



Nature Notes

Call the Nature Line (314) 935-8432 for meeting times & bird sightings

Journal of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, May 2006, Vol. 78, No. 5
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER - Yvonne Homeyer

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - On April 6, at the annual meeting of members, three new officers were elected: Ann Earley, President, Jane Walker, 1st Vice President; and Kimberlie McCue, 2nd Vice President. They will be installed at the Banquet on May 2nd. Jane will replace David Mendelson; and Kimberlie will replace Margy Terpstra. We appreciate everything that David and Margy have done for WGNSS during their time on the Board, and we will miss them. Thanks, David and Margy, for your loyal service to WGNSS.

TRANSITIONS - It has been my pleasure to serve WGNSS for two terms as its president. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to all the Board members who have served during my time as president. I especially want to acknowledge the contributions of Jim Adams. Jim volunteered to join the Board as Secretary, then offered to serve as Editor of Nature Notes. Along the way he resurrected the position of Historian and initiated the task of indexing every issue of Nature Notes since its first issue in 1929. (These indices are now available on our website, www.wgnss.org.) Jim has reached back into our history and helped us to connect with our past. One thing stands out clearly. WGNSS's core values have not changed since Alfred and Elizabeth Satterthwait founded our organization in 1920: a deep interest in and love for the natural worlds, a belief that ordinary people can study the natural world and contribute to our knowledge of it, a desire to introduce others to the wonder and excitement of nature, and a passion for protecting and preserving our natural resources, wildlife, and habitat. I doubt anyone in 1920 would have

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THE BEST SHOW IN TOWN

What - The WGNSS Annual Meeting

When - Tuesday, May 2

Where - Eden Commons, Webster Groves

Time - 5:45 PM - Social Hour/Silent Book Auction

6:30 PM - Dinner Buffet

After Dinner - Achievement Award
Presentation and "Grasslands"
by WGNSS member Doug Ladd

RESERVATION DEADLINE

APRIL 24

DIRECTIONS

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

1) from 40, east to Hanley Rd; south on Hanley (which becomes Laclede Station Road); right on Big Bend; right on E. Lockwood; left on Bompert; enter from Bompert.

2) from I-44, east on 44; Exit at Elm Ave. (Exit 220); left on S. Elm; right on Big Bend; left on Bompert; enter from Bompert

REPORT ON APRIL 5 BOARD MEETING - Editor

Plans for the May 2 Banquet were reviewed. All seems to be on track. Yvonne announced that the annual officer election will be held tomorrow night at the beginning of the April 6 General (Cont'd on p. 4)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - (Cont'd)

anticipated the intense pressure on our natural resources today, or imagined the loss of plants and wildlife that we have experienced in the last few decades. We have great challenges ahead of us but I am confident that WGNSS will continue to play a vital role in nature study and conservation in the years to come.

BOARD OPENINGS - Because Kimberlie McCue and Ann Earley were both Members-at-Large, there are now two vacancies on the Board because they have stepped up to officer positions. The new Board will be responsible for filling these vacancies. If you are interested in joining the Board, please contact me or Ann Earley. Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month.

MAY BANQUET - By the time this newsletter arrives, the Banquet will be just a few days away. We look forward to seeing all our friends at this event. Jim Jackson is the 2006 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award and Doug Ladd is our keynote speaker. A silent auction of a WGNSS member's donated birding book collection will also take place that night, so bring your checkbooks! The Banquet starts with a social hour at 5:45 and dinner will be served around 6:30. We are returning to Eden Commons on the Eden Seminary campus. If you have any questions, contact Margy Terpstra (see contact information at rear for Board members).

EDITOR'S COMMENTS - Jim Adams

Most presidents are best remembered by their inaugural addresses. I believe Yvonne will be remembered by the above, her "final" address. I appreciate the bouquet she threw in my direction, but I must point out that she's being overly modest. She contributed greatly to my efforts in opening up WGNSS's history through her advice/assistance. When I talked to her soon after I joined the Board, (she had recently become president), she deplored the lack of any organized Society archives and history. Since I expressed an interest in this, as a history buff, she followed up somewhat later with a suggestion that I chair a Heritage Night program (held in April 2003). This event was highly successful in my opinion and helped (Cont'd, next column)

me to meet a number of the older members and to hear their stories. It fell to me, as part of Heritage Night preparations, to assemble and to arrange for the binding of an additional five year volume of Nature Notes for our Missouri Botanical Garden Library archive, and I noted that the Society had formerly had a Historian in the person of Betty Nellums but the position was now vacant. I decided that this would be a fun job so I asked Yvonne about my filling it and she eagerly agreed. But then, because of my previous experience during my college years at the University of Texas Library, I wondered how one could retrieve information from this archive file, beautifully bound in buckram, but not indexed. So I decided that indexing was a must. Again, with Yvonne's cheerful assent, I began work. As I finished each year I sent her the index for her review, and she began to ask for copies of particular articles, which told me that the project was serving its intended purpose. It took quite a bit of time and work, but the project has given me an incomparable overview of the 85 years of WGSS history, and I now feel that I know some of the WGNSS titans of the past very personally.

But early on it became obvious that more was needed than an index; the indexes had to be made available to the members and other naturalists. Randy Korotev, our Society webmaster, has been a big help. He has found storage space for the very large index file and has also provided a very user-friendly way for people to access indexes for individual years. I should add that Randy's success was not unexpected. He also is webmaster for the Audubon Society of Missouri's website which contains data from all Xmas Bird Counts in the state of Missouri since 1901! I first learned of his involvement with the ASM website when I noticed some very fine print in the Bluebird, the ASM's newsletter. Without Randy and Yvonne, the indexing project could not have come to fruition.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR BIRDS - Elliott Coues

The following was taken from a biography of the great American ornithologist of the 19th Century, written by Paul Cutright and Michael J. Brodhead, a book I found about two years ago in the bookshop (Cont'd, page 3)

at the Visitors' Center at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial National Park at Medora, North Dakota. The writers have included a paragraph of advice from a "Manual of Instruction" by Coues for aspiring ornithologists. Coues, a protégé of Spencer F. Baird, the second director of the Smithsonian Institution, is considered to have been one of the most eloquent naturalists who ever lived. After I read this, I felt I must share it with you.

"Birds may be sought anywhere... Some come about your doorstep to tell their stories unasked. Others spring up before you as you stroll in the field, like the flowers that enticed the feet of Proserpine. Birds flit by as you measure the tired roadside... They disport overhead at hide-and-seek with the foliage as you loiter in the shade of the forest, and their music now answers the sigh of the tree-tops, now ripples an echo to the voice of the brook. But you will not always pluck so thornless a rose. Birds hedge themselves about with a bristling girdle of brier and bramble you cannot break; they build their tiny castles in the air surrounded by impossible moats, and the drawbridges are never down. They crown the mountain-top you may use your breath to climb; they sprinkle the desert where your parched lips may find no cooling draught; they fleck the snow-wreath when the nipling blast may make you turn your back; they breathe unharmed the pestilent vapors of the swamps that mean disease, if not death, for you; they outride the storm at sea that sends strong men to their last account. Where now will you look for birds?"

