s truck through the gate we could see an extensive area of red clay hills rising out of the mixed shortgrass prairie about a mile away. I knew the breaks (eroding slopes) in these hills must be where we were headed, and this was confirmed as we followed the 2-track around the south end and up on top of the hills. The landowner had requested we park on top, where he would be able to see our vehicles from his house. As we assembled our equipment and nets, the usual feelings of anticipation were tempered by the cold, gray conditions. We walked down the hillside to an open flat below one of the breaks – exactly where Bill had last encountered the beetle. Nothing. We walked the area for a while, and then started wandering off into adjacent areas. Nothing. I looked at the sky – a blue area could be seen off to the north, but the sun was well covered. I looked for any hint of movement in the clouds, thought maybe they were slowly moving south, and then decided I was just tricking myself with wishful thinking. We wandered back over the flats where we started – still nothing. Eventually, I became distracted collecting some small longhorn beetles (*Crossidius pulchellus*) clinging torpidly to broom snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*) blossoms – nothing spectacular, but a species I had not yet collected. Plus it was something to do. It was now close to noon – primetime for tiger beetles, but with still no hint of the beetles our hopes were fading fast. I pondered whether we had missed the timing (again!) or if the timing was right but conditions were just too cold. I dreaded the thought of making the 10-hour drive back to St. Louis empty-handed (again!). I gave another look at the sky, and this time there were hints of sun appearing through small breaks in the clouds. Just then, Bill yelled out from ~25 yards away – he had found one! I hurried over to where he was standing, and before I was within 15 feet I could see the beetle clumsily running across the ground. What a spectacular sight! We watched him for awhile before capturing him – he was very easy to collect because of the cool temperatures. We began searching the area intensively again, and after about 10 minutes I saw another one. I collected it, too, and no sooner than I had finished closing the bottle I looked up and saw another one. By now, the clouds had completely moved out, and while it was still relatively cool the sun was shining brightly. Beetles began appearing faster than we could see them, and eventually they were running abundantly over the very ground that we had so thoroughly, yet unsuccessfully, scoured just an hour or two earlier in the day. After collecting a sufficient series for study, I began exploring adjacent areas to see how extensively the beetle occurred at the location. Interestingly, the beetle was highly localized, occurring almost exclusively on the more sparsely vegetated flats immediately below the red clay breaks. No beetles were found in or on top of the breaks themselves, and they also became quite scarce on the flats further away from the breaks. I also searched the flats below some adjacent breaks and found the beetles only when there was a complete lack of woody plant growth in the flats. No beetles were found in flats where eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) was growing, however sparsely. The apparent habitat specificity of the beetle was further emphasized by visits to several other locations later in the day and during the following day, where several clay banks and erosion cuts along roadsides and streams were searched. Other tiger beetles were seen in these areas, but not *Cicindela pulchra*. We even returned to the Scenic Overlook where Chris and I had searched for the beetle the previous season, and at least in the (Cont’d, next page)

(Beetle Bits: The "Beautiful" Tiger Beetle – Cont'd)

roadside areas not enclosed by fence the beetle was not present.

