



# nature notes

Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society

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## Spring Dinner Thursday, May 3 Eden Commons

Our spring banquet will offer you an opportunity to purchase native plants for your garden. We have chosen flowering species especially for hummingbirds and butterflies. Inspired by the Feb. 9 and March 16 programs about growing native plants and planting for butterflies, we're offering the following:

Butterfly Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>
Joe Pye Weed	<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>
Slender Mt. Mint	<i>Pycnanthemum flexuosum</i>
Pincushion Flower	<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>
'Butterfly Blue'	

Sedum	<i>Sedum spectabile</i> 'Brilliant'
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>
Anise Hyssop	<i>Agastache x 'Red Fortune'</i>
Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>
Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon grandiflorus</i>
Mexican Sage	<i>Salvia leucantha</i>

The plants will be available before the banquet. Bring a box for plants in 4" pots.

- 6:00 PM social gathering and plant sale
- 6:45 buffet service
- 8:00 Program, "Evidence of Evolution," by Dr. Jonathan Losos, associate professor of biology, Washington University and director of Tyson Research Center.
- Make checks payable to WGNS Cost: \$15 per person

Eden Commons is located at 470 E. Lockwood on the campus of Eden Seminary in Webster Groves, Mo. Parking is convenient from Bompert Ave. Tear off the slip on this page & send with to: Pat McCormick, 1338 Eaglebrooke Ct., Ballwin, MO 63021

Spring Banquet reservations for \_\_\_\_\_ persons @ \$15 per person = \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Welcome to new members:

Barbara Bryant.....	Ladue
Angelo Bufalino.....	Richmond Heights
Nancy Havicon.....	Bloomsdale, MO
Karen Holden.....	Bloomsdale, MO
Gail & Charles Lents.....	Hillsboro, MO
Sherry McCowan.....	St. Louis
Nantawat Sitdhiraksa .....	Afton

## Thank You, New Life Members!

Ron Goetz  
Sue Gustafson

## Membership Renewals

Linda Virga

Most memberships expire in August. Your renewal date is printed on your mailing label. To renew, use the envelope included in the June issue. If you'd like to renew your membership early, send a check for \$15, payable to WGNSS, to Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis, MO 63122.

If you send more than \$15. Please indicate the purpose of the additional amount; e.g., \$5 for first class postage, or \$10 gift. ~

## Next Deadline: May 11

Submissions—handwritten, typed, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122-5722 or [mccormacka@earthlink.net](mailto:mccormacka@earthlink.net)

## The New Kaufman

Bill Rowe

*Birds of North America*, by Kenn Kaufman  
(Kaufman Focus Guides,  
Houghton Mifflin, 2000).

Newcomers to birding—and luckily there seem to be a lot of newcomers every year—feel perplexed at the mass of printed matter on birds available in the bookstore. They want to learn the basics, but which of the competing guides on the shelves will be the best one to get them started? As someone who has been teaching adult birding classes for over a decade, I try to stay attuned to this problem, and I know that a lot of what's out there is not right for the purpose. Even a good one-volume field guide like *National Geographic* is too detailed and dense to help the beginner sort through the birds from scratch.

The relatively few books that are really appropriate for this kind of fundamental orientation all have some virtues and some shortcomings. They may be clear and attractive but also out of date and inaccurate in places, like Peterson, or compact and complete but also misleadingly written and illustrated, like the Chandler Robbins guide. They may have great new plates but a less clear text and some lapses of coverage, like *All the Birds*. Then there are the photographically-illustrated efforts like Stokes, which I would never recommend to anyone as a primary field guide.

Now Kenn Kaufman has tackled this problem. In the introduction to his new Focus Guide, he says, "In recent years I've been obsessed with questions of how to teach people about nature." Just a glance through the new volume, and you can hear how his thoughts must have run: "Someone ought to write an introductory bird guide for the twenty-first century that is attractive, compact, clear, fun to read, complete in its coverage, and totally accurate and up to date in its text and pictures." It seems obvious that this is the mission Kaufman was on, and I think he has succeeded. I came to this conclusion a little slowly, because I had always believed

that good paintings were the best kind of field-guide illustrations, never to be superseded by photographs—and I still believe this. But Kaufman has done so well in the creation of this guide in every other respect, and his digitally-enhanced photographic illustrations are so generally serviceable and accurate, that my prejudice has mostly dissolved.

Let's have a look at the main components that Kaufman has assembled: format, introductory matter, species accounts, maps, and finally pictures. First comes format. This book is truly handy, with almost precisely the same dimensions as the Chandler Robbins guide (formerly a Golden Guide, recently revised; see below), and it will slip readily into any kind of pocket. It has a flexible glossy cover, good tough paper stock, text and maps on the left with pictures facing them on the right (an average of four species per page), and color-coded sectioning into major bird groups, which can be located easily by flipping the pages with your thumb. There are other visual aids to finding birds quickly, like a "Pictorial Table of Contents" occupying the front four pages; this illustrates all the major color-coded bird groups with a potpourri of photographs and refers you to their page numbers. At the top of each left-hand text page is a color-coded bar bearing a banner line to characterize that page's birds. Thus within the "red bar" section for birds of prey are pages entitled "Buteos of Open Country," "Hawks of the Woodlands," "Hawks of the Subtropics," "Osprey and Eagles," "Kites," etc. These banner lines are repeated at the top of the facing picture pages, though sometimes with a more descriptive twist—one text page, for instance, is titled "Grackles and Anis," while the facing page says "Long-tailed Black Birds." All of this manages to make the book user-friendly without creating too much clutter. I suspect that the banner lines will be a really useful memory aid for those who are just learning, since they provide subgroupings of a few species at a time. These often coincide with genera, like the page containing the Common

Yellowthroat (monotypic genus *Geothlypis*) and the four *Oporornis*. Groups and species are arranged roughly in AOU Checklist order, but with many purposeful departures from that order (such as the plate of "Birds of Open Fields" containing meadowlarks, Bobolink, Dickcissel, and Lark Bunting).

By way of introduction, Kaufman offers a nine-page section on Birding Basics. Here, in straightforward, relaxed language, he manages to touch all the bases in his effort to make the newcomer feel comfortable and properly oriented. Under *Where To Look*, he begins, "Even a city street will have a few birds, but you'll see more in natural habitats." Under *When To Look*: "Migration seasons can be especially rewarding: billions of little birds are on the move." Under *The Binocular*: "Prices vary from cheap to scary..." And again, "Watch out for well-meaning experts who insist that you should work on identifying difficult birds or travel to see rare ones. The best approach to birding is the one that you enjoy." He provides clear, simplified versions of the parts of a bird, the identification process, names and classification, range and habitat, and bird conservation. For someone who has spent his life acquiring a high level of expertise and nationwide recognition, Kaufman is great at understanding the needs of people at the entry level, and explaining things in a down-to-earth way without talking down to them.

This way with words continues through the species accounts, which are the book's greatest strength. For years it's been apparent that you would be hard pressed to find an inaccurate sentence in a Kaufman book; now it seems you would be hard pressed to find a clumsy or uninteresting one. Kaufman has emulated Roger Tory Peterson in striving to find just the right phrases to characterize a species and make it come to life in the reader's mind—as well as to nail down the basic field marks. Set in a clean, readable type face, the accounts average eight to ten lines per species, with a section of general comments followed by identification characters and voice. It is the general comments

that seem most crucial to me—they “set the stage” by capturing some quality or essential fact about the species right off the bat, before any talk about how to identify it. Like Peterson, Kaufman has the knack of highlighting a few things about each bird that make it memorable, or place it in the right context. In at least this one respect, Kaufman is a much better source for getting oriented about birds than National Geographic, the new Sibley Guide, or almost any other work.

