



Nature Notes



Call the Nature Line 314-935-8432 for meeting times & bird sightings www.wgnss.org

Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society

May 2005 Vol. 77, No. 5

85th Annual Spring Banquet 5/10

Margy Terpstra

Join us on Tuesday, May 10, for our Spring Banquet at Eden Seminary Commons, Lockwood and Bompert Ave. in Webster Groves. The social hour will begin at 5:45 pm. Mingle with other members and meet Jim Rathert, our featured speaker and well-known wildlife photographer from the Missouri Department of Conservation. Jim will be selling and autographing copies of his book, accepting checks or cash. A buffet dinner by Hendri's Catering begins at 6:45. Following dinner, we'll present a well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award to a member who has given outstanding service and dedication to nature. The presentation by Jim Rathert will begin at 8 pm. Jim will be showing us a presentation featuring photographs from his recent book, *In Focus*. Since his ongoing passion is birds, Jim will do a very special bird addendum in honor of the peak of spring migration.

Cost is \$23 for early birds, \$26 after 4/28. Please send registration form on p. 19 no later than May 5. Parking is available on the Seminary Grounds. Enter the parking lot from Bompert Ave. Directions on p. 11 & 14. 🐦

WGNSS Phoebe Snetsinger Memorial Project in Webster's Blackburn Park

Sue Gustafson

When world-renowned birder Phoebe Snetsinger passed away on November 23, 1999, her family suggested that memorial contributions be made to WGNSS. The family expressed interest in using the memorial fund to help restore the bird sanctuary at Blackburn Park in Webster Groves, as this is one of the first places in St. Louis that Phoebe started birding. Interest in the sanctuary restoration coincided with the city's development of a master plan for Blackburn Park as a whole, which included numerous public input meetings to develop the plan.

Over the last several years, the city has implemented the master plan for the non-sanctuary areas of the park (improved ball fields, refurbished pavilions, updated playgrounds, new landscaping features,

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Dates for '05 Meetings

Inclement weather? For board meeting, usually on first Wed. at University Club Tower, call Yvonne Homeyer, 963-7750. For general meetings, call St. Louis County Library Headquarters 314-994-3300 to ask if the meeting has been cancelled.

Most of these are 1st Thursday:

May 10, Tues., Spring Banquet at Eden Seminary with MDC photographer Jim Rathert
Sept. 1, Oct. 6, & Nov. 3, 2005 🌸

Election of Officers and Other Board Announcements

Yvonne Homeyer

On April 7, WGNSS members elected Jim Adams to serve a second term as Secretary and Randy Korotev to serve another terms as Treasurer. These important positions are in the able hands of two very capable and responsible WGNSS members and we appreciate their willingness to continue serving on the Board in their present duties.

The Board regretfully accepted the resignations of two Board members: Mike Thelen, member-at-large, and Anne McCormack, editor of *Nature Notes*. As member-at-large, Mike was serving a two-year term, which expires in May. Anne McCormack, who has been our Newsletter Editor since 1993, reluctantly tendered her resignation, due to time constraints imposed by other commitments. Anne will continue as editor through the June issue so we are searching for a new editor to take over with the September issue (see separate article). Although Anne is not able to continue serving WGNSS in her current duties, she expressed a desire to stay on the Board as member-at-large and offered to take over the vacancy created by the expiration of Mike Thelen's term. The Board voted enthusiastically to keep Anne on in this new capacity. On behalf of the entire Board, I would like to thank Mike for his dedicated service as member-at-large. Mike volunteered for many jobs during his tenure on the Board, most recently as part of the survey committee. Mike has been a valued member of the Board and we are sorry to see him go. Thank you, Mike, for your years of service to WGNSS. 🌸

Seeking Newsletter Editor

Yvonne Homeyer

In case you didn't read the article "Election of Officers and Other Board Announcements" first, this issue is one of Anne McCormack's last as editor of *Nature Notes*! At the April board meeting, Anne reluctantly resigned as editor due to time constraints imposed by other commitments. Anne has been our editor since 1992. For many of us, she is the only newsletter editor we have ever known. Her legacy of 140 issues of *Nature Notes* will stay with WGNSS forever. We can't express our appreciation enough for everything Anne has done for WGNSS over the years. Fortunately, Anne is staying on the Board as a member-at-large. But we are now searching for a new Newsletter Editor, beginning with the September issue that is prepared in August.

If you are interested in being WGNSS's next *Nature Notes* editor and going down in WGNSS history as such, please contact Yvonne Homeyer (314-963-7750) or Anne McCormack (314-965-8091). Anne will be happy to answer questions about what is involved. 🌸

Bird Sanctuary continued

Continued from page one and a paved walking trail). Upon completion of these improvements, the city is now turning their attention to the restoration of the bird sanctuary.

The sanctuary is a 5-acre wooded area in the southeast corner of the park heavily overrun with non-native bush honeysuckle and euonymus. The sanctuary also has a small spring-fed creek with steep banks that have been totally denuded of vegetation due to bicycle traffic and erosion. There was public interest in keeping the area as natural as possible, and the city indicated that it would remove the invasive non-native species to return the area to its natural biodiversity, in addition to stabilizing the stream banks and replanting the banks with native vegetation.

There will be no paved trails through the sanctuary. The project is being funded by state and federal grants, the WGNSS Snetsinger Memorial contribution of \$10,000, and the city's park sales tax. I agreed to serve as WGNSS's representative of the project, and Dave Snetsinger and I have had ongoing meetings with park management regarding the restoration.

Recent work has begun on the restoration, but there has been negative public reaction to the removal of the honeysuckle, and we have tried to educate people on the importance of irradiating non-native species. Additionally, five damaged trees that were close to the dirt footpaths had to be removed for safety reasons. Professional arborist Skip Kincaid and I did a walk-through to identify "unhealthy" appearing trees/snags that currently serve as bird nesting cavities, and these trees were flagged for non-removal. Native stone is being added to shore up the banks of the spring source, and the slopes of the creek banks have been decreased and stabilized with native stone and the addition of new native plantings. There will be an educational kiosk listing the plant, tree and bird species found in the sanctuary, along with information about Phoebe Snetsinger and her tremendous achievements as a birder. Upon completion, a dedication ceremony will be held. Keep an eye out in future newsletters for information about the upcoming dedication ceremony. 🌿

How You Can Take Part in the Best Spring Birding Game on May 14

Paul Bauer

NAMC stands for North American Migratory Count, which occurs across America on the second Sat. of May each year. It is conducted somewhat like Christmas Counts but each includes an entire county. NAMC counts provide a one-day snapshot across each state indicating how many birds of that species are present.

In Missouri, NAMCs started in 1992; I started a local count in '93 for St. Charles. With Busch and Weldon Spring Conservation Areas, Marais Temps Clair, and Riverlands that county should have the biggest list in the state.

Can you help us this year? Copy your bird list and highlight the species seen in a specific county and mail that to the county compiler. St. Louis City Compiler, Yvonne Homeyer – 314-963-7750, St. Louis County Compiler, Zoe Geist – 636-467-5030, or St. Charles County Compiler, Paul Bauer – 314-921-3972, 4 Club Grounds So., Florissant MO 63033, 314-921-3972. And while you're at it, send a copy to <amccormack@stjosephacad.org> for inclusion in the *Nature Notes* annual Big Day story. 🌿

Sandhill Crane Migration

Mike Thelen

One of my 2005 birding-trip goals was to see the ancient Sandhill Crane migration at the Sandhill Crane spring staging area along the Platte River in Nebraska. Over the long weekend of March 17 through 20 my wife and I combined a family visit to Omaha with my Sandhill Crane adventure.

The Audubon Rowe Center and Sanctuary, near Gibbon, Nebraska, hosts Sandhill Crane viewing in March and April and it's special because volunteer guides from around the country take sandhill watchers to a series of blinds on the banks of the Platte River to see roosting birds. I made my reservations the first day they were accepted: January 3.