Coues was thirty years old when he wrote this.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The St. Louis Rainforest Advocates

WGNSS members are invited to a free slide presentation at the Missouri Botanical Garden on Friday, April 28, at 7 PM. Maggie Eisenberger, who has just returned from the jungles of Panama, will present "Panama: Paradise in Peril." She will tell of the threat to this forest from Plan Pueblo which plans to build a highway, pipeline and power line through indigeneous lands, where the biodiversity is spectacular.

WHAT'S AHEAD??

June Board Meeting - June 7

MAY DATES

WGNSS ANNUAL BANQUET - MAY 2
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May Board Meeting - None
Birding Big Day - May 13
Entomology Group Meeting - May 21
Nature Notes Deadline - May 5
Nature Notes Mailing Party - May 15
May Bird/Botany Walks - See p. 20-21

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FROM A DINER "COFFEE NEWS"

It is now beyond any doubt that cigarettes are the biggest cause of statistics.

Living on earth is expensive, but it does include a free daily trip around the sun.

REPORT ON APRIL 5 BOARD MEETING (Cont'd)

Meeting.

Yvonne announced that this would be her last Board meeting as President and thanked the two outgoing officers, David Mendelson and Margy Terpstra, for their good work during the past two years. She will remain on the Board as Chair of the Conservation Committee. She asked for names of possible candidates for the two Member-at-Large Board positions that will exist after the election tomorrow night..

Margy Terpstra pointed out that the May issue of *Nature Notes* will be mailed on April 17 and will not be received by most members until after the April 24 Banquet reservation deadline. She recommended that a postcard reminder about the meeting and the reservation deadline be sent out as soon as possible. The Board approved this recommendation. This recommendation was approved.

Plans for the Membership Renewal Drive for the coming year were reviewed. A reminder will be included in the June issue of *Nature Notes* and in the August issue if needed. The June renewal notice and followup will be the responsibility of the Membership Committee.

Jim Adams reported that the indexing of all *Nature Notes* volumes through 2005 has been completed and the remaining volume indexes sent to Randy Korotev for the WGNSS website.

Mike Flieg reported on the 2006 Scudder and Menke Scholarship Awards.

Reports were received from the Botany, Ornithology, Entomology and Conservation Committees.

A May Board meeting won't be held because the Annual Banquet is scheduled for the previous evening.

TRIVIA - Editor

What was Alfred Satterthwait's middle name? (His M. I. was "F"). I'll announce the name of the first person who calls in with the correct answer in the June issue. .

REPORT ON JOINT WGNSS BOTANY GROUP TRIP WITH THE MISSOURI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – George Yatskievych, Botany Group Co-Ch

The day promised perfect weather as the group met on March 26 at a commuter lot in southern St. Louis for a three-hour drive to southeastern Missouri. Our goal was to reach Sand Ponds Conservation Area, which is south of Poplar Bluff via U.S. Highway 67 along the Arkansas border. Sand Ponds protects about 200 acres of upland and bottomland forests in the sandy soil of an old dune system in the Mississippi Lowlands Natural Division, including 68 acres dedicated as a state natural area. Our group of 18 hearty souls was in search of one of Missouri's least common species, the federally listed pondberry, *Lindera mellisifolia*. The property harbors one of the largest populations in the world of this early-blooming relative of spicebush (*L. benzoin*), the only such population in Missouri for this southeastern species.

The drive down was uneventful—those of us who missed the turn soon found ourselves making a U-turn in Arkansas. The nature preserve is nestled in a landscape of

REPORT ON JOINT BOTANY TRIP (Cont'd from p. 4)

farm fields, these green with winter wheat or beginning to turn purple with henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) and purple dead-nettle (*L. purpureum*). On the dirt road off the highway leading to the area, one of our vehicles passed a northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) swooping in search of prey amid the unplowed stubble of a farm field.

The spring bloom was remarkably late in southeastern Missouri this year, and we saw fewer wildflowers than expected for late March (only about ten species). At the parking area, our first find was scattered plants of the field pansy or Johnny-jump-up (*Viola bicolor*). We soon encountered an abundance of Pennsylvania bitter cress (*Cardamine pennsylvanica*), some of the plants already in fruit. Many of those in attendance remarked on the tangle of viney plants clambering over the trees and shrubs along the edge of the road through the property. These were a mixture of familiar weeds like Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), common native vines such as trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*) and greenbriers (*Smilax glauca*, *S. rotundifolia*), and unusual regionally restricted species, such as ladies' eardrops (*Brunnichia cirrhosa*). Sand Ponds is known for its diversity of oak species and the group puzzled out several kinds from fallen acorns and leaves around the often large trunks, including willow, Nuttall, post, swamp white, overcup, cherrybark, and blackjack oaks (*Quercus phellos*, *Q. texana*, *Q. stellata*, *Q. bicolor*, *Q. lyrata*, *Q. pagoda*, and *Q. marilandica*, respectively). In fact, the area is a great place to see a diversity of bottomland and upland trees and shrubs. However, in late March, wild plum (*Prunus americana*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) were the only showy trees in flower and deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) was one of the only woody species actively leafing out.

Eventually, it became necessary for the group to leave the roadway and venture into the not-too-swampy bottomland forest. After about fifteen minutes of searching, the elusive pondberry was finally spotted, in full-and-glorious bloom. Soon it appeared in abundance. Pondberry is a strongly colonial shrub that produces clusters of small yellow flowers along the branches before the foliage begins to grow. Interestingly, all of the numerous stems that we encountered contained staminate flowers; the pistillate clones remained elusive.

After our successfully foray, the group stopped briefly at Corkwoods Conservation Area, just a few miles to the northeast in adjacent Butler County. The name Corkwood refers to another colonial bottomland shrub, the rare *Leitneria floridana*, but too much water along the roadside and too many dense thickets of thorny vines prevented us from reaching the plants at that site. However, we were treated to a nice show of wild plum along one of the service roads and also encountered a large dense patch of pale corydalis (*Corydalis flavula*) with its interesting short-spurred yellow flowers.

At the edge of the parking lot was a large thicket of tangled vines of Japanese honeysuckle and greenbriers. When we arrived, the group heard frantic meowing and a small black and white cat soon struggled out to greet the group. Mr. Cat followed us on our walk, exhibiting heeling behavior more fitting for a dog, except when he climbed on Pat Harris's back as she bent to examine a wildflower. Jane Walker suggested that his name should be Corkwood, and Corky is now living at the Yatskievych home in Des Peres, although not yet getting along with our other two felines. So often, our groups

REPORT ON JOINT BOTANY TRIP (Cont'd from p. 5)

encounter former pets abandoned at parks and conservation areas by thoughtless and heartless persons lacking in compassion and a sense of responsibility. Most of these animals starve or are killed by other animals or cars, and those few that do adapt to life in the wild become invasive exotics, detrimental to other things in the natural landscape that bring joy to the hearts of most people, especially songbirds. It seemed imperative to reward this little fellow's unflagging efforts to find a new home away from his brier patch. It is interesting, however, to consider one of the other common names for *Smilax*, namely catbrier.

Editor's Note – Some readers may not know that George Yatskievych is updating Julian Steyermark's monumental *Flora of Missouri*, published in 1963. Dr. Steyermark was also a WGNSS member, a one time chairman of its Geology and Botany groups. George has completed the first volume of the planned multi-volume update.