There were additional successes on the trip besides *Cicindela pulchra*. Bill and I each found one *Megacyllene comanchei*, a beautiful longhorned beetle only recently discovered in western Texas and, until now, known only from the type series. Another longhorned beetle, *Crossidius discoideus* subsp. *sayi*, and the Denver tiger beetle (*Cicindela denverensis*) were found later in the day at a nearby ranch, both representing species I had not collected before, and Rich and I found one black individual each of the claypath tiger beetle (*Cicindela purpurea* subsp. *audubonii*) among the more abundant and normally colored greenish-purple individuals. Two halophilic (saline tolerant) species – white-cloaked (*Cicindela togata*) and oblique-lined (*Cicindela tranquebarica*) tiger beetles – were seen just across the border in Oklahoma at Salt Plain National Wildlife Refuge, where Bill had managed to arrange collecting permits for us. In all, we found nine species of tiger beetles. We also had some non-coleopteran successes – Rich found western pygmy blue (*Brephidium exile*), bordered patch (*Chlosyne lacinia*), and Gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) butterflies. These are species not commonly found in Missouri, and according to Bill the Gulf fritillary may be a site record for the Salt Plain Refuge. We also spotted a male chocolate tarantula (*Aphonopelma baergi*) crossing a road further west in Clark County, Kansas – presumably searching for a mate. He now resides in a terrarium in our home where he enjoys a life of leisure and hand-fed crickets and has been affectionately named "Crawly" by my daughter, Mollie. Without question, however, seeing *Cicindela pulchra* in its native habitat, watching its behavior, and understanding its quite specific habitat requirements (and demand for sun!) was the biggest success of the trip. I am also comforted by the fact that the beetle population appears to be secure in south-central Kansas – red clay breaks and the flats below them occur abundantly throughout the Gypsum Hills region, mostly on private ranches where they are largely protected from disturbance. Now, whenever I look at a pinned specimen of *Cicindela pulchra*, I will see much more than just the specimen in front of me.

REPORT ON MARCH 1 BOARD MEETING - Editor

The draft of Guidelines for Announcements in *Nature Notes* discussed at the previous Board meeting was approved. Progress reports were presented on preparations for the annual Banquet, and Margy Terpstra was complimented on how well this seems to be going. It was reported that the search for projects to be funded with the Holcim Award seems to be going well, and it is possible that that an announcement may be made soon by the search committee, possibly as early as the next Board meeting.

Several WGNSS members assisted in a recent multi-day back yard birding seminar at the Missouri Botanical Garden by leading bird walks, etc. WGNSS brochures were handed out to attendees, and at least two new members were obtained at the event.

Anne's now famous Townsend's Solitaire exited the scene about Feb. 15.

Adams reported that the entire *Nature Notes* file has now been indexed and that indexes for years 1929-97 have been edited and are ready for the WGNSS website. Because of data transmission problems via diskette, only about half of this number have been added to the website. Randy Korotev has provided an elegant, user-friendly year table on the website to facilitate access. Clicking on the desired year will bring up the index for that year. (If the year is displayed in blue in the year table, the index for that

(Cont'd next page)

(Report on March 1 Board Meeting – Cont'd)

year is available for access; if black, data for that year are not yet in the website.). The problems in data transmission are being addressed.

Adams reported that he's in good shape for the April issue; there's been a good flow of material for publication. He expressed concern that detailed reporting on the Christmas bird counts has dropped to near zero during recent years. In former years these counts were reported in great detail (WGNSS/SLAS/ joint counts), providing important historical documentation of these events, which show trends in bird populations. He requested that Ornithology Chairmen contact WGNSS count organizers each year ahead of the count dates and ask them to submit copies of their formal count reports to the Editor. The Ornithology Chairmen are the individuals in the best position to know the identity of each year's WGNSS/SLAS/other organizers (who frequently change from year to year.). Adams also reported that the number of 200 count birders reporting each year (the "200 Club") has declined sharply, only 12 in 2005 and 7 in 2006. A decade ago 200 Club members typically numbered about 25 to 30. Decline in interest in "listing" or a decline in bird populations may be the cause.

Adams also reported that the number of *Nature Notes* copies being mailed out has declined from 400 when he assumed the editorship to 365 for the March 2006 issue. Paralleling this, the number of new WGNSS members reported recently has been small. The Editor's files show that 30 new members for "the past year" were reported on May 5, 2005. Since then 4 new members were listed in *Nature Notes* in October 2005 and 7 new members were reported on Feb. 27, 2006. (See elsewhere in this issue). There was no consensus on whether these data represent a real problem or whether the problem lies in the reporting process.