From Omaha, March 18, I started the drive toward Gibbon going via the Harvard Marsh Wildlife Production Area in Clay County, Nebraska. I was thrilled to see my first sandhills of the trip, but amazed when I counted 1,000. Leaving Harvard Marsh I zigzagged through the countryside northward and picked up I-80. I had to stop on the shoulder 10 miles east of Grand Island (milepost 321) after spotting huge flocks of sandhills heading north. I could only guesstimate the size of this group at 5,000. As I continued west I saw another 1,000 in a field near the Crane Meadows Nature Center, west of Grand Island; another 1,000 in a field at milepost 303; 500 at milepost 296; 500 at milepost 285; another 500 west of milepost 285; and 1,000 east of Kearney at milepost 273. For the one day, March 18, I estimate that I saw over 10,000 Sandhill Cranes, and this was even before my Platte River blind visit, scheduled for early March 19. At one shoulder stop I watched a pair of sandhills jumping and bowing for one another in a timeless courtship display. Sandhills were in the air and in the fields; they seemed to be everywhere.

I arrived at the Rowe Center well before sunrise March 19. My group's two leaders led us away at 05:00 to our final parking place that we approached with headlights off. We walked quietly in the dark in the direction of the river, following a series of dim red lights marking the trail. Even at a quarter mile I could clearly hear the sandhills, noisy in their riverine roost yet safe from predators.

There were up to 2,000 sandhills in the river outside our blind, a two-story wooden structure, and even in the morning twilight I saw the silhouettes of the big birds, some walking stiffly in the cold water. Their distinctive vocalizations are a kind of throaty, croaking trill. Immature birds instead whistle plaintively—one might mistake the sound for shorebirds. Other sandhill watchers were seeing similar sights and hearing similar sounds from their blinds elsewhere along the river. As the light came up, I spotted a female N. Harrier and an adult "Western" rufous morph Red-tailed Hawk for my blind-mates, and heard Ring-necked Pheasant. Green-winged Teal floated by, unconcerned with us or the sandhills.

A few minutes after sunrise the birds outside our blind lifted off together to disperse for their daily foraging, and they joined thousands of others rising from other points in a spectacular display of sight and sound. I asked our leader, "How do you begin to count them?" He answered twice: "You don't," then, "Count all the legs and divide by two." The massive flock looked like the biggest flocks of Snow Goose I've seen, or of blackbirds in winter. I heard someone say the number 20,000.

Our leader told us that, in fact, biologists have been successful using thermal imaging for counting sandhills, a relatively new technique that has produced good results. He also told me that the 1,000 sandhills at Harvard Marsh on the 18th were unusual, and he thought that the strong northerly winds of the day had forced the birds down. The temperature had been about 35° F, with a north wind around 20 MPH. I had seen one sandhill in flight, flapping steadily against the stiff headwind, and even though the bird had airspeed, it's groundspeed, for a moment, was zero.

The Platte River has been under significant human pressure, notably from the irrigation demands of agriculture. That and the effects of a five-year drought have reduced water levels dramatically. There is concern about what this means for the sandhills, for the Platte River staging area is critical to the sandhill spring migration scheme. The birds stop here for food and rest, building strength for the final push to their breeding territories in the north country: the northern contiguous states, Canada, Alaska, and even Siberia.

There is encouraging news of a program designed to restore water and habitat in the Platte and Republican R. basins. The state of Nebr. and the federal government are partnering in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. CREP will pay farmers about \$125 an acre to keep irrigated fields out of production.

The Audubon Center at the Rowe Sanctuary has been nicely done. It was fun to visit and the staff was friendly and hospitable. I bought two copies of Michael Forsberg's *On Ancient Wings, The Sandhill Cranes of North America*. The author was there and kindly signed both books for me. Outside the Center there were Bald Eagles on the river and Harris's Sparrows at the feeders. The four-tubed thistle feeder near the building drew a dense, concentrated group of 50 American Goldfinch.

Driving back to Omaha I saw several hundred Snow Goose flying south (!) over I-80, and pulled over once again.

I'm fortunate to have seen Sandhill Cranes in several of the United States, and heartily recommend a Nebraska Sandhill Crane trip. Read more about the Rowe Center and Sanctuary at <www.rowsanctuary.org>. 🐾

Birding Fest of Southern Illinois

April 20–May 1, rain or shine, join the Cache River Wetlands Center for a bird walk, owl prowl, canoe trip, or an evening at the Cache R. Basin Vineyard and Winery for food and music. For more info, contact Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, 618-634-2231 or visit <www.birdingblitz.org>. 🐾

Big Day Dilemma

Anne McCormack

The calendar has conspired to put your dear editor in a difficult spot. May begins on a Sun., requiring the early deadline of May 6. Big Day however is late—May 14. I'll do my best to get our traditional Big Day story in the next issue, but I can't promise ya.

If you are birding on May 14—on a Big Day, NAMC or just out with the dog—email your list to <amccormack@stjosephacad.org> as soon as possible. 🐾

Winter Botanzing

Carl Darigo

Except for several cancellations due to threatening forecasts, winter weather did not deter the Botany Group from continuing their weekly Thursday outings, with the following attending one or more times, Father James Sullivan, Dave Alspaugh, Nancy & Wayne Clark, Carl Darigo, Rick Deschu, Ann Earley, Sue Gustafson, Pat & Jack Harris, Rex Hill, Nels Holmberg & grandson David Jespersen, Del Johnson, Susan Lammert, Jeannie Moe, Tom O'Gorman, John Oliver, Anne & Michael Orth, Nathan Pate, Ray Poninski, Susie & Dick Russell, Bob Siemer, Kathy Thiele, George Van Brunt and Dave Weber.

December 2, Creve Coeur Lake Park, St. Louis County—Ten persons turned out for a first look at the new trail from Dripping Springs south along the lake's east shore, below the Page Avenue bridge. The 45°, sunny weather was nice, but felt colder than expected, due to the trail being entirely shaded, at base of a steep west-facing bluff. Winter finally took its toll, with no flowering plants being found. However, living leaves of several wintering species were found, including *Phlox divaricata* (blue phlox), *Asarum canadense* (wild ginger), *Polymnia canadensis* (pale leaf cup), *Aster drummondii* (Drummond aster), *Asplenium rhizophyllum* (walking fern), *Hydrophyllum canadense* (broadleaf waterleaf) and *Monarda bradburiana* (beebalm). Nathan Pate wandered off into a swampy area to find *Ranunculus sceleratus* (cursed crowfoot) and Jack Harris followed with *Cinna arundinacea* (wood reed grass). Among trees spotted was a giant, six foot diameter cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) and a grove of black willow (*Salix nigra*). Father Sullivan found a bevy of brown and decaying pear shaped puffballs (*Lycoperdon pyriforme*) on a moist, dead log; these fungi are common and a choice edible when in the white, young stage.

December 9, Weldon Spring Conservation Area, St. Charles County—Nine people walked the Lost Valley Trail on a very nice, 50°, winter day. Two flowering plants still persisted, common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and common violet (*Viola sororia*). Kathy Thiele successfully answered the "test" on winter leaves of Miami mist (*Phacelia purshii*). Other leafy plants identified were *Corydalis flavula*

(pale corydalis), *Isopyrum biternatum* (lowland rue anemone), *Blephilia hirsuta* (wood mint), *Leonurus sibiricus* (Siberian motherwort), and *Verbena hastata* (blue vervain). Jack Harris called attention to a bright green carpet of *Anomodon rostratus* (velvet tree apron moss), covering part of the hillside along the trail. Jack also found an extensive growth of brown-toothed crust (*Hydnochaete olivaceum*) on a dead branch; this fungus' favorite habitat is dead oak (*Quercus sp.*) branches. Nels Holmberg spotted a derelict hay baler, complete with a growth of *Leskea gracilescens* (slender moss); this species is very common on tree trunks, has been known to grow on soil and rocks, and now is confirmed to like metal as well. Father Sullivan found a patch of nine Adam & Eve orchid leaves (*Aplectrum hyemale*) in a low area below the trail.