Some examples of his opening sentences for a few species will demonstrate what I mean. King Eider: “A tough duck, abundant in parts of high Arctic. Only a few straggle south to where most birders live.” Magnificent Frigatebird: “Over calm tropical seas, frigatebirds soar for days with hardly a beat of their long wings.” Golden Eagle: “This magnificent hunter favors wilderness areas. Usually rare in the east, somewhat more numerous in open country of the west.” Western Sandpiper: “Nesting in Alaska, this peep spreads across the continent in migration.” Red-cockaded Woodpecker: “Rare and localized, living in small colonies in mature pine forest of southeast; an endangered species.” Steller’s Jay: “In shady forests of western mountains and coast, this dark jay is common, often lurking at picnic grounds...” Carolina Chickadee: “Very common in woods of the southeast, replacing Black-capped Chickadee abruptly along a boundary that spans half the continent.” Orange-crowned Warbler: “A plain bird, its orange crown rarely showing except on frazzled summer adults.” Savannah Sparrow: “Around fields, marshes, or beach grass, a streaky little sparrow that sits in the open is very likely to be this species.” Red Crossbill: “Chunky nomads of evergreen forest, prying open cones with their odd bills.” You get the idea. Writing as vivid as this, under severe space constraints, is hard work, and it’s obvious that Kaufman has crafted his sentences with care.

After the opening “snapshot” come the identification features, and here Kaufman has kept strictly to the basics. He states the well-

known, important points about each species succinctly, with occasional italics for emphasis. Virtually nothing here is new or surprising. Keeping his intended audience firmly in mind, he makes no attempt to go very far into the more complex problems, like immature gulls; he leaves those to other guides, and so the experienced birder won’t find any revelations here. On the other hand, it makes for a great review to go through Kaufman group by group, noting what characters he stresses and how he explains them. Here and there he gives prominence to some points that aren’t usually emphasized in beginning guides, like the “reddish chestnut in the wings” of a Lapland Longspur or the “pale, plain face” of a Veery. One place where I wasn’t so sure I agreed with his choices was the dowitcher accounts, where he says things like “Fall juvenile Short-bills more brightly marked [than juvenile Long-bills].” This is true enough but not really helpful without more detail, and in neither account does he mention the wedge of white up the back that helps identify a bird as a dowitcher. But given the brief word count allowed him here, I’m not sure that any other analysis would have been better. He does, of course, present the most recent names and taxonomy, right down to the Gunnison Sage-Grouse (with its own map). All in all, Kaufman gives about the same level of detail as Peterson, only brought up to date, colored with his own experience, and free of the inaccuracies that are sprinkled through Peterson. In fact, I found only a single place where I would quibble with a fact in Kaufman’s text, and that one is so minor it isn’t worth a mention in a review like this.

Kaufman pays close attention to voice, succinctly describing both song and callnotes for most species (and helpfully boldfacing those two categories separately). He mixes classic transcriptions like the cardinal’s “what-cheer, what-cheer” with catchy versions of his own, like the White-eyed Vireo’s “pick-up-a-reeeal-chick!” Sometimes he will just describe rather than transcribe: the Clay-colored Sparrow gives “four flat scraping

buzzes on one pitch.” As always, space limitations prevent any discussion of the great variety of most birds’ vocalizations, but the brief typical versions offered here do give the right idea and ought to do the trick most of the time. The important point is that Kaufman treats voice as quite important and never omits it just to save space, as *All the Birds* often does (they omitted the Song Sparrow’s song!). In this respect, again, he is writing in the Peterson tradition.

The maps are placed right next to the species accounts, three to five per page. They are therefore smaller than Peterson’s but the same size as everybody else’s, about one inch square, and they use standard colors (red for breeding range, blue for winter range, purple for year-round). But they also incorporate one helpful innovation, plus two other good features that have already been used in other books, making them perhaps the best set of maps currently available in a field guide. (1) Using abundance statistics with a broad brush, Kaufman indicates two levels of range: deep color where the bird is common, pale color where the bird is scarcer. So, on the Prothonotary Warbler map, we see deep red for the core breeding range in the southeast and lower Mississippi valley, up to about St. Louis, and then fingers of pink extending up through Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to the range limits in Wisconsin, Michigan, and New York. Winter and permanent ranges are treated in the same way; for instance, Missouri falls within the pale blue strip of winter range for the Common Snipe (indicating uncommon, north of the deep blue areas) and within an entirely pale purple resident range for the Cooper’s Hawk (indicating that it is not too numerous anywhere). (2) The maps indicate migration range with a swath of gray in between breeding and wintering areas. This device has been used before, but not in all books (*National Geographic* omits it, for instance). Thus the map for the Stilt Sandpiper, which otherwise would present only a narrow red strip along the Arctic coast separated by thousands of miles from a bit of blue in south

Texas, shows us the bird’s occurrence across the whole continent in migration, with heavier gray down the middle (Great Plains) and lighter gray elsewhere. This tells us a lot more, in a general way, about where and when people actually see Stilt Sandpipers. Presumably by accident, a couple of species’ migration corridors were omitted, like that of the Smith’s Longspur. (3) A third good point, duplicated by some other guides but not consistently, is the focusing of the maps on areas where the birds do in fact occur. So the Emperor Goose map shows only Alaska, the Green Jay map is centered on Texas, and so forth, permitting a better view of their actual ranges—as opposed to maps that show all of North America, with the bird’s range barely visible in some corner of the map (one of the problems with Sibley). Various rare or very local birds for which it would be hard to define a range are not given maps of their own; instead the text simply states where they might be seen. Examples are Little Gull (“A few nest in the Great Lakes region and winter along the Atlantic coast, rarely straying elsewhere”) and Smooth-billed Ani (“Scarce and declining in southern Florida”).

Now for a closer look at the illustrations, which by his own account Kaufman labored long and hard to produce. He collected 2000+ pictures from 80+ photographers (all credited at the end of the book), scanned them into computer files, and then edited them digitally to produce images that suited his own sense of what the bird really looks like. These images are “cut out” and arranged on plates with pastel-colored backgrounds, just like regular field-guide art work. Small “pushpin” arrows point to important field marks, as in the Peterson guides (although, in an occasional editorial slip, an arrow will point to something not described in the text).

These digitized photos are a mixed bag. Many birds have turned out just fine, like the ducks, the woodpeckers, the chickadees, and so forth. Many others, however, lose something when compared to good paintings of the same species, especially if there is any-

thing subtle about the bird's coloration. Often the cause of this is the old issue of lighting that has always plagued photographic illustrations. Case in point: Common and Forster's Terns are both shown standing in profile and flying with wings outstretched so as to illustrate the pattern of the primaries. But in both poses there is shadow due to the lighting in the photo, and so it is impossible to tell that a Forster's Tern is actually pure white below while a Common is light gray—an important distinction at times, especially if you find the birds sitting together on driftwood. In fact, the shadow effect is such that the Forster's in Kaufman looks as if it could be grayer on the breast than the Common! Unfortunately he does not choose to mention this difference in his text either, and so the reader is left to surmise that both birds are white, or both birds are gray, or...whatever.

In general, bold colors and patterns held up well under Kaufman's technique. His tanagers and orioles came out fine, as did many of the warblers; the plate of the Black-throated Green and its four relatives, for instance, is very good, showing crisp patterns and true colors. Now, if the birder began to wonder about picking out a vagrant immature Hermit Warbler in the fall, these pictures wouldn't help much—but that's not a fair point because problems like that are not the domain of this book. On the other hand, an abundant bird like the Ruby-crowned Kinglet ought to be given as true an image as possible, whereas in fact we are shown three individuals, each washed in a slightly different color tone—to my eye, one is a little more grayish, one brownish, and one greenish. I'm pretty sure Kaufman didn't select these to show the natural variation in kinglet color (I don't recall ever seeing a brownish one), and so I assume that it's simply a matter of differences in lighting, film, or development that digital tinkering could not totally overcome. This example is not a really big deal—the birds still look like Ruby-crowns, and the reader can put the pictures together with the text and know what he or she has seen—but

on the other hand the picture in, say, Peterson works better as a "prototype" Ruby-crown for the birder to remember. Despite Kaufman's efforts, misleading photographic artifacts of this sort crop up here and there throughout the book.