BIRDING IN TRINIDAD AT THE WRIGHT NATURE CENTER AND LODGE

- **Mark Mittleman, Pat Lueders and Linda Tossing**

The challenge of writing an article about a trip to the Asa Wright Nature Center and Lodge in Trinidad is not just to recite a list of fantastic new birds for the life list. Sure, it was a wonderful travel experience in a tropical paradise. The food was fine, the lodge is very comfortable, you're not in a typical mass tourism resort, and there's nice company from American, Canadian, British, European and local fellow birders. In fact, without any advance knowledge of each other's plans, we found each other there! Two flights will get you to Trinidad, from St. Louis to Miami and from Miami to Port of Spain. The lodge's employees (or your own organized birding tour, as in the case of Pat and Linda) will pick you up at the airport. You don't even have to leave the lodge's veranda to see some of the most amazing hummingbirds, honey creepers and tanagers.

But let's get real. The challenge of writing the article is impossible. So let's just tell you the list of birds we saw (or heard) over the New Year's holiday, either at the lodge itself or on trips organized by very capable guides. For Mark, it was a list of 143 species in five and a half days, 87 of them life birds. Pat and Linda went on to the tourist and agricultural island of Tobago, 26 miles from the more industrialized Trinidad, for five additional days; the birds marked (T) on our list (at the end of this article) are the nine additional species they found there at the Cuffie River Nature Retreat and the Blue Waters Inn across a bay from Little Tobago Island Seabird Sanctuary. The trip was a
(Cont'd next page)

(Birding in Trinidad – Cont'd)

great way to start the birding year, and we all recommend it as an introduction for people who want to discover tropical birding.

The names alone are enough to make you want to encounter the birds. Come on, don't you really want to see a Violaceous Euphonia? A Rufous-browed Peppershrike? A Yellow-chinned Spinetail? A Tufted Coquette? Strangely enough, there is only one endemic in Trinidad, the Pawi or Trinidad Piping Guan. But many of the species are truly spectacular: all three trogons, the four woodpeckers, the tanagers and the manakins. The sight of 1500 Scarlet Ibis flying in at evening to their roost in the Caroni Swamp is amazing. One Scarlet Ibis is amazing, for that matter, but 1500 are not just a statistic. The Bearded Bellbird may be the loudest bird in the world—it is locally known as the Anvil Bird because it sounds like someone striking an anvil, only louder. It is an adult bird with a mouth that seems almost as big proportionally to its body as a baby American Robin's.

Mark's votes for the two best birds are the Blue-crowned Motmot and the Rufous-tailed Jacamar, which combine Paul Klee shapes with Wassily Kandinsky colors. Like real rainbows, their iridescent shades aren't separated by well-defined borders, but instead gradually merge. The Jacamar's long, LONG pointed bill makes it look like a mechanical toy, while the Motmot's racquet-tipped tail does not grow that way naturally—the bird plucks off part of the tail feathers just before the tip, to create a more beautiful impression for its mate. Pat and Linda loved the Ruby-topaz Hummingbird. Others might prefer the Tufted Coquette—the male looks like a guy wearing a bright red-orange hairpiece a couple of sizes too big, while the female constantly pumps her little band-rumped tail as she works over the lantana flowers.

Oh, and the tarantulas and the boa constrictors in the overhanging trees are awesome! So, to conclude, the next annual WGNSS meeting should be held at the Asa Wright Nature Center and Lodge.

Our List

The order of species on the our list follows Monroe and Sibley's *World Checklist of Birds*. (The tropical fish on Pat and Linda's coral reef snorkeling list are not included.)

Little Tinamou	Sanderling	Black-crested Antshrike
Rufous-vented Chachalaca (To)	Least Sandpiper	Barred Antshrike
Trinidad Piping Guan ("Pawi")	Wattled Jacana	White-flanked Antwren
Golden-olive Woodpecker	Black-bellied Plover	Yellow-chinned Spinetail
Chestnut Woodpecker	Semipalmated Plover	Gray-throated Leaf-tosser
Crimson-crested Woodpecker	Southern Lapwing	Streaked Xenops
Channel-billed Toucan	Osprey	Plain-brown Woodcreeper
Rufous-tailed Jacamar	Pearl Kite	Buff-throated Woodcreeper
White-tailed Trogon	Double-toothed Kite	Black-faced Ant-thrush
Collared Trogon	Common Black Hawk	Rufous-browed Peppershrike
Blue-crowned Motmot	Savanna Hawk	Gold-fronted Greenlet
Violaceous Trogon	Gray Hawk	Bare-eyed Thrush
Ringed Kingfisher	Yellow-headed Caracara	Cocoa Thrush
Smooth-billed Ani	Merlin	White-necked Thrush