December 16, Washington Riverfront Trail, Franklin County—On a chilly, 40° day, 13 persons covered the east portion of this new trail, along the Missouri River. A street and several establishments are named "South Point", in recognition of the fact that the Missouri River is at its southernmost point in this area. Several flowering plants were persisting through the winter, dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*), dead nettle (*L. purpureum*) and blue cardinal flower (*Lobelia siphilitica*). In the woods bordering the trail were numerous vines of raccoon grape (*Ampelopsis cordata*) and summer grape (*Vitis aestivalis*). Nels Holmberg and three year old grandson David Jespersen spotted a cluster of bright red, eyelash cup fungi (*Scutellinia scutellata*) on a dead log; the common name results from the numerous, brown cilia on the cup margin. A checkered skipper (*Pyrgus communis*) was found in a frozen state along the trail.

December 30, Hawn State Park, Ste. Genevieve County—Six persons gathered under cloudy, drizzly, 50° skies, to inspect a sandstone glade on the park's north side. Flowering plants were missing, but the day's best find was the dried remains of *Malaxis unifolia* (green adder's mouth orchid). An interesting grass was splitbeard bluestem (*Andropogon ternarius*), which favors sandstone habitat. Rex Hill and John Oliver were surprised to find a vigorous growth of fruiting partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*). Among ferns seen were As-

plenium platyneuron (ebony spleenwort), *Dryopteris marginalis* (marginal shield fern) and *Polystichum acrostichoides* (Christmas fern). Other notable glade-inhabiting plants found included *Croton wildenowii* (rushfoil), *Diodia teres* (rough buttonweed), *Hypericum gentianoides* (pineweed), *H. hypericoides* (St. Andrew's cross), *Potentilla simplex* (common cinquefoil), *Vaccinium arboreum* (farkleberry) and *V. pallidum* (lowbush blueberry).

January 13, Missouri Botanical Garden—Considering the 35° drizzle and impending snow forecast, a sizable gang of 10 turned out to visit the Garden. WGNSS member Dave Weber, an MBG volunteer, had arranged with Dr. Tom Croat for a tour of the Araceae section of the greenhouse. Emily Colletti gave an very interesting tour, guiding the group through aisles containing many green plants of various sizes, a few up to 15-20 feet tall and some with immense leaves. In one section, vine species were growing vertically, attached to both sides of a large wall. Plants of the Araceae family are known for their unique inflorescences, consisting of a lengthy spadix, surrounded by a cup-like spathe. The Araceae family, whose plants are commonly called "aroid" or "arum", has 104 genera and about 3,700 species, the vast majority growing in the New World tropics. Some of the more well-known genera are *Anthurium*, *Dieffenbachia*, *Spathiphyllum*, *Monstera* and *Philodendron*. In Missouri, two common members of the family are green dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*) and Jack-in-the-pulpit (*A. triphyllum*).

Jan. 20, Shaw Nature Reserve, Franklin Co.—Eleven persons toured the Whitmire Wildflower Garden and Wolf Lake Trail, on what seemed almost like a spring day, 50° and sunny, compared to the last two weeks' deep freeze. A large American holly (*Ilex opaca*) tree, with bright red fruits and shiny, toothed leaves was at the Garden's entrance. Partially exposed, yellowish roots of crested iris (*Iris cristata*) were arranged in a symmetric design around the plant bases. Nels Holmberg spotted numerous sedge green leaves, which turned out to be *Carex muskingumensis* (palm sedge), as explained by Scott Woodbury of the Shaw staff, who happened to be in the Garden; this sedge is primarily a wetland species, but according to Scott, the plantings seem to be doing well in the semi-woodland Garden habi-

tat. The eastern witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) had just finished flowering and the Ozark witch hazel (*H. vernalis*) was beginning to flower; the former is a fall-blooming plant while the latter usually starts to bloom on the first warm days of January. Dried seedheads of slender mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*) still retained their minty aroma.

January 27, Babler State Park, St. Louis County—Twelve people gathered on a cold, 35°, partly cloudy day to survey the Guy Park Trail and adjacent forest areas. In woods near the parking lot, Father Sullivan and Jack Harris found many leaves, some with dried fruiting stalks, of Adam & Eve orchid (*Aplectrum hyemale*). Nearby, *Botrychium dissectum* (cut leaf grape fern) revealed the characteristic, copper-colored winter leaf. Along the trail, Rex Hill pointed out the bright yellow buds of *Carya cordiformis* (bitternut hickory). A number of plants showed emerging green leaves, including wild chervil (*Chaerophyllum procumbens*), spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), woolen breeches (*Hydrophyllum appendiculatum*), sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza claytonii*), Miami mist (*Phacelia purshii*) and blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*); also seen was *Adiantum pedatum* (northern maiden-hair fern).

February 3, Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St. Charles County, and National Great Rivers Museum—A group of twelve met in fog so thick that the landmark Fina station could not be seen from the highway. The temperature started at 35°, but by noon, warmed to 45°, with a welcome sun burning off most of the fog. Jack Harris took a photo of everyone in front of the picturesque, snow and frost-covered switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) clumps at the Visitor Center. A short walk was taken on a concrete path to a wildlife viewing platform overlooking the river, but the hoar frost obscured all plants. However, on the ground below the platform could be seen green leaves of several musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*) rosettes. A short drive into Illinois led to the National Great Rivers Museum at the dam site. This museum is very nice with numerous hands-on displays. However, at a display featuring river bluff plants, as often happens in museums, the botanists did find several misspelled scientific names. Probably one of the more interesting displays was an aquarium with fish from three "Jurassic" (an-

cient, millions of years old) families, still inhabiting the Mississippi River, longnose gar, paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon. Leaving the museum, the group returned to REDA, checking out the bald eagles at Maple Island parking area, more eagles at Ellis Island parking area (with a nice view of one through Jeannie Moe's scope), and a large flock of white pelicans on the nearby water.

February 10, Missouri Botanical Garden—On a cold, 32° day, nine persons opted for the Garden, focusing mainly on the orchid show. In the lobby just prior to entering the main room, were several individual orchid displays, including *Dendrobium speciosum*, with huge white, drooping inflorescences. The orchid show itself was overwhelming with plants of many colors, shapes and sizes. Several of special note were *Ludisia discolor* (jewel orchid) with delicate white flowers, yellowish *Paphiopedilum aureum* (Asiatic lady slipper), *Spiranthes acaulis* with much larger flowers than Missouri species, delicate yellow flowers of *Oncidium onustum*, and *Phaius sp.* (nun's orchid) having 6' woody stems and reddish-brown flowers. A tour through the Linnean House revealed many white, pink and red camellias, and also the rare yellow species, *Camellia chrysantha*. Father Sullivan recognized yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*), from his Texas trip last fall. Outside was found the frozen blossoms of a hybrid witch hazel (*Hamamelis intermedia*). Among interesting plants seen in the Climatron were the silk floss tree's (*Chorisia speciosa*) very spiny trunk, *Costus sp.* (spiral flag) with white flowers atop artichoke-like formations, and sturdy stems of variegated bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*).

February 17, Pea Ridge Conservation Area, Washington County—Eight people made the annual Ozark witch hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) excursion on a clear, cold day with temperatures in the low 40s. Although the bushes were in flower, the characteristic aroma was somewhat depressed, probably due to the cold. Two *Elymus* grasses were seen, *E. hystrix* (bottlebrush grass) and *E. villosus* (downy wild rye). Among other interesting plants observed in their winter form, were *Echium vulgare* (common bugloss), *Dasistoma macrophylla* (mullein foxglove), *Physocarpus opulifolius* (nine bark), *Polanisia dodecandra* (clammy weed), *Quercus shumardii* (Shumard's oak) and *Trichostema brachiatum* (false pennyroyal).