Another problem with illustrations like these is that they cannot all be oriented in parallel poses. Field-guide illustrators have long used this technique, setting up confusing species side by side in the same orientation so as to show the points of difference most clearly. As outstanding examples, the Sibley guide and the new *Birds of Europe* (Mullarney, et al.) do a great job of showing all similar species in similar poses, so that the real points of difference emerge clearly. This can't be done so well with Kaufman's technique; he seems to have tried, but you would have to be amazingly lucky to find photographs that showed precisely parallel poses. Species pairs like Philadelphia and Warbling Vireos, Cassin's and Botteri's Sparrows, and many others really need this parallel comparison; here, instead, they get posed at various angles, with colors affected variously by the light. The result is not ruinous, just "sub-optimal."

So there are the problems, pointed out in accordance with a reviewer's obligations. But now I must backpedal and say that overall the illustrations work pretty well. They show most species clearly, they show the main types of variation within a species, and they distinguish one species from another. Some of the plates are quite appealing, like the small plovers, the mergansers (which include the Smew!), the western quail, the "wet and dry wrens," and a number of others. Most of them aren't as satisfying to the eye as a set of really good paintings, and in certain cases they aren't as instructive either, but for the most part they are fully functional and do the job.

Coupling respectable plates with its other very fine features, Kaufman's Focus Guide now stands at the head of the class as the best introductory field guide on the market. The emphasis here is on "introductory," as

stated at the outset, but it is a book worth owning for birders of all levels. It is far superior to the Chandler Robbins/Arthur Singer guide, the one it most closely resembles in size and coverage, even though that book has undergone a recent revision and a reprinting by St. Martin's Press and now has a better text (but the pictures are still wildly uneven and the maps are poor). Another competitor, *All the Birds of North America*, has some excellent color plates, but its text isn't as clear and it downplays or omits too much (like voices). Kaufman also edges out Peterson in terms of accuracy and currency of information, and he has equaled Peterson (but not surpassed him) in clarity and "learnability." Some day we will see the long-delayed fifth edition of the eastern Peterson guide, with the revised plates he painted for it, revised maps, and (presumably) some new text, and we will see whether this classic book can resume its leadership position. Personally, I'm not getting my hopes up too high, for Peterson's late art work (e.g., the new plates he painted for the fifth edition of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*) was below his own earlier standard. I don't consider any other guides to be in the running for this particular position—certainly not the Stokes guide or the other standard photo guides. Kaufman has achieved his goal of fitting good pictures, accurate range maps, and crisp, memorable descriptions of every North American bird into one pocket-sized volume, and it's Kaufman that I would now recommend to anyone as their basic guide from which to learn the birds. In this day and age, however, it no longer seems necessary to stick to one single guide; so I would also advise the purchase of a Peterson, and maybe a copy of *All the Birds* too, as companion volumes. Then, if you stay with this hobby for a while and want to learn more, the next stage will take you to *National Geographic* and Sibley.

I'm sure Kaufman's long-range hope is that his new book, with its simplicity and liveliness, will help create a lot of new amateur naturalists—that it will engage people

who did not previously know much about birds, increase their confidence and their enjoyment, and thereby bring them into the ranks of birders, in one sense or another. He must also hope that this will help swell the ranks of the conservation-minded, those who think and speak (and vote) with some appreciation of the natural world and its needs. I hope so too. ∞

## **My Life With the Satterthwaits— 74 Years Ago**

Dorothy B. Heinze

*Editor's note: WGNSS records do not record when the author of the next two articles, Dorothy Boyer Heinze, became a member of our organization. However, we can infer from the first article (which she agreed to write at our urging) that it was 'a long time ago.' Our records do show that she was elected an honorary Life Member in 1990, though that does not seem to stop her from sending annual dues. The Mastodon State Historic Site near her home in Imperial (Jefferson Co.) owes its existence to Dorothy's efforts to save the site in the 1970's. Dorothy remains secretary of the Mastodon Park Committee. As described in the second article, she is currently leading an effort to save another historic site adjacent to park.*

It began for me on 9 March 1927. I was 16 then and that afternoon my parents had gone shopping in a nearby village and I was alone in the yard on the old hill mending my dog's collar with a pair of scissors. Suddenly the scissors slipped and stabbed my right eye out. I lost what remained of the eye on 13 March in the old Mullanphy Hospital in St. Louis and was convinced that my life was ruined and I was disfigured for life. Ahhh, the woes of a young girl in those days!

Regretfully, I did not save the newspaper that carried the story of the Webster Groves couple who had started a new club for people who were interested in nature study. It was called the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, and since I had been writing stories

since age 14 or so for a botanical magazine whose name I forgot many ages ago, I wrote the Satterthwaits offering to share my great knowledge with them! I did not tell them of my loss or my intense need to look outside, but I think they must have sensed something was amiss for very shortly they paid my parents and me a visit on our lonely hill in the foothills of the Ozarks and, as if it had been scripted, invited me to come and live with them while I finished my high school work.

I am sure that they noted that my father was disabled and not likely to be able to help me beyond daily necessities so, out of the goodness of their Quaker hearts, they were willing to take me under their wings, at least for a try. They not only offered me a place to stay and continue my education, but Alfred Fellenberg Satterthwait (AFS) offered me a job as field assistant in the office of the U.S. Entomological Laboratory (Department of Agriculture) in charge of checking progress of instars [stage between molts] of field and forage insects under study there, which at the time was under the management of AFS, who was assisted by R. C. Lange, also an entomologist.

My job was to measure the amount of fresh corn leaf a certain age larvae could consume in a 24-hour period and keep a record each morning. The larvae were confined in small metal pillboxes and each had an individual number. I'll always remember the glee with which AFS told me one morning of RCL's notation when he was in charge of measuring the corn leaves and adding whatever needed to be noted concerning the critter in the box and RCL, having noted the previous day that "larva still dead." Whether that was a joke or not, with some of RCL's expressions it was at least a possibility and gave AFS satisfaction retelling the story. Some days, after examining several hundred of those pillboxes, a story like that became quite welcome to relieve the boredom.

There were quite a few well-known "name" scientists visiting the Lab in those days, entomologists from Hawaii, Russia, and

various other sections, who came to compare field notes and results with AFS, and I was flattered to be introduced to most of them. However, those I remember most clearly were the scientists in other groups, such as the St. Louis Academy of Sciences, or the American Association for the Advancement of Science, one of which sessions AFS arranged to have me present a section on herpetology to a teacher group.

Speaking of herpetology, the Satterthwaits were the most forgiving people in the world because they never said one word about the 58 snakes that I had in cages in my room at one time, when I was being asked to give talks in various schools about snakes and tarantulas (which I also kept). Even after a happening one afternoon as I entered the living room after school to find Mrs. Satterthwait (EAS) standing quietly at the foot of the stairway and addressing me very quietly, as usual, in her quietest Quaker manner: "Dorothy, will Thee please remove Thy friend from the stairway so that I might go upstairs?" Glancing up the stairs I saw a very large blacksnake staring down at us from about halfway up the stairs. He was promptly returned to a more confining situation but not one word of complaint for any of my mistakes was ever expressed by either of my benefactors.

Sometimes I learned the hard way. AFS knew only one speed most of the time and that was maintained no matter what the surface offered, including railroad tracks. Until I learned the hard way (duck when approaching potholes, rails, or other obstacles) I had quite a few close encounters with the roof of the car in the back seat. ROUGH!

We sometimes spent a week at the Lodge [on the Ranken estate, which is now the Beaumont Boy Scout Reservation] with other WGNSS members and I recall walking up the valley one afternoon with AFS cautioning us to be quiet and listen for the call of the Pileated Woodpecker someone had told him had been seen there. A sighting was denied to us, to their great disappointment and I sometimes recall that afternoon as I look



out my kitchen window where I sometimes have TWO pileateds feeding at the same time from a suet box not over 10 feet from my window.