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(Birding in Trinidad – Cont'd)

Red-bellied Macaw	Bat Falcon	Tropical Mockingbird
Green-rumped Parrotlet	Little Grebe	Rufous-breasted Wren.
Blue-headed Parrot	Red-billed Tropicbird (To)	Tropical ("Antillean") House Wren
Orange-winged Parrot	Red-footed Booby (To)	Long-billed Gnatwren
Chestnut-collared Swift	Brown Booby (To)	White-winged Swallow
Band-rumped Swift	Tricolored Heron	Gray-breasted Martin
Gray-rumped Swift	Little Blue Heron	Southern Rough-winged Swallow
Fork-tailed Palm Swift	Snowy Egret	Yellow Warbler
Rufous-breasted Hermit	Great Egret	American Redstart
Green Hermit	Cattle Egret	Northern Waterthrush
Little Hermit	Striated Heron	Golden-crowned Warbler
White-tailed Sabrewing (To)	Pinnated Bittern	Bananaquit
White-Necked Jacobin	Scarlet Ibis	White-shouldered Tanager
Black-throated Mango	Black Vulture	White-lined Tanager
Ruby-topaz Hummingbird (To)	Turkey Vulture	Red-crowned Ant-Tanager
Tufted Coquette	Magnificent Frigatebird	Silver-beaked Tanager
Black-chinned Sapphire	Slaty-capped Flycatcher	Blue-gray Tanager
White-chested Emerald	Southern Beardless Tyrannulet	Palm Tanager
Copper-rumped Hummingbird	Forest Elaenia	Violaceous Euphonia
Long-billed Starthroat	Yellow-bellied Elaenia	Turquoise Tanager
Barn Owl	Fuscous Flycatcher (To)	Speckled Tanager
Ferruginous Pygmy Owl	Euler's Flycatcher	Bay-headed Tanager
Oilbird	Tropical Peewee	Blue Dacnis
Common Potoo	Pied Water Tyrant	Green Honeycreeper
Pauraque	White-headed Marsh-Tyrant	Purple Honeycreeper
White-tailed Nightjar	Tropical Kingbird	Red-legged Honeycreeper
Rock Pigeon	Gray Kingbird	Grassland Yellow-Finch
Scaled Pigeon	Sulphury Flycatcher	Blue-Black Grassquit
Ruddy Ground Dove	Boat-billed Flycatcher	Grayish Saltator
Gray-fronted Dove	Great Kiskadee	Crested Oropendola
Limpkin	Bearded Bellbird	Yellow-rumped Cacique
Purple Gallinule	Golden-headed Manakin	Moriche Oriole
Common Moorhen	Blue-backed Manakin (To)	Yellow Oriole
Solitary Sandpiper	White-bearded Manakin	Yellow-hooded Blackbird
Ruddy Turnstone (To)	Great Antshrike	Red-breasted Blackbird
Lineated Woodpecker	Shiny Cowbird	Caribbean Grackle

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Stuart O'Byrne – Continued from the March issue

GOOD NEWS! Stuart O'Byrne celebrated his 100th birthday in September, 2005. Anita Lieser visited him in New Mexico in February 2006 and found him doing very well and very sharp. The Liesers, Anita, her late husband Arthur, and daughter Diane, have been long time family friends of the of the O'Byrne family. The Liesers have also had a
(Cont'd next page)

(Stuart O'Byrne - Cont'd)

long association with WGNSS. Arthur and Stuart were star-gazing buddies when Stuart and May resided in Webster Groves, and the two families were, and remain, close. After the O'Byrnes moved to New Mexico the Liesers have visited them there and have provided interesting new information about their New Mexico home and activities there. The new information fixes Stuart's birth date as Sept. 1905; last month's article gave an estimated birth date of 1908.