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February 24, Rockwoods Reservation, St. Louis County—A previous evening light snow shower left a fine white dusting on plants, but soon melted with 40° temperatures, as a group of 16 checked out a spring branch along the Lime Kiln Trail. A goal set by Jack Harris of finding *Corylus americana* (hazelnut) in flower was achieved. Otherwise, much emphasis was placed on trees and shrubs with 22 species being found, among which were sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*), northern hackberry (*Carya occidentalis*), swamp dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), eastern hop hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), chinquapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*), red oak (*Q. rubra*), Carolina buckthorn (*Rhamnus caroliniana*), American bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*) and southern black haw (*Virburnum rufidulum*). Two fungi spotted were wood ear (*Auricularia auricula*) and turkey tail (*Trametes versicolor*); the first is edible, but with an unappetizing slimy character, while attempting the second would be somewhat like eating wood. In the continuing search for flowering plants, after lunch, Nels Holmberg found harbinger of spring (*Erigeria bulbosa*) at Robertsville State Park, and Father Sullivan spotted dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*) and chickweed (*Stellaria media*) along Al Foster Trail at Glencoe.

Thanks to Jack Harris and Rex Hill for their contributions to this article. ☺

Historian's Corner: The Third Statue

Jim Adams

During John Karel's talk on Tower Grove Park at the WGNSS meeting on March 3, he mentioned that Henry Shaw had placed three statues in the park: Columbus, Shakespeare, and Alexander von Humboldt. I had head of Humboldt but knew little about him. My curiosity piqued, I did some research and found that he had ample reason to honor this man.

Alexander von Humboldt was one of two sons of a wealthy German nobleman, born in Berlin on Sept. 14, 1769. He studied geology at the University of Goettingen and mining and metallurgy at the School of Mines in Freiburg. From 1792 to 1797, he was a mines assessor in Prussia. While working for the Ministry of Mines, he found time to continue his studies in the life sciences and won a gold medal for a

paper on plant distribution. After his parents died he and he brother inherited the family fortune.

Now independently wealthy, he resigned his government job to pursue his first interest, the study of nature. He spent a winter in the Austrian Tyrol to build himself up physically and to practice astronomical, topographical, and meteorological skills in preparation for a hoped-for career in scientific exploration. After Tyrol, he went to Paris, which was reemerging as the cultural and intellectual capital of the world. Thanks to his growing reputation as a naturalist, he had the opportunity to meet many prominent scientists. There he learned of plans for a French oceanic exploration, headed by Nicholas Baudin. He applied for a place with the expedition but was rejected because he was Prussian.

While in Paris he met a young Frenchman, Aime Bonpland, who had been accepted for the expedition. Bonpland, four year younger than Humboldt, was trained as a physician but had come to Paris to study botany and zoology in preparation for his voyage. After the Baudin expedition was delayed because of French political turmoil, Humboldt suggested that he and Bonpland join forces and seek a similar opportunity elsewhere. They journeyed to Madrid, where Humboldt proposed that he make a scientific survey of Spanish territories in the Americas—something that had never been done. Since Humboldt offered to pay all expenses himself, his offer was accepted. Humboldt was given a royal passport to carry out his mission, leaving the details to him.

In preparation for his trip to the New World, Humboldt assembled a large collection of scientific instruments. On June 5, 1799, Humboldt and Bonpland sailed from the Spanish port of La Coruna on the *Pizarro*. After numerous delays to avoid British warships—the Napoleonic wars were then in progress—the ship headed for Havana. It made the trip to the New World in twenty days, following a route used by Columbus. On the crossing Humboldt and Bonpland made painstaking measurements of latitude and longitude, air and water temperatures, salinity of the ocean, the angle of the earth's magnetic field, recording the data for future analysis. Before they reached their destination, cases of typhus broke out on the *Pizarro*. The captain

decided to omit the Havana stop and proceed directly to their intended destination, Cumana, Venezuela. The *Pizarro* arrived on July 16, 1799. From Cumana, Humboldt and Bonpland began their journey, measuring observing, and collecting as they went. They stopped at mission outposts for supplies and rest and to recruit Indian guides and helpers. They also obtained carts, draft animals, and canoes needed for transporting food, instruments, journals, and collections.

About midway in their explorations, the two explorers returned to Cumana and sailed to Cuba in their careful fashion. While in Cuba, Humboldt learned that the Baudin expedition had finally been funded and that they had already left port with two ships for Cape Horn at the bottom of South America. From there, they planned to sail north along the Pacific Coast. Humboldt decided to cross the Andes to the east coast and trip to intercept the Baudin expedition and join it if possible. Humboldt and Bonpland successfully crossed the Andes to the coast. Baudin, however, belatedly decided to explore the coast of Africa instead. The quest for Baudin and their subsequent adventures in Peru and Ecuador gained them worldwide fame.

While in Ecuador they added a third man to their party, Carlos Montufar, son of the colonial governor in Quito. Montufar remained with the party to the end, accompanying Humboldt and Bonpland to Washington and later to Europe.

After completing their survey and observations on the Pacific coast, the party journeyed by ship to Acapulco, crossed Mexico to Veracruz. By the time they returned to Havana, the Humboldt party had traveled more than 6,000 miles by land. The three set sail from Havana in the frigate *Concepcion* for Philadelphia, arriving there twenty-four days later.

Although the capital of the new nation had been moved to Washington four years earlier, Philadelphia remained the cultural center of the nation. After being royally feted by the American Philosophical Society, of which Thomas Jefferson was still president, the explorers set out for Washington. They traveled by coach, accompanied by Charles Wilson Peal. In Washington they lunched with President Jefferson who was quite eager to talk to them because the Lewis and Clark expedition had just started

up the Missouri. Jefferson invited Humboldt and his companions to Monticello, where they continued their conversations. Jefferson was so impressed with Humboldt that he and Humboldt maintained a correspondence for the remainder of Jefferson's life.

Humboldt and his companions sailed for Europe from Philadelphia on July 9, 1803, aboard the French frigate *La Favorite*, arriving in Bordeaux on Aug. 1. Bonpland left the party to visit a brother and Humboldt and Montufar took a coach to Paris. In mid-October Humboldt reported on his journey to the Institut National des Sciences et Arts, and the same month, the first exhibition of Humboldt's botanical collection opened at the Jardin des Plantes. As in Washington, everyone was amazed at Humboldt's intellectual depth. Humboldt remained in Paris for twenty years, during which he published the notes of his South American journey in thirty volumes. While residing in Paris, he visited Charles Darwin, and the two discussed Humboldt's observation about the variations in similar species living in isolated habitats. Humboldt's writing helped inspire Darwin to seek a berth on the HMS *Beagle*. Darwin used data from Humboldt in his *Origin of Species*. Ironically, Darwin's *Origin* eclipsed Humboldt's *Cosmos*, which lapsed into obscurity.

Humboldt was eventually lured back to Prussia by the Prussian King, who gave him a well-paying position in the government and eventually made him a privy councilor. In 1852 Humboldt was awarded the British Royal Society's Copley Medal, its highest honor. At age 60, Humboldt was commissioned by Czar Nicholas I of Russia to make a resources survey of Siberia. He traveled 11,500 miles by coach and published a three-volume summary of his findings.

In his later years, as a polymath, Humboldt mentored a number of men who would become famous. They included naturalist Louis Agassiz, chemists Claude-Louis Berthollet and Justus von Liebig, and mathematician Carl Friedrich Gauss. During his last year he wrote his most famous book, *Cosmos: a Sketch of the Physical Description of the Universe*. The book was based on 61 lectures Humboldt gave at the University of Berlin. Humboldt died in 1859 shortly after he sent the fifth and final volume of *Cosmos* to his publisher.