AFS sometimes liked to work in his garden behind the fine old two-story 1904 home, where he had a goodly collection of iris, one of which was called Quaker Lady and which he shared with my mother. There were times when he came home from the Lab and just relaxed in his big old easy chair beside a west facing window, where his favorite magazines awaited him. And sometimes there were Quaker meetings in their living room in which I was always invited to partake as they held hands and spoke to one another in their special manners.

But the memories I treasure most in my life with the Satterthwaits are those when they included me in the St. Louis Audubon meetings, or the St. Louis Academy of Sciences or various other such. It was an Audubon meeting, of course, when I was introduced to that charming, unique gentleman, Otto Widmann, a very remarkable man whose smile was beautiful in a mannish manner. I later met his daughter and her daughters, who became my very good friends when we were active as members of the League of Women Voters. [Among other works, Mr. Widmann was the author of *A Preliminary Checklist of the Birds of Missouri*, which was published in the Transactions of the Academy of Sciences of St. Louis in 1907.]

Life with the Satterthwaits offered unique opportunities I never would have experienced had they not shared their lives with me. For instance, on summer mornings I was invited to breakfast with them on their large, wrap-around veranda as the sun came up and the birds were calling from the trees that grow so well in Webster Groves and we ate corn flakes and talked. They shared their special blessing with me in a way that continues to affect my life to this day and I shall be ever grateful. In retrospect I am sure that the small chores I performed while living with these uniquely special people were in-

adequate in returned for so very much that I received that shaped my life and living. While Elizabeth Allen Satterthwait (a descendent of the famous Allens of Pennsylvania) never received acclaim as a poet despite the lovely volume of verse, *A Gentle Heart*, a copy which graces the shelves of our private library, it reflected a very special spirit which helped shape my life. AFS wrote a number of published papers and I am ashamed to say that I do not have a single copy in our collection, I have only vivid memories and a deep sense of gratitude which I shall carry to eternity.

I think that their lives changed dramatically when AFS was transferred to Urbana, and after they moved to Florida I continued to hear from them. Their last letter contained a beautiful linen bib for my newborn and the last of those annual calendars they sent out each Christmas to their special friends.

To my Mother I owe the charge to accomplish some benefit to Humanity. To the Satterthwaits I owe the shape of what that charge should take. ~

## **Springs of Medicine Waters**

Dorothy B. Heinze

*Editors note: As background, the first part of the following article is an excerpt from an article written by W. C. Oglesby and originally published as "Historical Springs of Medicine Waters" in The Midland Magazine, vol. LIII, p. 9, in 1896. In the second part, Mrs. Heinze describes the present threat to the site – a proposed 4-lane highway to a casino. In a cover letter, she also explains that the present owners of the site, an elderly couple with health problems, have maintained the site for half a century and planned to live out their lives there. Mrs. Heinze requests the help of the WGNSS and its members in preserving the site of the "Springs of Medicine Waters" near Kimmswick.*

"Only a few days ago, in company with a party of gentlemen, a visit was paid to Montesano Springs, situated twenty miles south of St. Louis on the bank of the Mississippi

river and on the Iron Mountain Railroad. Montesano is one of the early settlements of Missouri. The cause of the settlement is handed down through legend and tradition more than through the pages of history.

“Even prior to the days of Laclede, the Indian chieftains had camped around the fifteen springs that bubble from a small area in a cove between two great hills. The curative powers of the water flowing from those springs has been so long an accepted fact that practical testimonials are taken beyond question. The Indians have, on one of these hills to the south of the spring, a burial ground that is today totally covered with graves. To the north of the springs and between them and the river is a high promontory overlooking the Mississippi river. On the top of this promontory, there are a number of graves marked by rough slabs. In conversation with a gentleman who resides in the little village of Kimmswick, he said:

“I was born here fifty-six years ago. From my father who had lived here a long time, I learned that those graves were old when he came. Thousands upon thousands of people have visited those springs and have benefited by them. That the waters have curative powers, there is no doubt. I was told by my father that the graves were of the earlier settlers of the early part of this century and the latter part of the past century. Before the great tide of leaving the country and going to the cities, people would gather here for the great benefits to be derived from the medicinal springs, and in a primitive way, support themselves by cultivating the rich valleys beyond. Montesano has long been a suburban health resort for St. Louis. That practice began with the early history of the city. A quarter of a century before, it was quite a popular place. A large four-story hotel was built here, and exorbitant prices were charged for board. Ten or twelve years ago, the hotel burned down and the fashionable guests who had been in the habit of visiting it grew accustomed to going elsewhere.”

“There are numerous legends of the Indians and the early settlers from which a ro-

mancer could weave weird stories as well as thrilling narratives, and the beauty of such stories would be the truth of their basis.

“Some of the most aristocratic families can trace their ancestry to meetings of white men and Indian maidens at ‘Medicine Springs’ and on ‘Health Mountains.’ It is a lineage of which any man may well be proud. The sires were the bravest, the best of Europe; and the mothers were of a race as royal as any titled house of the old world; a race that met ‘the pale face’ as a brother and cared for him as one of the tribe until the craving for a commercial supremacy taught the red man that in the ‘pale face,’ he saw one that would be a master and not a mate. Thus, began to disappear the ‘noble red man’ and to appear ‘the red demon.’

“There are numerous social and religious bodies that would arrange in advance for certain days and for those days [they would] charter steamers for an outing to Montesano. Those days are looked forward to with keen expectations by ones fortunate enough to secure invitations. The matrons who are most rigid in selecting trips for maiden daughters or small children accept such invitations with delight. That kind of excursion can be increased so as to occupy every day in the season and crowd beyond carrying capacity the steamboat lines to Montesano...”

*DBH note:* The article goes on to describe various facets of the operations at this once famous resort, which was the result of the white man’s opportunity to preempt and reap monetary gain from a natural area that has been a sacred place for thousands of Amerindians for generations.

Today, those sacred springs, from which I drank as a teenager, have all disappeared through neglect and erosion. On my last visit, there was only one spring with water; some three or four were wet spots out of the fifteen I remembered in my youth...and today, the proposed Lady Luck Casino (which we have fought thus far) plans to construct an approach right through the area. So much for progress. West of the springs was once a marsh extending into what is now the Mas-

today Site, and as recently as 20 years ago, two springs were still evident along the east border of the Site. We devoutly hope that these can one day be restored.

The author of the first part of the informational paper was W. C. Oglesby, who at that time (1896) wanted to preserve the site. My parents (who in the early part of [the last] century lived near Montesano), attested to the popularity of the water and the hospitality and said that steamboats and railroad trains brought people from St. Louis by the thousands to this popular resort. ~

## Proclamation

*by the city of Webster Groves*

Whereas, the Webster Groves Nature Study Society was founded in 1920, and have recently committed \$10,000 towards the refurbishment of the bird sanctuary at Blackburn Park; and

Whereas, the Webster Groves Nature Study Society is able to make this wonderful contribution to our community, due to the generous memorial donations made by the family and friends of the late Phoebe Snetsinger of Webster Groves, world renowned bird watcher; and

Whereas, the objective of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society is to stimulate interest in nature study, for both adults and children, to cooperate with other organizations in nature study, to encourage amateur research in the natural sciences, and to promote conservation of wildlife and natural beauty; and

Whereas, the refurbishment of the bird sanctuary in Blackburn Park will focus on introducing a diverse selection of plant material, which will provide food and habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, and the creek flowing out of the natural spring will be restored and enhanced, with natural landscaping.

Now, therefore, I, Gerry Welch, mayor of the city of Webster Groves, on behalf of the en-

tire city council, wish to thank and honor the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, for their generous contribution, and do hereby proclaim Tuesday, April 3, 2001, as "Webster Groves Nature Study Society Day in the City Of Webster Groves" – and when this project is complete, I invite our residents to visit the bird sanctuary at Blackburn Park, and take in a bit of nature.

Signed this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of April, 2001,  
Gerry Welch  
(Signed)

## WGNSS Report Card

David Rabenau

I recently asked the Board to grade WGNSS on how well the Society is doing on accomplishing its objectives. Of course, the Board is ultimately responsible for how well WGNSS is doing, so the results may be a little biased! In any case, the purpose of this exercise was to make us stop a minute, think about what we are doing and why, and to identify our strengths and weaknesses as we wrap up the year.