In last month's article about Stuart, I mentioned the lack of vocational information about Stuart. According to the Liesers, Stuart worked at the Old Tower Grove Bank at Grand and Hartford, now a Commerce bank.

According to Anita and Diane Lieser, May is now deceased, but she was not an Alzheimer's victim as reported last month. The Liesers also provided current information about the O'Byrne's daughter Jean. Jean is living in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Her married name is Jean (Mrs. Peter) Ossorio, and her telephone number is (505) 647-1362. Jean is reportedly an environmental activist, her principal interest being the restoration of wolf populations. (The Ossorio name appears in *Nature Notes* during the period when the O'Byrnes were local residents.)

Stuart lives in a Retirement Home. His address is Bee Hive Home, P O. Box 172, Santa Clara, New Mexico, 88026. The Liesers report that Stuart would like to hear from WGNSS friends in St. Louis. If you'd like to send a congratulatory note or card, feel free. (I couldn't find Santa Clara on the map, but the zip code confirms that it's in the Las Cruces area.)

Phil Rau, WGNSS Entomologist

The following obituary was published in the July, 1948 issue of *Nature Notes*:

"On the night of May 29th, Mr. Phil Rau suddenly passed away. Mr. Rau was identified with the Society for many years, during which time he aided us in a great many ways. Foremost was his assistance to young people in the study of insect life and the encouragement he gave them in researches in the natural sciences. Internal recognition came to him for his own researches in the field of animal behavior and evolution, particularly the studies which he carried out on wasps and other social insects. For his help in establishment of the Lodge he will long be remembered. His departure from this life will be keenly felt by all the members."

Very few personal details about Rau are found in *Nature Notes*. It seems likely from the available evidence that he was born about 1890-95, give or take a few years. By 1918 he had co-authored a book with his wife Nellie, *Wasp Studies Afield*. (This book became so popular that it was reprinted by Dover Press in 1973.) He likely joined WGNSS soon after the Society was founded. Because of his already established interest in entomology, he would have been attracted to WGNSS after its establishment by entomologist Alfred Satterthwait, who came to Webster Groves in 1918 to head the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Entomological Station and Laboratory. Rau's first article in *Nature Notes* was in the May 1930 issue, shortly after the publication of the first issue of this journal in November, 1929. The article was entitled "Evolution of 'Wasps' Nesting Habits".

We are indebted to Edwin Way Teale, prominent naturalist and writer of the 1950's
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(Phil Rau – Cont'd)

for information about Phil Rau's acquisition of the interest in entomology which became a life-long passion with him and catapulted him to fame. In his book, *Days Without Time*, Teal reports (as reprinted in N.N., June 1953):

"A friend of mine, for many years, owned a profitable business in a large Midwestern city. One morning, as he was walking the mile and a quarter from his home to the office, he passed a vacant lot. Above it, he noticed a host of insects gyrating in the air. He stopped to watch them and became engrossed in their activity. The insects were digger wasps, in the midst of their courtship flight. Hours went by, and the telephone rang unheeded in his office. During that runaway day without time, the businessman, Phil Rau, first became interested in the ways of insects. As a consequence, he made observations on the life habits of wasps that have been of real value to science. His book, *Wasp Studies Afield*, written with his wife, Nellie Rau, is a classic of its kind."

Rau subsequently produced another classic, *The Jungle Bees and Wasps of Barro Colorado Island*, published in 1933. To gather material for this book, Rau spent five weeks in 1928 on this remote island in Gatun Lake in Panama. One can imagine the rigors of such a stay on a small tropical island without the amenities we are accustomed to in our daily lives. In an article in *Scientific Monthly* in May 1933, Dr. William H. Wheaton Jr. describes the popularity of Barro Island for biological research. Dr. Wheaton refers to a single leaf found there that was so profusely infested with leaf-spotting fungi and sooty mounds that it was said to have furnished enough material for one monograph, two doctorate theses, and four short papers. (N.N. June 1933).