As for Aime Bonpland, he never wrote anything about his momentous journeys with Humboldt. He returned to South America at 41 to assume a professorship at the University of Buenos Aires. A few years later, while botanizing in a border area contested by Argentina and Paraguay, he was captured by Paraguayan soldiers and languished in prison for the next nine years, despite strenuous effort by Humboldt to secure his release. After his release, he settled down in Uruguay, married an Indian woman, continued his botanical studies and founded a museum. He never returned to Europe and died in 1858 at 85.

Carlos Montufar returned to Ecuador and joined the rebellion against Spanish rule. He was captured by colonial authorities and shot.

The major accomplishments of the Humboldt expedition were:

- Mapped areas visited with great accuracy. South America's position on the map was moved 35 mi. to the south as a result of their work. Humboldt used Galileo's method for fixing longitude, using a telescope and recently updated navigation tables. He recalculated the longitude for Havana, which later experts confirmed to be accurate within a second.
- Explored and surveyed the Amazon and Orinoco River basins, an area of swampy rainforest of jaguars, crocodiles, piranha, venomous snakes, and swarms of biting, stinging insects.
- Resolved a long-standing argument among geographers about the existence of a river connection between the Amazon and Orinoco. The explorers found this river, now known as the Casiquiare, and traversed it by boat from the Amazon to the Orinoco, mapping its entire length.
- Observed that the character of vegetation changes with elevation, and first proposed the concept of altitudinal plant zones.
- Put the first isothermal (constant temperature) lines on a map.
- Survived illness, including malaria and typhus. Bonpland was injured but survived an assassination attempt by a slave.
- Climbed all the volcanoes they passed. In Venezuela, Jorullo in Mexico—one of the few volcanoes formed in historic times—and every volcano on the Quito

Plateau, including Cotopaxi, the world's highest active volcano. Humboldt supported the theory that volcanism is caused by event deep within the earth rather than event close to the earth's surface, such as coal mine fires, a popular theory at the time. Humboldt's concept proved to be correct.

- Climbed Mt. Chimborazo, then believed to be the highest mountain in the world and an extinct volcano. Humboldt and his two friends climbed to 19,286 feet but were stopped 1,300 feet below the summit by an impassable crevasse. No one before them had ventured so high, the conventional wisdom being that man could not survive in the atmosphere. Humboldt's ascent made him an international celebrity. The first climber to reach the summit of Chimborazo was famed British mountaineer Edward Whymper in 1880.
- Discovered the earth's magnetic equator in Ecuador.
- Collected 60,000 plant specimens.
- Introduced millions of American and Europeans to the astonishing culture of the Aztecs and Incas.
- Documented for the first time the velocity and temperature of the famous "Humboldt" current off the South American west coast.

I now understand why Henry Shaw selected Alexander von Humboldt for his third statue.

Suggested reading: *Humboldt's Cosmos*, by Gerard Helferich. New York: Gotham Books, 2004. 🐾

Dr. William S. Brandhorst

Jim Adams

Dr. William Brandhorst, a long-time WGNSS member, died March 15, 2005, of complications from Parkinson's disease. He was 87 and had lived in Kirkwood.

Dr. Brandhorst was born in Nashville, Illinois, but grew up in Webster Groves. He graduated in 1939 from Harvard with a bachelor's degree in geology and earned a dental degree from the Washington University School of Dental Medicine in 1943.

After serving three years in the Army Dental Corps in World War II, and completing a degree in orthodontics from the University of

Michigan in 1948, he joined his father's orthodontic practice in St. Louis. Later he opened his own practice in west St. Louis County. He also taught at his alma mater, earning full professor status in orthodontics at its dental school. He was honored by the University as a distinguished graduate in 1989.

From the time he was a child, Bill Brandhorst had a fascination with nature, particularly with birds, butterflies, and moths. In addition to a lengthy tenure in WGNSS, he also served on the board of St. Louis Audubon Society. Dr. Brandhorst developed a wooden and glass frame to encase butterflies so both sides would show. In 1996 he traveled to central Mexico and filmed the wintering site of the Monarch butterfly, capturing many millions on film. He also led butterfly walks and participated in the annual butterfly census.

Dr. Brandhorst is survived by his wife of 62 years, Emilie P. Brandhorst, and three sons. Memorial contributions may be made to Grace Episcopal Church in Kirkwood, the St. Louis Audubon Society, or the Dental Health Theater in St. Louis. 🐾

An Owl Adventure

Pat Brock Diener

This adventure started on Thursday, February 10. We headed for Baldwin Lake, Ill., to see the Snow Geese. There were none nor was there a Shrike. North to Peabody Refuge to see the Short-eared Owl. Again—none. South, we turned to Chester and crossed the Mississippi River and explored Kaskaskia Island. Lots of mud. Few birds.

Next week our brave leader again took us to Baldwin Lake. Yes, a flock of Snow Geese rested on the shore. This flock seems to have a high percentage of blue phase birds. We scanned for Ross and when we saw Canada Geese, we found smaller ones which may be been Cackling Geese.

Onto Peabody Refuge which is the remains of an old strip mine. Artificial hills are left from the mining operations. It's Thursday—so it's cold. It's the prairie, so the wind is roaring across them. It's Short-eared Owl, so they need to be flushed. So everyone gets out and starts hiking. These low hills are covered in thick grasses which have been bent over by the elements. There are low paths to follow—ex-

cept these are water ways. We spread out. John to the right; Roseann to the left, and Jackie straight out and full steam head. I did catch up to her and ask, "What is going to happen?" She queried, "You have never seen them?" "No." She explained that these owls mainly roost in the grasses or low shrubs. She went on and moved toward Roseann and the ridge which was my stopping place. How much more of the cold could I take? Jackie called that there were two owls rising from the low shrubs and soaring overhead. Then another and another. She had not prepared me for their beauty. These soaring owls looked more like hawks, but Roseann pointed out how large their heads and upper bodies were. I was enchanted by their high color of autumn. We had a total of eight in the air and then three perched on branches and bars provided by the keepers. Everyone of our group had good looks. They were a life bird for me.

I knew they were beautiful but I could not describe the coloration. The following week, Jackie brought *Missouri Conservationist* for Feb. '03. The cover bird was our star—article and photo by Jim Rathert. The breast is tawny with streaks of rust. The underside of the wing is tawny with wingtips dark. Above, the shoulders are dark while the primaries are orange and light. The tail is banded orange and brown with a white band. Do go to the library to find a copy. What a wonderful day! It was cold, we ate our lunches with gloves on. A few had sense enough to eat in the car. As long as the sun shines and birds appear, we are a happy group. ♡

Eden Seminary WGNSS Banquet

Lockwood and Bompert in Webster Groves
From 40

- east to Hanley Rd
- south on Hanley, becomes Laclede Sta. Rd
- right on to Big Bend
- right on to E Lockwood
- left on to Bompert, enter

From 44

- east on 44, Exit 220, Elm Ave.
- left on S Elm
- right on Big Bend
- left on Bompert, enter

March Bird Report

Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer

BCA = Busch Wildlife Area
CL = Carlyle Lake
CSP = Castlewood State Park
CC= Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Ref, Annada
FP = Forest Park
HL = Horseshoe Lake
LCCL= Little Creve Coeur Lake
LVT = Lost Valley Trail
MTC = Marais Temps Clair
REDA = Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area
SNR = Shaw Nature Reserve (Arboretum)
TGP = Tower Grove Park

Introduction: As insect populations decline, it is important to keep feeding our backyard birds all year round. We can anticipate continued pesticide spraying by municipalities for mosquitoes, which intensified after the West Nile Virus outbreak. Although birds may prefer one type of food to another, they are adaptable. For example, the House Sparrows in Jim's yard eat bananas.

All the regularly occurring herons and egrets, plus 8 species of warblers, arrived in the St. Louis area by 4/1. This is unprecedented.