Here are the grades we gave ourselves:  
objectives of WGNSS grade on a 4.0 scale  
(F = 0, A = 4)

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| (1) to stimulate interest in nature study on the part of adults | 3.8 |
| (2) and children,   | 2.0 |
| (3) to cooperate with other organizations in nature study,      | 3.9 |
| (4) to encourage amateur research in the natural sciences, and  | 3.1 |
| (5) to promote conservation of wildlife                         | 3.6 |
| (6) and natural beauty  | 2.8 |

An abbreviated listing of some of the examples identified for each of the objectives is as follows:

For Objective 1: Ornithology Group, Botany Group, Entomology Group, membership expertise, active membership, *Birds of the St. Louis Area* book, Audubon scholarships, Menke Family scholarship, Scudder scholar-

ship, special recognition awards, and our journal *Nature Notes*.

For Objective 2: Talks at grade schools, Support teachers at Audubon camp, Tyson Research contributions

For Objective 3: SLAS (bird walks, Holiday party, joint meetings), NABA (joint meeting, butterfly walks, July 4 count), Christmas bird counts, Mo. Dept of Conservation, Mo. DNR, Meramec Greenway, St. Louis County Parks and Rec, Forest Park, Tower Grove Park, Illinois DNR, Idalia Society, American Bottom Conservancy, MO Native Plant Society, Cornell Laboratory, Missouri Coalition Environmental, Sierra Club, St. Louis Herpetological, MO-PIRG / Meramec Campus, Endangered Special Coalition, French Valley Conservancy (IL), Neighborhood Law Office (IL), E. St. Louis Community Action

For Objective 4: Breeding bird surveys, Christmas bird counts, State-wide butterfly counts, NABA July 4 count, Cerulean Warbler Atlas Project, Backyard Feeder Survey, Migratory Bird Day, Quarterly Botany reports, Monthly Birding reports, WGNSS bird checklist, WGNSS butterfly checklist, Forest Park migratory data, Tower Grove migratory data, Birding Hotline, *Birds of the St. Louis Area*, *Nature Notes*

For Objective 5: Conservation Committee, Holnam Project, Missouri Bird Conservation, Conservation Focus, Meramec Greenway consulting, Wetlands/Gateway Racetrack, chip mills, Roadless Initiative, Mills Mall, cell phone tower in Lone Elk, shark finning, blackbird poisoning, Massasauga Rattlesnake, tower kill surveys, Antire Park, Busch Conservation Area, Phoebe Snetsinger project, *Nature Notes*, Page Avenue Extension effort

For Objective 6: Busch Butterfly Garden, N. County Recreation Butterfly Garden, Jack Van Benthuisen Memorial, Gaddy Bird Garden, preserving Antire Park, preserving Holnam site, Dick Anderson Memorial, *Nature Notes* ~

## Spring Break in Choco

Peter Hoell

Teachers get spring break too and forgoing Daytona Beach, Padre, and Cancun this year I opted for the Valle and Choco regions of Colombia. No beaches and not one college kid. Instead I saw extraordinary mountains, jungles, waterfalls, birds, and orchids and met some wonderful people too. Among them is Rudi Vreeburg, who put me on to a group after I put a call out on the net for information on birding in and around Calí, Colombia, a city where the Vermilion Flycatcher is almost a "trashbird." Here in St. Louis we have some extremely knowledgeable experts on South American birding but when I asked around Calí drew a big blank. Rudi is a Dutchman living in Trujillo, a village in the western Andes mountains two hours by bus up the valley from the city of Calí. His main interests are orchids and poison frogs though he'll happily look at birds, lizards, and anything else that lives there. He invited me to visit and said, "Just tell the driver to let you off at the house of the gringo." (He doesn't care for that term and is trying to teach them to call him "holandés.") It worked. The hardest part was finding the Trujillo ticket window in the huge multilevel bus terminal in Calí.

After being let off at his door as promised we toured the town then went to the square to find a man with a Willys jeep who could take us the following day over the mountains to the village of Naranjal on the eastern edge of the great Choco jungle. From there the jungle sweeps pretty much uninterrupted all the way to the Pacific. En route crossing high plateaus and ranch land we saw both Black and Turkey Vultures and a soaring Crested Caracara but not much else from our bouncing jeep. We spent the night in Naranjal and continued the next day winding along the side of a steep mountain gorge passing spectacular waterfalls and watching enormous White-collared Swifts swooping overhead while Black Phoebes hunted from fence post perches. The road ended, and we set off on foot climbing up steep muddy jungle trails

made by hunters and coca workers. The high points for me on this hike were sightings of a Spot-crowned Barbet—woodpecker-like with bright red flanks—and later a Blue-crowned Mot Mot, with part of the tail always picked clean of feathers looking like a pendulum. At one point we heard likely poison frogs but they went silent before we could determine which bromeliad they were hiding in.

On the road returning to Naranjal we gave a lift to a couple who were out on their day off and they invited us to spend the night at the ranch house where they worked in a small settlement called Dos Quebradas, or two streams. We spent the next morning walking along a crystal clear branch and encountered Hooded, White-shouldered, and Yellow-rumped Tanagers, just a few of the huge assortment to be found in the region. The guide lists 127! We struggled with a pair of flycatchers finally concluding they were Apical Flycatchers, an endemic species. Later that day, the ranch owner came up from Calí, and together with some of his workers, we drove to a mountainous property. After a long, steep, uphill slog through dense jungle without benefit of a trail, a sharp-eyed girl with us spotted a family of howler monkeys. They were stunning in their bright orange pelage and most cooperative, allowing everyone a good look before moving on. A moment later a big Squirrel Cuckoo hopped into view. It was about the same color. We returned late that night to Trujillo, flushing nightjars from the road as we went.

The next morning we went down the mountain to the small city of Tulua where I would catch the bus to Calí. Killing some time in the city park I watched as several people with long poles and ropes snagged iguanas the size of dachshunds out of the trees and loaded them into plastic travel crates. One of the captors told me the iguanas were dying of hunger in the park so were being moved to the Calí Zoo with some to be released in the wild. However there were detractors in the crowd who told me they were probably just going to be eaten. I'm going to look for those iguanas at

the Calí Zoo! If anyone has questions about the fauna and flora of the region you can write to Rudi Vreeburg at [Orchids@teletulua.com.co](mailto:Orchids@teletulua.com.co)

## March 2001 Bird Report

Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer

### Abbreviations:

BCA = Busch Wildlife Area

CL = Carlyle Lake

FP = Forest Park

HL = Horseshoe Lake

Lost Valley Trail = LVT

MTNWR = Mark Twain Nat. Wildlife Refuge

MTC = Marais Temps Clair

REDA = Riverlands

TGP = Tower Grove Park

*Introduction:* This observation applies equally well to birds: "In addition to the practical arguments for the preservation of butterflies, there are clearly aesthetic and moral reasons to insist that butterflies survive. As people become ever more conscious to their environment, they may come to see that all biological entities have intrinsic value and are worthy of protection. Many years ago, the Greeks equated butterflies with the souls of people, using the Greek word *psyche* for both. One does not have to believe in Greek mythology to know that in a world without butterflies, the souls of all people would be greatly diminished." Jeffrey Glassberg, *Butterflies through Binoculars: the East*.

### Early arrival dates:

2/25 – Pine Warbler;

2/25 – Brown Thrasher;

3/1 – Fox Sparrow;

3/3 – Lesser Yellowlegs;

3/9 – Am. Pipits;

3/10 – Tree Swallow

3/11 – Snipe

3/11 – Long-billed Dowitcher

3/11 – Bonaparte's Gull

3/12 – Hermit Thrush

3/14 – Greater Yellowlegs

3/16 – Brewer's Blackbirds

3/18 – Purple Martin

3/21 – Merlin

3/22 – Yellow-crowned Night Heron

3/23 – Great Egret

3/24 – Pectoral Sandpiper

3/25 – Barn & Rough-winged Swallow  
3/27 – Cattle Egret  
3/28 – Little Blue Heron  
3/28 – Snowy Egret  
3/29 – Louisiana Waterthrush.