ATTENTION, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE! - Jim Adams

In indexing the Nature Notes file, I have noticed that WGNSS has been a prime promoter of romances. Julian Steyermark married Cora Shoup, Botany Grp. Chair, in 1937. Other prominent members who met and married in WGNSS include Editor Harold O'Byrne and President Olive Schregardus, Astronomer Stuart O'Byrne and Botany Chair May Brinkmeyer, and Entomologist Marshall Magner and Ernestine Thro; the list goes on and on. I haven't counted, but I would guess that at least 35-40 such weddings are reported in *Nature Notes*. And one time *Nature Notes* issues often included a "Nursery News" department. If you married a WGNSS member while a member of WGNSS, let me know. A list of such romances would make interesting reading..

HISTORIAN'S CORNER – OSCAR PETERSEN, THE VAGABOND DREAMER

SATURDAY MORNING JAN. 11, 1948. I WAS AWAKENED BY THE
MAGIC CALL: "CHBO-CHBO-WHIT-WHIT-CHEER" OF THE CARDINAL
THOUGH BRIEF, AS IT WAS UNEXPECTED, IT WAS A MOST CHEERFUL
REMINDER OF SPRING. "BEAUTIFUL SPRING" — JUST AHEAD.

GREETINGS.

IT COULD NOT BE, AND YET, IT IS
A PLEASING ODE TO SPRING,
WHEN ONE AWAKES IN JANUARY
TO HEAR THE CARDINAL SING.
"CHEER UP- CHEER UP!" LIVE, HEAR AND SEE,
FORGET WHATEVER TROUBLES THEE!

AWAKE! THE MAGIC CALL CAME TRUE
AS IF I HEARD THE VOICE OF YOU
FROM FAR-AWAY, WAFT ON THE AIR,
A CALMING WAVE TO DROWN DESPAIR.
AND NOW: THE SONGSTER, FLOWN AWAY
I SIT, WITH THOUGHTS SUBLIME AND PRAY:
THAT GOD WILL GRANT YOU ALL- THIS SPRING
THE BLISS: TO SEE. TO HEAR AND SING.

HAPPY NEW-YEAR!



(Cont'd next page)

OSCAR PETERSEN, THE VAGABOND DREAMER (Cont'd)

The above is a reproduction of Petersen's 1948 "Annual New-Years Reminder: "That the Vagabond is Still Vagabonding", as described in a note found in Marshall Magner's effects with which this card was enclosed. The card is hand-drawn and colored. Note the neat typewriter-like handwriting, which was his style. Because of the clarity and neatness of his writing, some of his articles were reproduced in WGNSS without retyping. .

Oscar was another of the illustrious naturalists in the early WGNSS pantheon about whom I have been writing. The following memorial was written by his good friend and fellow botanist Waldemar Palm and printed in the January, 1965 issue of *Nature Notes*.

OSCAR PETERSEN

If somebody had told me on that evening when I met for the first time, Oscar Petersen, at the home of the late Hermann Schwartz in January, 1940, that he was then almost seventy-five years of age, I would have listened with considerable incredulity. The man looked at the most in his sixties and spoke and acted like a still younger person.

Later I had many opportunities to observe Oscar on field trips up to only a few years ago, when we roamed the open countryside in search of wildflowers, as he climbed effortlessly up hill and down dale, stepping over logs and rocks quite surefootedly and with surprising endurance. He never carried a lunch nor did he ever accept any offerings in the middle of the day. But he usually had his vasculum with him to take back collected specimens.

Oscar Petersen was born in Denmark on March 10, 1865, came to the United States as a young man, and being attuned to Nature from an early age, soon found his particular avocation: The search and identification of plants, especially herbaceous wildflowers. The unglaciated parts of Missouri are a rewarding territory for such a pursuit, and he took full advantage of it.

Over the years, Oscar Petersen designed and accumulated a collection of cards which eventually made it unnecessary for him to take along on botanical excursions any book for identification of plants. These cards, each with a colored picture of a particular species, a short description of it, where it had been found, and the period of flowering, served him well. They were filed in chronological order as to the latter characteristic. When he went out to explore a region, he took along only cards of plants which could be expected to be flowering at that particular time, thus having no bulky weights to carry. Too bad this idea and work of his was never utilized for publication. Of course, it would have been a considerable undertaking, a costly product, and in view of the comparatively small demand for nature books in general, a not too profitable business for a publisher, if one could have been found at all

Oscar was an amazing plant spotter. He had sharp eyes for tiny and partially hidden flowerlets, and could name practically any without hesitation.

When Dr. Julian A. Steyermark was still a student in Soldan High School, he very often visited with Petersen. It is a likely assumption that the latter inspired the former, and this contributed greatly to the single-minded orientation of the well known author of
(Cont'd next page)

OSCAR PETERSEN, THE VAGABOND DREAMER (Cont'd)

the "The Spring Flora of Missouri", later enlarged to the comprehensive "Flora of Missouri", a really monumental tome. Steyermark gave recognition to Petersen by naming a distinctive form of our wild hyacinth: Camissia scillioides f. Petersonii, first identified by Oscar.

However, besides being a remarkable amateur naturalist, Oscar Petersen also was a gifted linguist and poet. He was truly trilingual, an unusual accomplishment by any standard. His Mother-tongue was, of course, Danish, but he also spoke fluently German and English. I never heard about his writing poetry in Danish; however, I can attest to the excellence of his German and English poems. They are free of sentimentality, and rather reveal his highly esthetic sense, his innate sensitivity and deep understanding regarding everything in our natural surroundings.

I personally look back with great pleasure to the outings and meetings with Oscar Petersen, and now realize these were all too few. He was a good companion with a keen sense of humor (I can still hear his hearty laugh), a well-informed and patient teacher and beloved by all who had the privilege of knowing him. For his contribution in the field of conservation, Oscar Petersen received the 1956 citation of the St. Louis Audubon Society.

A rare man, indeed, who retained his faculties miraculously almost to the last when he passed away on November 6, 1964.

Historian's Comments

This truly was a remarkable man. From time to time I'll publish some of his beautiful poems in Nature Notes. WGNSS hasn't had many poets; the late Phoebe Snetsinger is another person making poetry contributions to *Nature Notes*.

Palm's Memorial covers highlights in the WGNSS career of the Vagabond Dreamer. But it's unfortunate that there's no information about his pre-WGNSS life in N. N. I'd like to hear from any one who has additional information about him. The Memorial mentions his receipt of the St. Louis Audubon Society's Conservation Award as an amateur botanist (N.N. April 1956). But the same issue of N. N. reports that the following week he received the Audubon Society's annual award for work in Conservation and was cited for discovering so many rare plants in Missouri and for inspiring many young amateurs to work in the field of botany.

There are numerous interesting poems/articles by/about Petersen in *Nature Notes*. One relates the story of his finding "the lost orchid" at Pickel Springs by locating its roots (N.N. June 1956). He wrote an article giving biographical information about Julian Steyermark and Richard Grossenheider (Feb. 1956). An article (June 1959) reports his rediscovery of *Isotria verticillata*, an orchid first found by Julian Steyermark and then lost. He authored articles about bugs, a grandson of a friend, and a whimsical story: "This not a Peach of a Story but a Story of a Peach" (N.N. Sept. 1955). Any one wanting to learn more about this remarkable man can check out the N.N. indexes in the WGNSS website for the years 1948-1965.