Early Arrivals:

1/8	Bonaparte's Gull	HL	FH
1/16	Western Meadowlark	REDA	MT
	Common Redpoll	CL	DK
1/26	Fish Crow	Calvary Cem	KP
1/30	Spotted Towhee	Howell Is	MAA
2/4	Wigeon, Pintail	REDA	D Rogles
2/5	Killdeer	HL	FH
	Merlin	REDA	JU
2/7	Woodcock	Jefferson Co	MP
2/8	Laughing Gull	REDA	G&TB
2/13	Snow & White-fronted Geese	HL	FH
2/18	Tree Swallow	HL	FH
2/20	Harlan's Hawk	Katy Access	MT
2/26	Pine Siskin	BCA	KL, BK
2/27	E. Phoebe	Jefferson County	MP
2/28	Song & Fox Sparrows	Area-wide	m. ob.
3/5	Purple Martin	Mo. Bot. Garden	J. Hudson
3/6	Am. Pipit	CC	JE
3/10	Pine Warbler	Hawn SP	JChain, Th. Group
3/12	Horned Grebe	REDA	CA, T Bo
	Brewer's Blackbird	HL	G&TB
3/13	Red-breasted Merganser	HL	FH
	Rusty Blackbirds	HL	FH
3/17	Eared Grebe	HL	FH
3/19	Vesper Sparrow	Chubb Trail	MB
	Pectoral Sandpiper		
	Lesser Yellowlegs		
	Snipe		
	Lesser Golden Plover	REDA	DB, Sat. Group
3/20	N. Rough-winged Swallow	CSP	MB
	Brown Thrasher	CSP	MB
	Field Sparrow	Chubb Trail	MB

3/21	Little Blue Heron	Indian Lake	JZ
3/25	Lincoln's Sparrow	FP	GA
	Barn Swallow	HL	FH
	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	CSP	MB
	Chimney Swift	Kirkwood	AM
3/26	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Granite City	FH
	N. Goshawk	TGP	JZ, C&J LaM
	Cattle Egret	HL	CA, P&BJ
3/27	Black-crowned Night Heron	HL	P&BJ, FH
	Pacific Loon	HL	P&BJ, JZ
	Harris's Sparrow	HL	FH
	Snowy Egret	HL	FH
	Dunlin	REDA	DB
3/28	Golden-crowned Kinglet		
	Hermit Thrush	TGP	JChain
	Orange-crowned Warbler	TGP	JZ
	Bewick's Wren	TGP	JZ, J Cowan
3/30	Black-and-white Warbler	TGP	JZ, SE
	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	TGP	GA
	Nashville Warbler	FP	BW
3/31	Yellow-throated Warbler	CSP	MB

Sightings: A Pacific Loon was present at HL from 3/27 to 3/29 (P&BJ, G&TB, J.Cowan, JZ, YH). Ten Horned Grebes and 2 Oldsquaw were seen at REDA on 3/12 (CA, T Bo), and 2 Horned Grebes were seen at HL on 2/13 (DB). Eared Grebes were sighted at HL on 3/18 (FH), 3/26 (G&TB) and 3/28 (T Be). On 3/20, Anne McCormack observed 100 White Pelicans flying over Ballas Road. Frank Holmes reported 2 Great Egrets and 5 species of geese—Ross's, Snow, White-fronted, Cackling & Canada—at HL on 3/6. Yellow-crowned Night Herons returned to their rookery in a Granite City Park on 3/26 (FH). On 3/7, Ted Heisel heard and saw 40 Sandhill Cranes flying along the Mississippi River near Chester, IL. Joe Eades estimated 500 White-fronted Geese were present at CC on 3/6. The Sat. Group found 2 Ross's Geese at Teal Pond, REDA on 3/12 (DB). The Solodars reported Snow and White-fronted Geese at BK Leach on 3/17. Black Duck is becoming difficult to find in the St. Louis area, however, the Barkers saw one at HL on 3/5. On 3/2, at HL, there were an estimated 150 Redheads and 100+ Wigeons (JZ). By 3/28, there were still 43 Redheads and 34 Wigeons present there (T Be). By 3/13, Red-breasted Mergansers had arrived in good numbers across the area. On 3/12, Connie Alwood and Tom Bormann found 250 Pintails at BK Leach and at Gilbert Lake, they found 700 Ruddy Ducks and over 1000 Snow Geese. Frank Holmes and Jim Ziebol led a Sunday walk to HL on 3/13, where the group saw 21 species of waterfowl, Rusty Blackbirds, Great Egrets, and

many Red-breasted Mergansers. Lesser Yellow-legs, several Pecks, numerous Snipe and Killdeer, and a Lesser Golden Plover were seen at REDA on 3/19 (DB, Sat. Group). A very early Dunlin was found at REDA on 3/26 (DB, Sat. Group). Jim Ziebol saw 1 Woodcock in TGP on 3/7, and Chip Tynan reported them at Mo. Botanical Garden.

Many birders have reported that the Bald Eagles are on their nest along Hwy. 143 near the Alton Barge property. Two Bald Eagles, 10+ Red-tails, a Red-shouldered, 2 Cooper's, 1 Sharp-shin, and 2 N. Harriers were seen at HL on 3/2 (JZ). Sherry McCowan observed a Red-tailed Hawk on a nest in FP on 2/11. By 3/31, the Great Horned Owls in TGP had fledged at least 1 young (MR). Phobes were seen on 3/6 at MTC and Dresser Island (CA, T Bo) and on 3/12 at Whitecliff Park (VL). The first N. Rough-winged Swallow was found at CSP on 3/20 (MB) and the first Barn Swallow was found at HL on 3/25 (FH). March 29 was a very good day in TGP, with numerous Winter Wrens present (J Chain, GA) and Bewick's Wrens also being seen (JZ, J Cowan). Shawn Clubb saw Bewick's Wrens there on 3/30. On 3/24, Jackie Chain and the Thursday group reported Fish Crows, 1 Hairy Woodpecker, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Turkey Vultures at CSP, and Pine Siskins and Phoebe at Rockwoods. Torrey Berger found 3 Fish Crows at REDA on 3/18. On 3/25, Mike Brady reported the following from CSP and Chubb Trail: several nesting Red-shouldered Hawks, the first Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Pine Warblers and Winter Wrens. On 3/18, Mike Thelen saw 3 Am. Pipits at HL. An extremely early Orange-crowned Warbler was found in TGP on 3/29 (JZ). At Hawn SP on 3/10, Jackie Chain and the Thurs. Group found 2 Pine Warblers and Sue Schoening spotted a White-breasted Nuthatch. Other Pine Warblers were reported at Rockwoods on 3/16 (T Be), at CSP on 3/20 (MB), at SNR on 3/25 (SM, P&BJ), and at Fallen Oak Trail, BCA on 3/27 (SE). David Becher and the Sat. Group found the first Louisiana Waterthrush in TGP near the Jack Van pool on 3/19. On 3/20 at TGP, 4 E. Towhees, 4 Sapsuckers, a Red-breasted Nuthatch and 9 Fox Sparrows were seen by Nick Barber. A female Oregon Junco, with very orange flanks, was seen at Greensfelder Pk. on 3/19 (YH, JZ). Up to 15 Fox Sparrows, some singing, were seen at TGP

on 3/19 (SM). The first Vesper Sparrow was found at the Chubb Trail on 3/19 (MB). On 3/26, David Becher and the Sat. Group located 2 Harriers at LCCL and both nuthatches and 12 Purple Finch at BCA.

A typical day at Lafayette Park on 3/30 included a Wood Duck, 2 E. Bluebirds, 4 Fox Sparrows, a Field Sparrow, a Brown Thrasher, Hermit Thrush, 6 Sapsuckers, several Flickers, and a Woodcock engaged in courtship display — fanning its tail, raising tail over back, bobbing as it walked (SM). A typical day on 3/17 for the Thurs. Group included Fox Sparrows, Phoebes, a Pine Warbler and Pine Siskins at Rockwoods; all 3 Mergansers, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Green-winged Teal, Pintail, Gadwall, Mallard, Shoveler, and Tree Swallows at REDA; several Kestrels and the nesting Balding Eagle on Hwy. 143; a variety of ducks and Mute Swans at HL (J Chain).