**Sightings:** On 3/29, a Common Loon was observed at HL (KM). Two Horned Grebes were present at REDA on 3/10 (MT). Jeannie Moe found 16 Double-crested Cormorants on Mueller Road on 3/24. A Neotropic Cormorant was located at REDA on 3/11 by the Johnsons. Yellow-crowned Night Herons were found near HL on 3/22 (FH). Jim Ziebol found Little Blue Herons on Collinsville Rd. on 3/28. Two Great Egrets were observed at Sauget Marsh on 3/23 (KM). Cattle Egrets were seen on 3/27 near Fairmont City (CM, KM). On 3/28, Snowy Egrets and Little Blue Herons were found at Frank Holten Park (KM). A large flock (3500+) of White Pelicans occupied HL from 3/16 to 3/23. [FH, D Bz, KM, JZ (video), MT]. Mike Thelen saw 2 Ross's Geese at REDA on 3/10. Approximately **50,000 Snow Geese** were present at MTNWR on 3/4 (HW, m. ob.). On 3/1, a flock containing 57 Wood Ducks was seen along Levee Road (JZ). Dennis Bozzay found 2000+ Shovelers near HL on 3/18. Three large groups of Lesser Scaup were sighted: 1000 on 3/10 at REDA (J Mo), 1200 on 3/11 at HL (FH), and 8000 on 3/28 at CL (DK). Large gatherings of **3000 Ruddy Ducks** were seen at HL on 3/23 (FH) and 4000 Ruddy Ducks were at CL on 3/28 (DK). The HL numbers were very high for that location. Dan Kassebaum also reported 10,000 Red-breasted Mergansers at CL on 3/28.

Lesser Yellowlegs were reported on 3/3 at REDA (CA) and on 3/11 near Alton (FH). Charlene Malone found Greater Yellowlegs on Powers Road on 3/14 and John Solodar observed several at REDA on 3/29. Lesser Golden Plover were sighted several places: 4 were seen at REDA on 3/2 (J&CM), 6 were seen on 3/26 (CA) and 19 were seen at REDA on 3/29 (T Be). Torrey Berger found a Long-billed Dowitcher at REDA on 3/11. Pectoral Sandpipers were observed at REDA

on 3/24 (J Mo) and 50+ were seen there on 3/29 (JS). Snipe were sighted on 3/11 near HL (JZ, YH), 4 were found on 3/18 at HL (D Bz & KC), 150 were seen on 3/23 at CL (KM), and 1 on 3/29 at REDA (JS).

Several reports of Laughing Gull came from different areas: on 3/9 at HL (DB), on 3/11 at CL with a few Bonaparte's (DK), on 3/19 at Frank Holten SP (KM), and on 3/29 at HL (G&TB). Bonaparte's were also seen on 3/2 at HL (FH). March 4 was the last reported sighting of the first-winter Glaucous Gull at REDA (m. ob.). A Sharp-shinned Hawk was spotted on Mueller Road on 3/24 (J Mo). During the week of 3/18, Tom Parmeter saw several Sharpies and a Cooper's Hawk in his neighborhood and on 3/25 Mike Thelen saw a Cooper's Hawk on Olive Blvd. west of 270. A Red-shouldered Hawk was observed at Shaw Nat. Pres. on 3/10 (P&BJ) and Jeannie Moe found a nest there on 3/28. The Levee Road on 3/18 produced 2 Harlan's Hawks, 1 Western Red-tailed, and a Cooper's Hawk (JZ, YH). Viola Buchholtz found 2 Krider's Red-taileds at REDA on 3/17. A Merlin was observed on 3/21 by Dave Hoehne along Darst Road and on 3/24 in Jersey Co. (HW). Jim Ziebol and Dennis Bozzay found 12 Bald Eagles (one of which was albinistic), 4 Harriers (2 of which were males), Harlan's Hawk and Great Horned Owl along the Levee Road on 3/16. An Osprey appeared at MTNWR on 3/31 (IM).

Three Short-eared Owls were sighted on 3/18 on Bend Road/HL (D Bz, KC). On 3/31 Jeannie Moe and Jean Cook observed a red-phase Screech Owl at Portage de Sioux Pond. Tom Parmeter located Great Horned Owls near his home on 3/29 (TP). Red-headed Woodpeckers were observed at Shaw Nat. Pres. on 3/10 (P&BJ). A Loggerhead Shrike was found on the Levee Road on 3/24 (T Be). On 3/10, Tree Swallows were found throughout the area. Purple Martins were seen on 3/18 at the Levee Road (YH) and at BCA on 3/25 along with Tree, Barn and Rough-winged Swallows (YH, J&CM). Torrey Berger found a Red-breasted Nuthatch at his home on 3/11. American Pipits

were heard at REDA on 3/9 (MT), 4 were seen at HL on 3/11 (JZ, YH) and 100 were found at REDA on 3/17 (DB, VB).

Irene Mondhink found a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on 3/31 at Gilbert Lake. Tom Bormann observed 6 Pine Warblers and a Golden-crowned Kinglet at Hawn SP on 3/9. A Pine Warbler was heard singing at Rockwoods on 3/20 (CM). On the same date, Charlene Malone also had a Louisiana Waterthrush there. A Harris' Sparrow was located at BCA on 3/3 (Sandra Walters). A flock of **5 Harris's Sparrows** was seen at the Blue Grosbeak Trail/Weldon Spring CA on 3/31 (RW), a number reminiscent of the 1960s at BCA. Early in the month, Savannah Sparrows were being seen at Little Creve Coeur Marsh: on 3/2 (P&BJ) and again on 3/6 (G&TB). The sighting of a Clay-colored Sparrow at BCA (J&CM) was notable for its early date of 3/24, which is more one month earlier than any date previously reported. Keith McMullen saw Vesper Sparrows in St. Clair Co. on 3/29. A Swamp Sparrow was found at LVT on 3/31 (G&TB). Rusty Blackbirds were seen on 3/2 at BCA and on 3/11 at HL (P&BJ) and on 3/17 along Mueller Road (J Mo). Frank Holmes reported both Brewer's and Rusties at Bruns & Bischoff Rd. on 3/10. Towhees, Fox Sparrows and Juncos were numerous in TGP on 3/25 (Samantha Moore & John Emery).

**Comments:** Please report all sightings of **Cerulean Warbler** to Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372) or Yvonne Homeyer (314-963-7750). Twenty-six environmental groups have petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to have this bird listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A pair of young Cooper's Hawks (first adult plumage) has returned to the same nest site in TGP as last year. This demonstrates that birds are faithful to a breeding location. If the hawks are not disturbed, we should see them for many years to come.

A Snow Bunting in breeding plumage was sighted on 3/21 at Mastodon State Park. This could be the same bird, also in breeding plumage, seen there in February. Wilma

Kennell observed a Purple Finch at her home on 3/22 and an orange variant House Finch on 3/17. Tom Parmeter found Woodcock at Busch on 2/11 and Fish Crows in Bellefontaine Park. A Spotted Towhee was seen at Jack Harris's feeder in late March.

**Contributors:** George & Terry Barker, David Becher, Torrey Berger, Tom Bormann, Dennis Bozzay, Viola Buchholtz, Ken Cohen, Jean Cook, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, Paul & Barbara Johnson, Dan Kassebaum, Jim & Charlene Malone, Keith McMullen, Jeannie Moe, Irene Mondhink, Tom Parmeter, John Solodar, Mike Thelen, Rad Widmar, Helen Wuestenfeld, Jim Ziebol, many observers. An asterisk means "documented." To submit a report, call Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372) or email Yvonne at by the last day of the month. If you want to send photos or videos of birds reported, please mail them to Jim Ziebol, 3900 Berger, St. Louis, Mo. 63109. We will keep them on hand for future reference. ∞

## Conservation Report

Yvonne Homeyer  
Cerulean Warbler: Logging is continuing at Weldon Spring C.A. not far from Lost Valley Trail, a nesting site for Cerulean Warbler. WGNSS has received permission from the Mo. Dept. of Conservation to expand our Lost Valley Trail Breeding Bird Survey into the section that has been closed off to the public for the logging operations. In addition, we are asking that MDC stop logging activities entirely during breeding season. Last fall, 26 environmental organizations petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Cerulean Warbler as "Threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. Please report *all* Cerulean Warblers to Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372); with particular emphasis on Ceruleans found at Weldon Spring C.A.