It is indicative of the affection of the Society for Petersen that there was a special

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OSCAR PETERSEN, THE VAGABOND DREAMER (Cont'd)

birthday recognition article for Petersen ("Happy Birthday, Mr. Peterson") article in 1957 (his 92nd birthday) and special recognition at WGNSS March general meetings in the form of birthday dinner parties at the Palm home in March, 1958, 1959, and 1960. (N.N. issues for March 1958, 1959 and 1960.) General meetings were held in private homes at that time. After 1960 there was no mention of Petersen in *Nature Notes* until his death in 1964; he may not have been active during the final years of his life for health reasons.

The only address shown for Petersen in *Nature Notes* is 436 Glendale Road, Webster Groves. Website visitors will note that his name is often spelled "Peterson". However, it appears in his handwriting in *Nature Notes* as Petersen, and this is the spelling used in the 1965 Memorial by his close friend Waldemar Palm.

IN MEMORIAM – JANIS BROCKLAND - Editor

WGNSS extends its sympathy to Paul Brockland on the death of his wife, Janis, after an extended illness. Janis died on Dec. 21, and her funeral was on Christmas Eve.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS - Editor

WGNSS extends its congratulations to Mike Opperman, long-time Webster Groves Parks and Recreation Director. Mike recently received the prestigious Fellow Award from the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association. WGNSS members will remember that Mike spoke at the Marshall Magner Memorial Service at the Congregational Church in Webster on May 28 last year and spoke at the dedication of the Magner Woods on June 22. In his speech at the dedication Mike recounted his long time friendship with Marshall and on Marshall's role in making the Shady Creek Sanctuary a reality. Mike has also played a major role in the restoration of the Bird Sanctuary in Blackburn Park, which is being partially financed with memorial funds honoring the late Phoebe Snetsinger.

WGNSS also extends its congratulations to Joan Essermann on her election to the Webster Groves City Council in the April municipal election. See the April, 2006 issue of *Nature Notes*, p. 2, Col. 1, for a contribution by Joan, a WGNSS member.

BIRDS IN THE NEWS - Editor

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* carried an article on March 17 that made WGNSS bird watchers scratch their heads. The article concerned an inquiry by UMSL students about two introduced birds, the English tree sparrow and the Eurasian tree sparrows. The inquiry concerned the question of why the English sparrows have virtually covered the nation and the Eurasian sparrows have remained "stranded" in the St. Louis area. The interesting thing about the article is that pictures are shown side by side of the two birds. But both were English sparrows, a male and a female.

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BIRDS IN THE NEWS (Cont'd)

In a second article about sparrows, the *Wall Street Journal* (Feb. 23, 2006) contains an article "Birdwatchers Find Sparrows Often Are A Tough Nut to Crack". Pictures of the Song sparrow and the Savannah Sparrow are shown side by side (in living color) to illustrate the "identification problem".

And speaking of sparrows, a biography of Elliott Coues that I'm, reading (and referred to earlier in this issue), gives the best account I've seen of the introduction of the English sparrow into the U.S. I've read much about the introduction of the Eurasian tree but don't recall ever seeing an account of the English sparrow introduction. Seems like the introduction, begun in 1852, eventually brought about the "Sparrow War", "one of the most heated battles ever fought among men of science" (about the wisdom of such importation). By 1874 the war was at its peak. Principals were Elliott Coues (con) and Thomas Brewer, ornithologist (pro). It got really ugly. Interesting reading--and increased my admiration for Coues.

2006 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS - Mike Flieg

The **Menke** Scholarships (2) were awarded to:

Jack Cornell – Missouri State University at Springfield: "Short Term Intensive Management of High Densities of *Sericea Lespedeza* that Promotes Wildlife Habitat and Native Plant Diversity"

Keefe Reuther – St. Louis University: "The Invasive Japanese Pavement Ant *Tetramorium tsushimae*: A Model System for Understanding Invasion Dynamics and its Implications on Conservation"

The **Scudder** Scholarship has been awarded to:

Nicholas W. Griffin – Washington University: "Factors Influencing Pollinator Interactions and Mating Systems in *Mimulus ringens*"

WGNS SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED SINCE THEIR INCEPTION

The Mickey Scudder Scholarships – Instituted 1985

1985, Anthony Rossi (UMSL) *An Investigation of Honey Storage and Utilization in Pre-emergent Nests of a Paper Wasp.*

1986, Kaius Helenurm (WU) *Mating systems and Reproductive Biology of the Texas Bluebonnet.*

1987, Jane Stevens (UMSL) *Response to Stimulated Herbivory in the Trumpet Vine.*

1988, Kathy Reppell (SLU) *Incidence of Lyme Disease Spirochetes and Rocky Mountain Rickettsia in Ticks at Tyson.*

1989, Jennifer Matos (WU) *Evolution in the Pinus Montezuma complex, Population Structures and Hybridization.*

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The Mickey Scudder Scholarships (Cont'd)

- 1990, Richard Clinebell (UMSL)** *Biology of Exotic Invasion in the Wade Tract, a Relict Preserve of Endangered Long-leaf Pine Savanna in Thomas Co. Georgia.*
- 1991, Marshal Hedin (WU)** *Natural History of Glade Inhabiting Arachnids: Ecological, Evolutionary and conservation Biology Implications.*
- 1992, Niels Rattenberg (SLU)** *Effect of Clutch Topography on the Hatching Success of Host Eggs in Nests Parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird.*
- 1993, Delbert Hutchison (WU)** *Levels of Genetic Variation Within and Between Isolated Populations of collared Lizards on Missouri Glades: Testing Conservationally Important Hypotheses.*
- 1994, Chris Hochwender (UMSL)** *The Effects of Species Loss and Host Plant Genotypes on communal structure: a Test case Using the common Milkweed and its Herbivores.*
- 1995, John Lill (UMSL)** *Ecological Factors Influencing Host Plant Selection in three Caterpillar Species.*
- 1996, Paige Mettler/McClure (SIU)** *Determination of Light Level Patterns and their Relationship to Herbaceous Succession for sites of a Threatened Floodplain Species, Boltonia decurrens*
- 1997, Jacqueline M. Goerck (UMSL)** *Ecology and History as determinants of Rarity of Birds: A Case Study with Antbirds.*
- 1998, Thomas Prinzie (WU & MOBOT)** *Evolution of the Milkweed Corona; Systemics and Flower Development in Neotropical Milkweeds.*
- 1999, Debbie Tobin (UMSL)** *Ecology and Social Role of Scent Markings of North American River Otters in Missouri.*
- 2000, Andrew Kinziger (SLU)** *Systematics of the Ozark Sculpin and Mottled Sculpin.*
- 2001, Elma Kay (SLU)** *Pollination of the Greater Antillean Passionflower by the Greater Antillean Long-tongued Bat.*
- 2002, Kevin Matson (UMSL)** *Maintenance of Immune system Function in Hawaii's Introduced Birds.*
- 2003, Cintia Cornelius (UMSL)** *Reproductive success and genetic structure of two endemic birds of the south-temperate rainforest: dispersal and habitat limitations in a fragmented landscape.*
- 2004, Teresa Patricia Feria (UMSL)** *Modeling the Ecological Niche of Endemic Species in the Balsas Basin, Mexico: and Evaluation of Four Methods*
- 2005, Casey Dillman (SLU)** *Systematics of the Crayfish Genus Camberus*
- 2006, Nicholas W. Griffin (WU)** *Factors Influencing Pollinator Interactions and Mating System in Mimulus ringens*