Rau's book is reviewed in the May 1933 issue of N. N. by Editor and entomologist Harold O'Byrne. O'Byrne's extensive review reads in part: "...Rau made observations on the biology and ecology of the stingless bees and solitary wasps of the American tropics....His studies have yielded an immense amount of hitherto unknown information concerning the behavior of these creatures, from which he has been able to deduce much of what goes on within their minds. His analysis of the origin of their instincts leads up to the last chapter, "Mind as a Forerunner of Evolution", in which he presents an entirely new idea of the method whereby animals evolve."

For the rest of his life, Rau produced numerous scientific papers about the social behavior of insects. Most dealt with wasps, but included some papers on roaches and butterflies. Forty Rau papers are referenced in *Nature Notes*, all published in national entomological journals. He gave the Sigma Xi Lecture at Indiana University in 1938. He also served as a member of the WGNSS Museum Board and Chairman of the WGNSS Entomology Group. He spoke at several WGNSS General Meetings; evolution of man seemed to be one of his favorite topics. In 1939 a newly formed WGNSS Music Group had its first meeting at the Rau Home in Kirkwood, indicating a diversity of interests for the Rau's. The Rau's also hosted numerous WGNSS General Meetings/picnics at their spacious home at 549 E. Argonne in Kirkwood. Rau's wife, Nellie, was WGNSS President in 1934-5 and a son, David Rau, served as WGNSS President for 1943-44. Numerous other Rau's served WGNSS in various capacities. .

In 1944 a WGNSS party celebrated Phil Rau's "coming out" after a "long confining siege of illness", and by 1946 the Rau's had moved to a home at 501 E. Pacific in Webster Groves. Phil Rau died suddenly at this home on May 28, 1948. His devoted wife, Nellie, outlived her husband by many years. She died in September, 1972.

Webster Groves Nature Study Society – Founded 1920
GROUP ACTIVITY/WALK SCHEDULES
 April 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. 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.		
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 23, 2006	Boone's Crossing	8 AM	John Solodar
(Take Hwy 40/I64 to the Boone's Crossing Exit in Chesterfield Valley. Take a right at the light at the top of the ramp and you will quickly come to a T at the north outer road. Go left, west, 2.3 miles to the Chesterfield Recreation Center and park in the lot there. The parking lot for the Boone's Crossing unit of the Big Muddy Refuge has space for only six cars, and we will carpool to that lot from the Chesterfield Recreation Area. For more information, call John Solodar (314) 862-5294			
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	Busch 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

BOTANY WALKS – Jeannie Moe – Co-Chair , Co-Leader (636-946-9802)
George Yatskiyevych – Co-Chair (314-577-9522) – Work Phone
Leader – Fr. James Sullivan (starting his 40th yr. in January, 2006)

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 Yatskiyevych (314-577-9522, Work Phone)

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

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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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. 4/7	Mon. 4/17
Fri. 5/5	Mon. 5/15

Next Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 5, 7 PM, 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

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE SPRING BANQUET! ~ TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2006
by Margy Terpstra

Doug Ladd will be our keynote speaker. Doug is Director of Conservation Science for the Missouri Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. His 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 field guide to wildflowers of Midwestern tallgrass prairies". He will be selling autographed copies at the banquet. Also, be sure to browse and bid on the remaining books from the donated birding library that will be sold at silent auction.

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

There are a few changes this year. Eden Campus now has their own catering company, Designing Chefs, who will prepare our buffet. WGNSS will provide wine, beer and soft drinks for this event. Coffee and tea will be provided with the meal. A vegetarian meal option is also available. Just be sure to put a **V** after your name on the reservation form.

Reservations must be received by Monday, April 24, at the latest. Look for the form in this newsletter. Seating is limited ~ **SEND IN YOUR RESERVATION FORM TODAY!**

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.

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

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Phone (____) _____ e-mail _____ fax (____) _____

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

April, 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