Environmental Impact Statement: Concern about Holnam's proposed cement plant in Jefferson & Ste. Genevieve Counties is spreading. WGNSS met with the Governor's office in March and we have had contact with Sen. Carnahan, Sen. Bond, Rep.

Gephardt, Rep. Clay, and several state legislators. It is critical that each of us begin contacting our elected officials on both sides of the river. That includes governors, federal and state representatives and senators, and local county officials. Ask each person to contact Col. Morrow and request that the Corps of Engineers prepare an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**. (The EPA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are also asking the Corps to prepare an EIS, and the Mo. Dept. of Conservation is opposed to the project.) In addition to habitat destruction and impacts to wildlife, the proposed Holnam cement plant would emit huge quantities of air pollutants, which affect our health and are especially bad for people with asthma and other respiratory illnesses. If the Holnam cement plant were built, it would add to our regional air quality problem. Existing businesses could be subjected to increased restrictions and new businesses might choose to go elsewhere. This proposed project spells "environmental impact" in every sense of the word. Ask your elected officials to contact Col. Morrow and request an Environmental Impact Statement:

Col. Michael Morrow  
U.S. Corps of Engineers  
1222 Spruce Street  
St. Louis, Mo. 63103

More on Holnam: The *Post-Dispatch* and the *Ste. Genevieve Herald* both reported on our victory at the Land Reclamation Commission meeting on March 22. Holnam was asking for a second permit, this time to mine 35 acres. Instead, the Commissioners voted to consolidate the second application with Holnam's third application to mine an additional 1748 acres (both applications are still pending). Significantly, the Land Reclamation Commission also decided that its investigation of Holnam's record of environmental compliance should be expanded from just Missouri to include ALL the states in which Holnam's 12 U.S. cement plants are located. Therefore, it could be several months before there is any further action on Holnam's quarry applications. WGNSS was repre-

sented by Jill Witkowski, a law student at the Environmental Law Clinic, who persuaded the Commissioners with well-researched legal arguments to take the above steps. The Clinic students also presented a chart of Holnam's record of noncompliance in Missouri and read affidavits of nearby landowners concerned about the water, air and noise impacts of the proposed strip-mining operations. WGNSS member Nancy Havicon, who lives near the Holnam property, spoke of her concerns, and Yvonne Homeyer talked about the disastrous effects of forest fragmentation on Neotropical migrants. Other organizations present included Endangered Species Coalition, American Bottom Conservancy, Coalition for the Environment, and Sierra Club.

Besides the Holnam proposal, another company, Continental Cement, has now applied to DNR for permission to build a second cement plant between the Holnam site and the town of Ste. Genevieve. We are looking into this proposed project also.

Conservation Focus: Jim Ziebol, Jack Harris, Sue Gustafson, Yvonne Homeyer, Charles Burwick, Edge Wade, Susan Hazelwood, Dave Bedan, Roy Hengerson, Charles Phillips, Bea Covington and other representatives of birding and environmental organizations attended the Mo. Dept. of Conservation's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Conservation Focus on April 7. Our concerns about forest fragmentation, chip mills, clear-cutting, the disappearance of wetlands and the steep decline of Neotropical migrant populations were effectively voiced throughout the day. WGNSS met many Mo. Dept. of Conservation officials and we look forward to continuing our dialogue with these individuals.

Call Yvonne Homeyer (314-963-7750) for the date of the next meeting of the Conservation Committee and/or the Holnam Task Force. ~



## Vincent van Gogh and Nature

Dianne Benjamin

Have you seen the exhibition featuring seventy of the world's most famous paintings by Vincent van Gogh and his fellow artists of the "Petit Boulevard" showing at the Saint Louis Art Museum 2/17–5/13/01? You may be surprised to learn how intensely van Gogh sought the sacred in nature. Many of us have asked, "Where is the sacred?" Which is not the same query as "Who/what is God?" By looking at van Gogh's art and writings, one sees how connected he was to the natural world. Bold and colorful sunflowers, cypress trees, working peasants, crows, storm clouds, starry nights, and wheat fields cry out to be understood.

Fortunately I went to lectures and a guided tour of the van Gogh exhibit by professor and author Cliff Edwards, Ph.D. In his book, *Van Gogh and God: A Creative Spiritual Quest*, Dr. Edwards provides unique insight into the symbolism of Vincent's art without sinking to static allegories, reductionism, or tabloid myths. He writes, "Symbolism for Vincent was not a clever code created by artists, but a *dynamic* ITALICS {given} from a deeper or a higher sense which opened itself to that artist who lived in love and simplicity, persisting in daily labor within nature." The ITALICS {given} was symbolism as grace to be received by faith that dares to venture into nature.

Vincent wrote (Letter 228), "I see that nature has told me something, has spoken to me, and that I have put it down in shorthand. In my shorthand there may be words that cannot be deciphered, there may be mistakes or gaps, but there is something of what wood or beach or figure has told me in it, and it is not the tame or conventional language derived from a studied manner or system rather than from nature itself." He painted outdoors or through an open window every single day for ten years. His walls were covered with Japanese Zen paintings and haiku poems done on-the-spot to commemorate a flowering branch or other natural event. "Come now, isn't it almost a true religion

which these simple Japanese teach us, who live in nature as though they themselves were flowers?" (Letter 542)

Dr. Edwards noted that Vincent—according to his sister Elizabeth—was enchanted by birds and nests from his youth. Later, as an artist, van Gogh painted both birds and nests. He even sent birds' nests as a reconciliation gift to another artist who refused to consider Vincent's *The Potato Eater* as worthy of serious consideration. He writes (Letter R 58), "I sent a basket containing bird's nests to your address today. I have some in my own studio too... I thought that you might like the bird's nests as much as I do myself, for really and truly birds—such as the wren and the golden oriole—rank among the artists too."

Vincent van Gogh failed first as an art dealer then as a theologian from a prominent Dutch family of successful art dealers and theologians. He was a second son, born exactly one year to the day March 30, 1853, after his namesake, stillborn brother. He was perceived as a coarse ugly redhead in a society that valued only smooth conventional features. His own mother burned hundreds of his paintings. He suffered from disabling epilepsy and was rejected by lovers and fellow artists. He severed only a portion of an ear lobe but he did shoot himself in the side out in a wheat field. He died a few days later on October 29, 1890, in the arms of his younger brother Theo, explaining his mortal wounds were to save his namesake newborn nephew from life in cramped city apartments. Theo had supported Vincent's life in expensive rural asylums and died himself a few months later. Brothers are buried side by side. Vincent's art fetches shameless millions at auction while his natural world suffers.

"Only I have no news to tell you [Theo], for the days are all the same, I have no ideas, except to think that a field of wheat or a cypress is well worth the trouble of looking at close up... (Letter 596). Well, do you [Theo] know what I hope for, once I let myself begin to hope? It is that a family will be for you what nature, the clods of earth, the grass, the

yellow wheat, the peasant are for me, that is to say, that you may find in your love for people something I *not only to work for*, but to comfort and restore you when there is need for it (Letter 604). I feel so strongly that it is the same with people as it is with wheat, if you are not sown in the earth to germinate there, what does it matter?—in the end you are ground between the millstones to become bread. The differences between happiness and unhappiness! Both are necessary and useful, as well as death or disappearance—it is so relative—and life is the same. Even faced with an illness that breaks me up and frightens me, that belief is unshaken. (Letter 607).” ∞

### **Ornithology Meetings**

Vicki Flier

On April 29 we will hold the annual “warblerfest” at the Flier’s by showing the best darned video, which includes 38 species and their songs. The schedule for the rest of the summer’s meeting is June 17—bird nest identification, July 29, August 19 and September 23. These are all on Sunday and will start at 4:00 p.m. We will have different topics each month for discussion plus guest speakers. Bring a dish and join the fun while we increase our birding skills. For more information call Vicki Flier at 314-968-9166 or e-mail [RRVVCC@AOL.com](mailto:RRVVCC@AOL.com) Everyone is invited. ∞

### **Tyson Trails Day**

Tyson Trails Day will be Saturday, April 28, from 10 AM to 3 PM.