Menke Scholarships – Instituted 2001

- 2001, Tracy Green (UMColumbia)** *Dispersal of Salamanders through Fragmented Landscapes.*
- 2002, Corey Anderson (WU)** *Factors Influencing Genetic Variation and Gene flow in a Western Range Timber Rattlesnake Population.*
- 2003, Alejandro Masis (UMSL)** *Effects of Uneven and Even Aged Timber Management on Species Diversity of Fruit Feeding Butterflies in the Missouri Ozarks.*
- 2003, Justin Shew (SMS)** *Spatial Ecology and Habitat Use of the Western Fox Snake at Squaw Creek NWR. (Two Grants were awarded in 2003)*

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The Menke Scholarships (Cont'd)

2004, Rachel Katz (Truman State University) *The Effects of Burning Versus Mowing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Fields on Ground-nesting Birds, their Potential Prey, and Nest Depredation in Northeast Missouri*
2004, Nicholas J. Lang (SLU) *Assessment of Habitat, Land Use, and Demographic factors on the Contemporary abundance and Distribution of Notropis heterolepis in the Loutre River Basin, MO. (Two Grants awarded in 2004)*

2005, Brian Allen (WU) *A Protective Role for Avian Diversity in the United States West Nile Virus Epidemic*
2005, Wade Ryberg (WU) *Food Webs in Fragmented Landscapes (Two Grants awarded in 2005)*

2006, Keefe Reuther (SLU) *The Invasive Japanese Pavement Ant, Tetramorium: A Model System for Understanding Invasion Dynamics and its Implications on Conservation.*

2006, Jack Cornell (SWMS) *Short-term Intensive Management of High Densities of Sericia Lespedeza that Promises Wildlife Habitat and Native Plant Diversity (Two Grants awarded in 2006)*

DEMOGRAPHICS OF AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS 1985-2006

The Scudder Scholarship is awarded to colleges within the St. Louis Metro area only; whereas the Menke is awarded only to colleges within the state of Missouri.

Institutions receiving grants	Total grants awarded
University of Missouri, St. Louis	11
Washington University	9
St. Louis University	6
Southern Illinois University	1
University of Missouri, Columbia	1
Southeast Missouri State	1
Truman State University	1
Southwest Missouri State	1

Grant Categories	Grant Recipients				
	Gender	National Origin			
Botany	9	Male	21	Caucasian	26
Entomology	6	Female	11	Hispanic	5
Ornithology	5			African American	1
Herpetology	4				
Mammalogy	2				
Ichthyology	2				
Ecology	3				

FEBRUARY BOTANY REPORT – George R. Van Brunt

February 7, 2006 Botany Field Trip

We met on a cold, sunny morning at the Howell Island Conservation Area in St. Charles County. Howell Island, about 4 miles long and a little over a mile wide, lies in the Missouri River across from the Weldon Spring Conservation Area. The hardy winter botanists accompanying Father Sullivan were Kathy Thiele, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Dick Russell, Sue Schoening, Nels Holmberg, and George Van Brunt. We walked the causeway across Centaur Chute, a small braid of the Missouri River separating Howell Island from St. Louis County.

We walked about a mile on a northwesterly trail and then retraced our steps to our starting point. Along the way we identified *Artemisia annua* (annual or sweet wormwood), a member of the daisy family (Asteraceae). We saw both last year's dried plant in fruit as well as new green leaves. Following the general pattern for this time of year, the green leaves were hugging the
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FEBRUARY BOTANY REPORT (Cont'd)

ground. We also identified the green leaves of *Lamium purpureum* (deadnettle) and *Rubus trivialis* (southern dewberry). Father Sullivan told us a very interesting story about the southern dewberry plants on Howell Island. The Missouri River is the northern limit of the range of southern dewberry. At one time, Carl Darigo got a St. Charles County record for southern dewberry by identifying the plant on Howell Island, which is in St. Charles County, but south of the Missouri River. We examined the buds of *Platanus occidentalis* (sycamore) which are reddish brown, have a single bud scale, and resemble a dunce cap. We looked at *Equisetum hyemale* (scouring rush) with longitudinal siliceous ridges on its stems. Pioneers bound the abrasive stems of these common plants together to make scouring pads for cleaning pots and pans. These plants are green throughout the winter as suggested by the name *hyemale* which means "of the winter". Another interesting plant we examined was *Desmanthus illinoensis*, bundle flower. The two plants we saw were dried and had small crescent-shaped fruits like other members of the bean family. As indicated by the genus name which is Greek for "bundle flower", these fruits, each produced by a different flower, were packed in small globular bundles.

Addendum

Mosses are sometimes difficult to identify in the field without a microscope so various members of the botany group collect small samples and give them to our expert, Carl Darigo, to identify. It usually takes a few weeks to get the results. On our most recent trip to Babler State Park on January 2nd, Nels Holmberg found two interesting mosses. One, *Ephemerum crassinervium* (ephemerum moss), is state listed in Missouri. This means that it is being considered for inclusion on the Endangered Species list. The other, *Fissidens exilis* (fissidens moss) is very rare in Missouri having been previously reported only from Saline County and St. Louis County. There is no herbarium specimen from Saline County and the only herbarium specimen in the state was collected by the WGNSS Botany group in Queeny Park in St. Louis County.

February 14, 2006 Botany Field Trip

The hardy winter botanists, hoping soon to be spring botanists, met at Robertsville State Park in Franklin County. We walked the aptly named Spicebush Trail, a mile long loop, through Meramec River bottomland. Accompanying Father Sullivan on this cold, sunny, winter day were Nels Holmberg, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Jeannie Moe, Bill Knight, Jack Harris, and George Van Brunt.