Backyard Birds: Connie Alwood reported Pine Siskins on 3/8 and a Sharp-shinned Hawk on 3/15. Good winter birds seen at Jack Harris' feeder were Hairy Woodpecker, Cooper's Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk. Margy Terpstra saw Barred Owl and a Carolina Wren nest with 5 eggs. Barbara Elftman has nesting Carolina Wrens and an occasional Turkey and Bobwhite. In Franklin Co., Cheryl & Don Delashmit have a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks nesting on the edge of the woods by their house and Bewick's Wrens have again returned to their property. Anne McCormack observed a very early Chimney Swift and several Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

Contributors: Gail Ahumada, Connie Alwood, Mary Anne Auer, Nick Barber, George & Terry Barker, David Becher, Torrey Berger, Tom Bormann, Mike Brady, Jackie Chain, Shawn Clubb, Jack Cowan, Joe Eades, Steve Ewer, Frank Holmes, Jean Hudson, Paul & Barbara Johnson, Bob Kleiger, Cliff & Judy LaMotte, Kent Lannert, Vivian Liddell, Jim & Charlene Malone, Anne McCormack, Sherry McCowan, Jeannie Moe, Mark Peters, Kraig Paradise, Mick Richardson, Dave Rogles, John & Nancy Solodar, Mike Thelen, Josh Uffman, Bob Wykes, Clarence Zacher, and Jim Ziebol. Please submit sightings by the last day of the month to Jim Ziebol, 314-781-7372, or Yvonne Homeyer <homeyer@earthlink.net>.

Next deadline: May 6!

Nature Notes publishes 10 issues a year, each mailed on the third Mon. of the month—unless the library is closed. To allow time for layout, printing, etc., the deadline is always 10 days prior to that date.

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Costa Rica's Monteverde

Rachel Crandell, President, Monteverde Conservation League, U.S.

An extraordinary opportunity to meet and learn directly from Carlos Muñoz, Director of the Monteverde Conservation League in Costa Rica, awaits you Wed., April 27 at 7:30 PM at the Missouri Botanical Garden's Schoenberg Auditorium. Carlos will be concluding a speaking tour in the US with a visit to St. Louis.

Carlos will share pictures and history of conservation in Costa Rica as well as a look to the future. You will learn of the critical work being accomplished by the Monteverde Conservation League's guards in protecting the 54,000 acres El Bosque Eterno de los Niños (BEN), the Eternal Forest of the Children. The BEN is the largest private reserve in all of Central America. You will hear the inspiring story of the Swedish children who began the dream of buying and saving a big chunk of tropical biodiversity that grew into an international effort of enormous proportions. Discover the next steps in protecting one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet.

Call the Nature Line!

Call 314-935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area and dates & times of WGNSS events. 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 Deadlines & Mailings

We meet at the Oak Bend Library, 842 S. Holmes, Kirkwood to attach mailing labels. We could use your help! Call Margie Richardson 314-965-8974.

<i>mailing party</i>	<i>NN deadline</i>
Tues. 5/17, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 5/6
Tues. 5/17, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 5/6
Mon. 8/15, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 8/5
Mon. 9/19, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 9/9
Mon. 10/17, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 10/7
Mon. 11/21, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 11/11
Mon. 12/19/05, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 12/9

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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

Eden Seminary WGNSS Banquet

Intersection of Lockwood and Bompert in Webster Groves

From 40

- east to Hanley Rd
- south on Hanley, becomes Laclede Sta. Rd
- right on to Big Bend
- right on to E Lockwood
- left on to Bompert, enter

From 44

- east on 44, Exit 220, Elm Ave.
- left on S Elm
- right on Big Bend
- left on Bompert, enter

International Migratory Bird Week Celebration

May 7 - 15, 2005

The following is a list of the special events around the St. Louis area in conjunction with International Migratory Bird Week. None of the events require reservations. All are free of charge. Bring binoculars to bird walks, wear comfortable walking shoes, and dress for spring weather conditions. Walks are geared at all experience levels, and beginning birders are especially encouraged to attend

Saturday, May 7

Birding in Tower Grove Park

7:30 AM St. Louis Audubon Society

Tower Grove Park is historically known as one of the best migratory stop-over sites in the St. Louis area, offering views of numerous species of warblers. Meet at the Gaddy Bird Garden at the northwest corner of the park. Leaders are John Solodar at 314-862-5294 and Pat Leuders at 314-961-6614 for more information.

Sunday, May 8

Birding in Tower Grove Park

8 AM WGNSS

We'll once again visit this premiere birding spot at what is historically the "peak" date of spring migration. Meet at the Gaddy Bird Garden at the northwest corner of the park. Leaders are Bob Bailey and David Garcia at 314-351-0390 for more information.

Thursday, May 12

Bird Walk at the Green Center

8:30 AM The Green Center

The bird walk will explore the Green Center's learning/demonstration gardens, a half-acre prairie, a restored wetland, and the 26-acre Ruth Park Woods, which attracts a variety of migratory songbirds. Meet in front of the Green Center's 1932-era home in University City's Kaufman Park at 8025 Blackberry Ave. Park in front of Kaufman Park's tennis courts. For more info contact the Green Center at classes@thegreencenter.org, or call Dianne Benjamin, Program Director, 314-725-8314.

Thurs. May 12

Special Event: 7:30-10:30 AM

Bird Banding at World Bird Sanctuary

The World Bird Sanctuary will band songbirds during this special demonstration session. Stop

by anytime during the session hours. The event will take place outside, and in the event of adverse weather it will be cancelled. The World Bird Sanctuary is located on the north-west side of the Hwy 44 and Hwy 141 intersection: take the North Outer Road as if you are going to Lone Elk Park, the sanctuary entrance is on the right side of the road just before the Lone Elk Park entrance. For further information, call Linda Tossing at 314-849-4260.

Friday, May 13

Bird Walk at Castlewood State Park

8:00 AM MO Dept Of Natural Resources

Come explore the meadows and bottomland forest along the Meramec River and Keifer Creek. Our area's most urban state park provides excellent riparian habitat for migrating warblers, breeding habitat for songbird species of conservation concern, and year-round habitat for waterbirds. Meet in the parking lot next to the visitor center. Leader is Mike Brady at 636-391-7631 for more information.

Saturday, May 14

Migratory Bird Discovery Day

10:00-2:30 PM St. Louis Audubon Society at Powder Valley Nature Center

Do you want to know more about wild birds, and birding? Family activities and demonstrations will feature bird identification tips and a hands-on project. We'll also have materials on how to avoid bird window collisions. No reservations required; the morning program will begin at 10:00 am and the same program will be repeated again starting again at 12:30 pm. Drop in at anytime. For more details, call Sharon Nickl at 636-391-8751.

Saturday, May 14

North American Migration Count

Various Starting Times

Every year on the 2nd Saturday of May, Partners in Flight sponsors the North American Migration Count. The goal is to monitor neotropical migrant birds over the long term to look for trends in population, range, and migratory patterns. The Count is very similar to the Christmas Bird Count. Our goal is to cover as many locations in St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County as possible. For more information or to take part in

April 2005 www.wgnss.org

one of the counts, contact St. Louis City Compiler, Yvonne Homeyer - 314-963-7750, St. Louis County Compiler, Zoe Geist - 636-467-5030, or St. Charles County Compiler, Paul Bauer - 314-921-3972.

Saturday, May 14

Birding At Forest Park

7:30 AM St. Louis Audubon Society

Kennedy Woods in Forest Park is one of the best places in the area to observe warblers and other spring migrants. Trails provided by the MO Department of Conservation make this area more accessible to groups. Meet at the trailhead off of Wells Dr. west of the south zoo entrance. Leaders are Nick Barber and Paul Bauer, 314-921-3972 for more information.

Sunday, May 15

Birding at Riverlands

Environmental Demonstration Area

8 AM WGNSS

We'll explore the open water and various pools for waterbirds and migrant landbirds. Meet at the Headquarters building on Riverlands Way. Leader is Torrey Berger at 314-579-9227.