This event will be hosted by the Friends of Tyson and the Tyson Field Science Program. We need lots of volunteers to help. Contact Joyce Duncan, 314-935-8430 or e-mail [tyson@biology.wustl.edu](mailto:tyson@biology.wustl.edu) to volunteer your time and services. Be sure to join us on the 28<sup>th</sup>, volunteer few hours of your time and then spend some time enjoying the activities. This is a family-oriented event with many diverse activities—there will be something for everybody. ∞

### **Outdoor Ed at the Green Center**

The Green Center, the center for outdoor environmental education and the arts located in University City, is offering classes for the general public from now through July. The classes, all of which are being taught by volunteers, range from bird watching, to poetry writing, to insect hunting, to Deep Ecology. Prices for the classes vary, but are being kept low so that families can afford to take part. Class fees go to support the work and mission of the Green Center. Scholarships are available. Still to come in Spring/Summer 2001 session are:

#### **For Adults and Children**

Birdwatching for Beginners  
Sunday, April 29, 2001  
8:00am-10:00 AM

Create Wetland Connections  
Saturday, May 5, 2001  
10:00am-2:00 PM

Bird Walk in Ruth Park Woods  
Saturday, May 12, 2001  
8:00am-10:00 AM

Sharing in Nature  
Saturday, May 19, 2001  
10:00am-11:30 AM

Jewelry and Lantern  
Making from Nature  
Sunday, May 20, 2001  
1:00PM-4:30 PM

Drawing in the Woods  
Sunday, June 3, 2001  
1:00 PM-3:00 PM

Blooms 'n Tunes  
Sunday, June 17, 2001  
11:00am-12:00 PM

Butterfly Walk  
Sunday, July 15, 2001  
1:00 PM-3:00 PM

#### **For Children**

Compost Happens  
Saturday, May 12, 2001  
10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Squiggly, Squishy and Slimy Things  
Saturday and Sunday, July 7-8, 2001,  
10:00am-11:00 AM & 1:00 PM-2:00 PM

Insect Safari  
Saturday, July 14, 2001  
10:00am-11:30 AM

**For Adults**

Daylily Splendor (3 sessions—2 remaining)  
Daylily Garden Tour  
Date TBA, Mid-June-Mid-July

Daylily Decision Making  
Date TBA, Mid-June-Mid-July

Deep Ecology: Weekly class  
Wednesday, May 2, 2001—June 20, 2001  
7: 00 PM-8:00 PM

Literature of Nature  
Saturday, June 9, 2001  
10:00am-12:00 PM

Permaculture: Growing Food Ecologically  
Sunday, June 210, 2001  
10:00am-12:00 PM

For more information, or to request a brochure, please call the Green Center at 314-725-8314 or contact the Center via e-mail at [info@thegreencenter.org](mailto:info@thegreencenter.org).

The mission of the Green Center, founded in 1997, is to provide "...a natural laboratory and cultural gathering place, where people of our community with their diverse backgrounds and experiences can come together to understand each other and their relationship to the natural world." If you are interested in volunteering with the Center, please contact them at the number and e-mail listed above. ~

**Deadlines for Nature Notes '01**

Marjorie Richardson  
10 AM Oak Bend Library, 842 S. Holmes, Kirkwood

mailing party	deadline
May 21	May 11
Aug. 20	Aug. 10
Sept. 17	Sept. 7
Oct. 15	Oct. 5
Nov. 19	Nov. 9
Dec. 17	Dec. 7

*tyson nature line*

Call 935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area. Please report any unusual birds to Connie Alwood, 524-8111. ~

**Next Deadline: May 11** 

Submissions—handwritten, typed, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122-5722 or [mccormacka@earthlink.net](mailto:mccormacka@earthlink.net)

*Need directions?*

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**Castlewood State Park**

- Take Manchester west, south (left) on New Ballwin Rd., east (left) on Kiefer Creek, follow signs.

**Forest Park, Kennedy Forest**

- Highway 40 to Hampton north, follow signs to St. Louis Zoo's Living World. Kennedy Forest is about 1/4 mi. west.

**Shaw Nature Reserve (Arboretum),**

**Gray Summit**

- Take 44 west to Gray Summit (100) exit, left over highway, right onto service road and immediately left into Arboretum.
- Meet at Brushy Creek trail head.

**Tower Grove Park**

- Take 44 to Kingshighway south, east (left) on Magnolia, 1st right into park.
- In park, 1st right (west), past tennis courts & stable to 1st picnic area on right (Gus Foyt Site).

**Webster Groves Nature Study Society**

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. ~

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## 2000-2001 WGNSS Board

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ntotland@tnc.org

# Webster Groves Nature Study Society

## MEETINGS

*Wednesday May 2*

7:00 PM Board meeting at David Rabenau's, 429 Belleview Avenue, Webster Groves, 314-968-8128. All members are welcome.

*Thursday May 3*

WGNSS Spring Banquet at Eden Theological Seminary in Webster.

## BOTANY

*Thursdays April-Aug.*

Beginners welcome. Bring lunch, weather gear. Field trips usually meet 9:30 AM. Trip is usually 3-5 hr. plus travel time. Call Fr. Sullivan: 291-7885 after 1 PM Wed for location. An e-mail message is sent every Wed. advising when and where the field trip is scheduled. If you would like to receive it, send your e-mail address to Jack Harris at jahar@mac.com

## ENTOMOLOGY

*Sunday April 29*

7 PM at Magners', 516 Bacon Ave., 961-4588. Mike Arduser will present the program: "Using Missouri Heritage Data Base to trace Species of concern."

*Sunday May 27*

7 PM at Magners's, above. Phil Koenig and Marshall Wagner will discuss Lepidoptera records of the early 1900's.

## BIRDING

*Thursdays May-Aug.*

8:00 AM at Des Peres Park on Ballas, one block north of Manchester. Note time change. Questions: call Dottie Herweg: 314-966-2274.

*Saturday April 28*

8 AM Tower Grove Park, west of stables. Bring lunch. Leader: David Becher, 314-576-1146.

*Saturday May 5*

8 AM Castlewood State Park. Meet near boat launch. Bring lunch. Leader: David Becher, 314-576-1146.

*Sunday May 6*

8 AM Tower Grove Pk. Call Jim Malone above.

*Saturday May 12*

Big Day!

*Sunday May 13*

8 AM Forest Park's Kennedy Forest. Call Jim Malone above.

*Saturday May 19*

8 AM Gray Summit Arboretum. Meet at entrance to Brush Creek Trail. Bring lunch. Leader: David Becher, 314-576-1146.

*Saturday May 26*

8 AM "Where the Birds Are." Meet at SE corner of Kohl's parking lot, Olive & 270. Bring lunch. Leader: David Becher, 314-576-1146.

*Nature Notes deadline May 11*

*join wgnss* Send \$15 to Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132



Webster Groves  
 Nature Study Society  
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 St. Louis MO 63119

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# Webster Groves Nature Study Society

## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Membership categories (circle one):  
 Individual or Family: .....\$15  
*for 1st class mail..... add \$5*  
 Student .....\$5  
 Life .....\$300  
*(lump sum or equal payments over 5 yrs.)*

Please make check payable to: Webster Groves Nature Study Society  
 Please mail this form with check to:  
 Treasurer: Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132