We identified, as we have in many places all winter, twigs and buds of *Lindera benzoin* (spicebush), *Fraxinus americana* (white ash), *Ulmus rubra* (slippery elm), *Carya cordiformis* (bitternut hickory), *Acer saccharum* (sugar maple), *Ostrya virginiana* (hop hornbeam), *Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood), and *Asimina triloba* (pawpaw). We were very pleased not to find any *Lonicera maackii* (amur honeysuckle) on our walk. Nels identified *Frullania inflata*, a leafy liverwort with no common name. It grows on trees with smooth bark and appears to be a stain on the bark. Upon closer examination, tiny tendril-like leaves are evident. We identified a southern black haw (*Viburnum rufidulum*) with a few oblong, dark fruits still present on the bush. The plant's buds were velvety, covered with rusty-red hairs. The species epithet,

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FEBRUARY BOTANY REPORT (Cont'd)

rufidulum, refers to these little rufous hairs. We also identified a few *Aplectrum hyemale* plants (Adam-and-Eve orchids). Each plant has one ground-hugging green leaf which arises from an underground corm. This leaf photosynthesizes all winter when there is no shading from taller plants. In the spring, the leaf withers and the corm sends up an inflorescence with 8 to 15 brown to greenish-yellow flowers. Unlike many orchids which have a spur on the petal called the labellum, these orchids do not, a fact reflected in the name *Aplectrum*, which means "no spur". Each year, the corm produces a new corm connected to it by a small rhizome. These paired corms, one growing from the side of the other, are the reason for the common name, "Adam-and-Eve". Another plant that we identified was Missouri gooseberry (*Ribes missouriense*). This small shrub has a dense mat of prickles on the main stems and a fair number of prickles and large spines on the secondary branches. We also saw the American basswood (*Tilia americana*) with its strikingly red twig tips and leaf buds. The terminal few inches of each twig contrasted sharply with the rest of the bark which was gray in color. *Botrychium dissectum* f. *obliquum* (grape fern) leaves had their coppery winter color. Small green leaves of *Phacelia purshii* (Miami mist) and *Geum canadense* (white avens) were peeking through the brown leaf litter just waiting for spring.

February 21, 2006 botany Field Trip

The hardy winter botanists became indoor botanists as we met at Powder Valley Nature Center. Those present were Father Sullivan, Jeannie Moe, Jack Harris, Pat Harris, Jeanne Clauson, Sue Schoening, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Nathan Pate, Jim Roe, Yvonne Roe, Tom Terrific, Dave Alspaugh, James Ruschill, Margaret Ruschill, Dick Russell, Susan Russell, Nels Holmberg, Bob Siemer, Ann Earley, John Oliver, David Weber, and George Van Brunt.

On our agenda today was a warmup for spring botanizing. Pat Harris presented a slide show of spring flowers that she and Jack had photographed at various places in Missouri. Their photography was excellent; the flowers were sharp, clear, and colorful. This was followed by short presentations by Nels Holmberg and Nathan Pate. Nels showed us slide photographs of his 10 favorite plants, and Nathan showed us slide photographs of various interesting plants from the eastern US, mostly the New Jersey pine barrens.

After the slide shows, Father Sullivan talked about a possible trip to the driftless area of northeastern Iowa, northwestern Illinois, southwestern Wisconsin, and southeastern Minnesota. This trip would focus on algalic slopes in this unglaciated region. Jack Harris discussed two books: *The Terrestrial Natural Communities of Missouri* by Paul W. Nelson, and *Atlas of Missouri Ecoregions* by Timothy A. Nigh and Walter A. Schroeder. Jack also discussed a list of possible future field trips. Jeannie Moe showed us a beautiful collection of paintings and quilts she made with plant and bird themes. At the end of the meeting a few of us went for a walk in the Russell E. Emmenegger Nature Park across Highway 270 from Powder Valley Nature Center.

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FEBRUARY BOTANY REPORT (Cont'd)

February 28, 2006 Botany Field Trip

Accompanying Father Sullivan at the Pea Ridge Conservation Area in Washington County were Jack Harris, Wayne Clark, Nancy Clark, Gay Brown, Zenas Blevin, Rex Hill, Martha Hill, Jim Ruschill, Marge Ruschill, Bill Knight, Jerry Brown, Dave Alspaugh, and George Van Brunt. We explored the sandbars, gravelbars, and bottomlands of Indian Creek, crossing the creek a number of times. Wet feet were not a problem because the sky was sunny and the temperature was in the 60's. Large numbers of flowering *Hamamelis vernalis* (Ozark witch hazel) were growing in the creek bed. The peak of flowering was past, but a faint fragrance of witch hazel permeated the air.

One very interesting plant we found growing on the limestone outcrop on one side of the creek was *Asplenium rhizophyllum* (walking fern). This plant is notable for a couple of reasons. One characteristic is its simple frond, not pinnately divided like most temperate ferns. The other characteristic is its habit of forming roots at the leaf apex, giving rise to a new plant. This is a form of asexual reproduction. The species epithet, *rhizophyllum*, means "root leaf".

There are many examples of plants named for human body parts, processes, or diseases. These plants received their names because of the Doctrine of Signatures, the idea that God put a sign or signature on each of His creations that indicated the purpose of that creation. This doctrine became part of medical thinking in the early 17th century, but had been an idea of herbalists long before that. According to the Doctrine of Signatures, one can determine the purpose of a plant by careful examination of its color, shape, habit, and habitat. Many botanists of the 15th - 18th centuries were physicians searching for cures for human ailments. We found *Hepatica acutiloba* growing on the same cool sheltered limestone outcrop as *Asplenium rhizophyllum*. The winter leaves of *Hepatica acutiloba* are three-lobed and reddish-purple in color. These leaves resemble the liver in color and shape and thus were thought to be effective in treating liver ailments. *Hepatica* comes from the Greek name for the liver, hepar.

Father Sullivan made the exciting discovery of a *Juglans cinerea* (white walnut) tree. This economically important species, once common over the northeastern half of the United States, is now becoming rare. In our own region, for example, the white walnut has disappeared from the Young Conservation Area in Jefferson County where it was once common. This is due to the spread of a fatal canker caused by a fungus, *Sirococcus clavigignenti-juglandacearum*. The fungus infects trees through openings in the bark such as leaf scars and insect wounds. People have found a few healthy white walnut trees growing in areas where there are many diseased and dying trees. These trees are of interest because they could have resistance to the fungus. Upon identification of the white walnut tree at the Pea Ridge Conservation Area, Jack Harris and Wayne Clark took out their GPS devices and carefully recorded the coordinates of the tree. They reported the location of this specimen to the Missouri Department of Conservation which is interested in finding resistant trees. It was a pleasant surprise that Tim Smith of the Missouri Department of Conservation told us that MODOC had so many other records of *Juglans cinerea* in the state that they stopped adding sitings to the data base. They still are interested recording the locations of successfully fruiting trees, but our tree was too young. However, MODOC is interested in the tree we found because it is a new Washington County record!

(The End)