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Botany Co-Chair: Jeannie Moe
2419 Mayer Dr.

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Entomology: Marshall Magner
516 Bacon Ave
Webster Groves MO 63119
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Member at Large: Ann Earley
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Member at Large: Dr. Kimberlie McCue
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Member at Large: Mike Thelen
943 Morehouse Ln.
St. Louis, MO 63130-2158
314-862-6642

Loveliest of Trees

A. E. Houseman

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It leaves me only fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Call 314-935-8432 for the latest bird sightings in St. Louis.

Meetings

Tuesday April 7

WGNSS Spring Banquet at Eden Seminary Commons, Lockwood and Bompert Ave. in Webster Groves. Social hour at 5:45 PM. Jim Rathert, wildlife photographer from the MO Dept. of Conservation and author of *In Focus*, will speak. A buffet dinner by Hendri's Catering begins 6:45. During the program, our 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award winner will be announced. Reservations to Ann Earley, 1425 Bobolink Place, St. Louis, MO 63144 (963-0103) by Thurs. April 28 ticket is \$23, later \$26.

Wednesday May 4

7 PM Board meeting at University Club Tower, 1034 S. Brentwood, 15th floor, Suite 1515. All members are welcome.

Nature Notes deadline: Fri. May 6

Entomology

Saturday May 7

Field trip in search of the Gorgone Checkerspot in the igneous glades of Missouri. A trip to the St. Francois mountains of MO. Richard Thoma 314-965-6744 for details.

Sunday May 22

7 PM at Marshall Magner's home, 516 Bacon Ave., Webster, 314-961-4588. Richard Thoma will speak on "Insect Paintings of John James Audubon, a Comparison of the World of 1800 to Today."

Botany

Thursday April-June

Field trips usually meet 9:30 AM. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch, weather gear. Trip is usually 3-5 hr. plus travel time. Call Fr. Sullivan 291-7885 after 1 PM Wed for location. E-mail is sent every Wed. with field trip destination. To receive, send your e-mail address to Jack Harris <jahar@mac.com>.

April 2005 www.wgnss.org

Saturday April 23

Noon Jeannie Moe will lead a botany walk at the Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville IL. Rain date 4/24. For more information call Jeannie Moe, 636-946-9802.

Birding

Thursdays April

8:30 AM at Des Peres Park on Ballas, one block n. of Manchester. Call Jackie Chain, 314-644-5998.

Saturday April 16 & May 28

8 AM WGNSS "Where the Birds Are." Parking lot of HQ of Co. Library, Lindbergh, south of 40. Meet on north side. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday April 16

8:00 AM SLAS Castlewood SP Join Mike Brady and John Solodar on a half-day walk.

Sunday April 17

8 AM Castlewood Park with Sherry McCowan, meet at headquarters.

Saturday April 23

8 AM WGNSS Tower Grove Park. Meet at Gus Fogt site, just west of stable. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday April 23

8 AM SLAS Join Dave Rogles and Torrey Berger on a birding trip to BK Leach and Prairie Slough.

Saturday April 30

8 AM Castlewood. Meet at boat ramp. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday April 30

7:30 AM SLAS All-day trip starting at Shaw Nature Reserve and going on to Robertsville State Park with Connie Alwood and John Solodar.

Thursdays May-October

8:00 AM at Des Peres Park on Ballas, one block n. of Manchester. Call Jackie Chain, 314-644-5998. Note time change.

Saturday May 7

8 AM Weldon Springs Wildlife Area, Lost Valley Hiking Trail. Route D in St. Charles Co. west of Busch Wildlife. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday May 7

7:30 AM SLAS Tower Grove Pk, meet Pat Lueders and John Solodar at Bird Garden, NW corner of park.

Sunday May 8

8 AM Tower Grove Pk, meet David Garcia, 314-351-0390, and Bob Bailey at Bird Garden, NW corner of the park.

Saturday May 14

Big Day. To include your list in the Big Day story in *Nature Notes*, send it to <amccormack@stjosephacad.org>.

Saturday May 14

Send your list of birds seen to the compilers of North American Migratory Bird Count: St. Louis City, Yvonne Homeyer, 314-963-7750, St. Louis Co., Zoe Geist, 636-467-5030, or St. Charles Co., Paul Bauer, 314-921-3972, 4 Club Grounds So., Florissant MO 63033, 314-921-3972. To include it in *Nature Notes*, send to <amccormack@stjosephacad.org>.

Saturday May 14

7:30 AM SLAS Meet Nick Barber & Paul Bauer at Kennedy Forest off Wells Dr. in Forest Park.

Sunday May 15

8 AM Riverlands with Torrey Berger at HQ. More info, call Torrey 314- 579-9227.

Saturday May 21

8 AM Shaw Nature Reserve (Arboretum). Meet at Brush Creek Trail. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday May 21

7:30 AM SLAS birding at Columbia Bottom. Meet MDC's Mike Arduser and John Solodar at the River Access parking lot.

Sunday May 22

8 AM Tower Grove Park with Sherry McCowan at Bird Garden.

Saturday May 28

8 AM WGNSS "Where the Birds Are." Parking lot of HQ of Co. Library, Lindbergh, south of 40. Meet on north side. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday May 28

7:30 AM SLAS Meet Torrey Berger and Dave Rogles at Little Creve Coeur Lake, behind Seeger Golf Driving Range.

Sunday May 29

8 AM Busch CA with Tom Parmeter at Hampton Lake.

Saturday June 4

7:30 AM SLAS Meet Pat Lueders and Mike Grant at Lost Valley Trail, 5.7 mi. beyond 40 and 94 in St. Charles Co.

Join WGNSS

Send \$20 to Randy Korotey, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132

85TH Annual Spring Banquet on Tuesday, May 10

Eden Seminary Commons in Webster Groves

Our annual banquet takes place on a Tuesday evening this year. The social hour will begin at 5:45 pm. Come meet Jim Rathert, our featured speaker and well-known wildlife photographer from the Missouri Department of Conservation. A buffet dinner by Hendri's Catering begins at 6:45. During the dinner program, our 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award winner will be announced. The presentation by Jim Rathert follows, featuring photographs from his recent book, *In Focus*, with a very special bird addendum.



5:45

Social Hour

6:45

Dinner Buffet, Program with Award Presentation and Photographic Presentation by Jim Rathert

Please reserve your place at the Banquet today by using the form printed below. Send your reservation form with a check made out to WGNSS for \$23 per person.

Refund policy: A full refund of your reservation cost of \$23 will be given if requested before May 2. After May 2, no refunds can be made. Contact Ann Earley at 963-0103.

Early-bird reservations: \$23 per person, must be postmarked by Thurs. April 28

Please note: No reminder cards will be sent this year.

Late reservations: \$26 per ticket, must be postmarked by Thursday, May 5

Your check will confirm your reservation.

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

WGNSS Spring Banquet
c/o Ann Earley
1425 Bobolink Place
St. Louis, MO 63144-1128

Early-bird reservations must be postmarked by Thursday, April 28

Late registrations must be postmarked by Thursday, May 5

I would like Spring Banquet Reservations for _____ persons

Early-bird @ \$23 per person = _____ Late @\$26.00 per person = _____

Name _____

Address _____

Questions? Contact Ann Earley at 963-0103

**webster groves nature
study society** 

PO Box 190065
St. Louis MO 63119

address service requested

Non-profit Org.

US Postage Paid

St. Louis MO
Permit #690

exp: 31-08-2005 [0/R]

James F & Betty Adams
35 Tulip Dr
Saint Louis MO 63119-4660

63119+4660 81



webster groves nature study society

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

Call the Nature Line at **314-935-8432** for meetings and bird sightings. www.wgnss.org

Membership categories (circle one):
Individual or Household:.....\$20
for 1st class mail..... add \$8
Student.....\$10

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