MARCH BIRD REPORT – Jim Ziebol and Yvonne Homeyer

Sightings: Early Arrival Dates:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Observer</u>
1/11	Coot	Horseshoe Lake	D Coles
1/15	Cormorant	Horseshoe Lake	FH
1/21	Prairie Falcon	Riverlands	J&CM
1/22	Pied-billed Grebe	Horseshoe Lake	SM
1/29	Harris's Sparrow	Horseshoe Lake	YH
		Busch Wildlife	JE
	Bonaparte's Gull	Horseshoe Lake	FH, JZ
2/6	Franklin's Gull	Riverlands	D Rogles
2/15	Kildeer	Bruns Road	JZ
	Wood Duck	Horseshoe Lake	JZ
	Woodcock	Wildwood	MB
2/18	Snipe	Baldwin Lake	KL
2/20	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Forest Park	SM
2/23	Blue-winged Teal	Creve Coeur Lake	D Curran
		Riverlands	D Becher
2/28	E. Meadowlark	Meramec Comm.	A McC
	Sandhill Crane	Horseshoe Lake	Mick R
3/1	Hooded Merganser	Forest Park	SM
	Green-winged Teal	Forest Park	SM
3/4	Rusty Blackbird	Busch Wildlife	MT
	Fish Crow	Weldon Springs CA	MT
	Tree Sparrow	Gilbert Lake	EA
3/6	Fox Sparrow	Forest Park	SM
	N. Goshawk	Indian Lake	JZ
3/8	Winter Wren	Castlewood	MB
	Horned Grebe	Riverlands	CA
	Brewer's Blackbird	Riverlands	CA
3/9	Bluebird	Forest Park	SM
	E. Towhee	Forest Park	SM
3/11	Field Sparrow	Lafayette Park	SM
	Song Sparrow	Tower Grove Park	JZ
3/12	Great Egret	Horseshoe Lake	JZ
	Black-crowned Night Heron	Horseshoe Lake	FH
	Broad-winged Hawk	Horseshoe Lake	MT
	Pectoral Sandpiper	Hwy. 79	JU
3/13	Bewick's Wren	Shrewsbury	NB
3/14	Golden Eagle	BK Leach	SS
	Lesser Yellowlegs	BK Leach	CM

(Cont'd next page)

MARCH BIRD REPORT (Cont'd)

3/16	Common Loon	Riverlands	CA
3/18	Purple Martin	Forest Park	SM
3/18	Greater Yellowlegs	BK Leach	MT
	Barn Swallow	Hwy. FF	JZ
	Loggerhead Shrike	Riverlands	D Rogles
3/19	American Pipit	Two Rivers NWR	EA
3/21	Vesper Sparrow	Horseshoe Lake	JZ
3/22	Lark Sparrow	Horseshoe Lake	SC
3/24	Hermit Thrush	Castlewood	MB
3/25	Merlin	Horseshoe Lake	MT
3/26	Solitary Sandpiper	Horseshoe Lake	FH
3/27	Least Sandpiper	Keeteman Rd.	D Rogles
	Rough-legged Hawk	Old Monroe	D Rogles
	Chipping Sparrow	Lafayette Park	SM
3/29	Lincoln's Sparrow	Castlewood	MB
	Little Blue Heron	Horseshoe Lake	FH
	Caspian Tern	Riverlands	JU
3/30	Black-throated Green	Lafayette Park	SM
	Louisiana Waterthrush	Rockwoods	CM
	Louisiana Waterthrush	Tyson	Tyson Staff
3/31	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Granite City	FH
	Snowy Egret	Hwy. 111	FH
	Cattle Egret	Borrow Pit/Hwy. 203	SC
	Yellow-throated Warbler	Rockwoods	CM
4/ 1	Rough-winged Swallow	Horseshoe Lake	FH
	Osprey	Riverlands	MT
	LeConte's Sparrow	Horseshoe Lake	D Becher
4/2	Spotted Towhee	West Alton	JU

The first Common Loon was found at REDA on 3/16 (CA). Good counts of Horned Grebes included 25 at HL on 3/25 (J Chain, Th. Group) and 25 at REDA on 3/29 (JU). A thousand Pelicans were present near Winfield Dam on 3/19 (MT). More than 700 Cormorants were counted moving north on the evening of 3/30 in Lemay (JZ). All of the regularly occurring herons and egrets, except Green Heron, arrived in March: 3/12, Great Egret and Black-crowned Night Heron, HL (FH); 3/29, Little Blue Heron, HL (FH), 3/31 Snowy Egret, Hwy. 111 (FH); and 3/31, Cattle Egret, near the Borrow Pit (SC). On 3/14, 40 Great Egrets were seen in the Cahokia Canal marshes along Hwy. 70 (JZ). On 3/17, Dottie Herwig located a small heronry at Castlewood containing 8 to 10 Great Blue Herons. Shawn Clubb spotted 17 Sandhill Cranes flying over HL on 3/19. About 300 Snow Geese were seen in flight over St. Louis County on 3/1 (AM). On 3/19, Mike Thelen counted 200+ Green-winged Teal at Winfield Dam and Sandy Slough, and 50 Blue-winged Teal at BK Leach. A male and female Hooded Merganser, a Green-winged Teal and a few Gadwall were present in FP on 3/1 (SM). The 95 Buffleheads seen at HL

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MARCH BIRD REPORT (Cont'd)

on 3/29 was a high number. On 3/25, Josh Uffman estimated 1,000 Scaup species and 500 Ruddy Ducks at REDA. Woodcock sightings included 1 near the Jack Van pool in TGP on 3/2 (J Chain, Th. Group), 3 at Spanish Lake Park on 3/10 (KP), 1 at Lafayette Park on 3/11 (SM), 1 at TGP on 3/14 (JZ), and 10 displaying at BCA on 3/11 (MT). Snipe was seen in very good numbers, with 31 at the Hwy. 143 marsh on 3/18 (CA), 60 in Lincoln County on 3/19 (MT), and 50 at Two Rivers NWR on 3/19 (EA). A very beautiful immature female N. Goshawk was filmed near Indian Lake on 3/6 (JZ). Another immature N. Goshawk was located at BK Leach on 3/18 (JU). On 3/11, the Saturday Group encountered Cooper's Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk at the Blue Grosbeak Trail (D Becher). Krider's Red-tails were moving the week of 3/20, with sightings on 3/20 at HL (JZ), 3/22 at Emmenegger Park (AM), 3/24 at BK Leach (SM), and 3/27 at Keeteman Rd. (MM). While leading a group for SLAS, Mike Thelen spotted a male Merlin with blue-gray upperparts at HL. Other birds seen that day included Franklin's Gull, 25 Bonaparte's, 1 Herring Gull, 1 Lesser Black-backed (MT, PB). Steve Vogel reported a Ring-necked Pheasant on 3/22 at Sandy Creek, Jefferson County. On 3/2 at TGP, 2 of the Great Horned owlets were seen in the nest and one was located on the ground (MJ), and on 3/12, the Thursday Group saw both of the adult owls and the all 3 owlets (J Chain). The best bird of the day for the Saturday Group on 3/11 was a Short-eared Owl at Katy Access (D Becher). Then, a week later, Mike Thelen found 7 Short-eared Owls at BK Leach on 3/19. On 3/19, a trip to the Monroe Co. Levee area produced 2 Eurasian Collared Doves and 3 male N. Harriers (SM, JZ).

On 3/26, the best bird of the day for the Sunday group was a Loggerhead Shrike at REDA (T Berger). Three Phoebes, 2 Pine Warblers and a Red-breasted Nuthatch were seen on 3/1 near Rockwoods (CM). Gail Ahumada reported a Red-breasted Nuthatch in TGP on 3/15. The first Pipit of the year was seen at Two Rivers NWR on 3/18 (EA). On 3/21, 120 Pipits were present on Bischoff/Bruns Roads (FH) and another Pipit was located at REDA on 3/22 (LJ). Also on 3/21, on Bischoff/Bruns, 7 Snipe, 60 Kildeer, 15 Song Sparrows, 2 Savannahs and a Vesper Sparrow were observed (JZ). The Rocky Mountain race of Hermit Thrush, *C. G. auduboni*, was located at CSP by Mike Brady; this bird is more olive and gray than a typical eastern Hermit Thrush, and the spotting is much more extensive underneath. A Gray Catbird was seen near Marshall and Hanley Roads on 3/10 (JZ). A Brown Thrasher was observed in FP on 3/13 (SM) and one was located at HL on 3/14 (JZ). On 3/6, the Thursday Group reported 2 Pine Warblers at #2 Memorial Forest off old Manchester Road (J Chain). Mark Paradise observed a Vesper Sparrow at Little Creve Coeur on 3/31. On 3/2, Linda Yust found the Harris's Sparrow at BCA, Lake 6, along with Rusty Blackbirds. Another Harris's Sparrow was seen on 3/12 at BK Leach (JU). Fifteen Brewer's Blackbirds were reported at BK Leach on 3/12 (JU). The Thursday Group located Brewer's and Rusty Blackbirds and 50 Great-tailed Grackles at Church/Seeberger on 3/16 (J Chain). Mike Thelen found 20 Rusty Blackbirds on 3/4 at BCA. The Sunday group on 3/12, led by Frank Holmes and Jim Ziebol, found 240 Rusty Blackbirds, 2 Great Egrets, 2 Black-crowned Night Herons, and 115 Greater White-fronted Geese at HL.

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MARCH BIRD REPORT (Cont'd)

Backyard Birds: Margy Terpstra has posted daily reports on MoBirds of the development of the Great Horned owl in her yard. Kraig Paradise reported Carolina Wren and 2 Cedar Waxwings at his home on 3/24. Sherry McCowan had an Oregon Junco on 3/19 in Soulard. An American Tree Sparrow was spotted by Connie Alwood on 3/22 in Ferguson, and in the woods behind his yard, he watched a Great Horned Owl and a Red-tailed Hawk fighting over a mouse that one had caught. Margie Richardson has had a Red-breasted Nuthatch visiting her yard all winter, and an occasional pair of Cooper's Hawks. Another Red-breasted Nuthatch has wintered in Pat Lueders' yard. Jeannie Moe had a Pine Siskin in St. Charles on 3/7. When a group working on the prairie at Hwy. 40 and Lindbergh disturbed 3 voles, a Red-tailed Hawk swooped down three times to snatch each one, completely oblivious to the people (Kraig Paradise).

Contributors: Gail Ahumada, Edna Alexander, Connie Alwood, Nick Barber, Paul Bauer, David Becher, Torrey Berger, Rose Ann Bodman, Dennis Bozzay, Mike Brady, Chris Brown, Jackie Chain, Shawn Clubb, Dick Coles, Dan Curran, Joe Eades, Pat Harrison, Dottie Herwig, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, Les Jenkins, Margaret Johnson, John Loomis, Jim & Charlene Malone, Anne McCormack, Sherry McCowan, Mark Mittelman, Jeannie Moe, Kraig Paradise, Mark Paradise, Mark Peters, Mick Richardson, David Rogles, Eric Schuette, Scott Schuette, John & Nancy Solodar, Margy Terpstra, Josh Uffman, Steve Vogel, and Jim Ziebol. An asterisk means "documented". Please submit sightings by the last day of the month to Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372) or Yvonne Homeyer (homeyer@earthlink.net).

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

BOOKS I'VE ENJOYED RECENTLY – Jim Adams

Mercator, The Man Who Mapped the Planet – Nicholas Crane, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 397 pages (2003)

About Gerardus Mercator, a Flemish cobbler's son, who made good despite war, plague, and the Inquisition. He participated in the mapping of America and devised a new method – a 'projection' – of converting the spherical world into a two-dimensional map. He constructed the two more important globes of the sixteenth century, and the title of his 'modern geography', the *Atlas*, became the standard name for a book of maps. He was born in 1512 and died in 1594, extraordinary longevity for the period in which he lived. The first part of life was devoted to learning, experimentation. Later in life he withdrew to his Rhenish sanctuary and concentrated on the works that would bring him timeless fame.

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BOOKS I'VE ENJOYED RECENTLY (Cont'd)

Exploration and Empire – The Explorer and the Scientists in the Winning of the American West – William H. Goetzmann – History Book Club reprint and a Francis Parkman Prize Edition, 656 pages plus index (1966/2006)

This remarkable book covers all explorations of the West after Lewis and Clark, beginning with Alexander von Humboldt's exploration of California ca. 1810. All major explorations by individuals, such as Jedediah Smith and the many surveys/explorations sponsored by military and government agencies are included. I had wondered about the numerous Humboldt place names in California; now I understand. The Pacific Railway Survey expeditions are covered, along with Clarence King's 40th Parallel Survey and John Wesley Powell's two traverses of the Grand Canyon. (Not covered is the 49th Parallel Survey in 1872 by a joint American-British Border Commission Survey team. The terrain was fearsome and unbelievable swarms of mosquitos made this a very difficult undertaking. Dr. Elliott Coues, ornithologist and Army surgeon, participated in this survey as a naturalist.)

Little Brown Brother – How the United States Purchased and Pacified the Philippine Islands at the Century's Turn – Leon Wolff – History Book Club reprint and a Francis Parkman Prize Edition, 383 pages (1960/2006)

The almost unknown tale of the dirty little war that followed the Spanish American War. (160,000 American soldiers involved at peak, and 4,500 deaths). Filipino forces suffered c. 20,000 loses, and about 250,000 civilians were killed.

Of Moths and Men: An Evolutionary Tale – The Untold Story of Science and the Peppered Moth - Judith Hooper – W. W. Norton & Co., New York (2002)

The night-flying peppered moth, *Biston betularia*, became one of the most famous insects in history. It was hailed as Darwin's missing evidence: as the skies over England darkened from coal smoke during the Industrial Revolution, the heretofore light colored moth turned dark. The darkening was attributed to "survival of the fittest": the lighter colored moths were easier for birds to spot and hence the species became progressively darker, and lightened up in color again as the skies were cleared because of stringent anti-pollution laws.

The book describes the efforts of an amateur British lepidopterist, Dr. H.B.D. Kettlewell, to "prove" the correctness of the theory through controlled scientific experiments in the English countryside in 1953. . Read the details, and also the criticism of the experiments which argue against the conclusions drawn by Dr. Kettlewell, in this interesting book.

Wisdom from an E-mail message trailer: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is therefore not an act, but is a habit." Aristotle

Webster Groves Nature Study Society – Founded 1920
GROUP ACTIVITY/WALK SCHEDULES
 April 2006 Update

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

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

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

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

ORNITHOLOGY – SUNDAY BIRD WALKS

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

April 23, 2006	Boone's Crossing (Take Hwy 40/I64 to the Boone's Crossing Exit in Chesterfield Valley. Take a right at the light at the top of the ramp and you will quickly come to a T at the north outer road. Go left, west, 2.3 miles to the Chesterfield Recreation Center and park in the lot there. The parking lot for the Boone's Crossing unit of the Big Muddy Refuge has space for only six cars, and we will carpool to that lot from the Chesterfield Recreation Area. For more information, call John Solodar (314) 862-5294)	8 AM	John Solodar
April 30, 2006	Tower Grove Park Meet at Gaddy Bird Garden	8 AM	Bailey & Garcia
May 7, 2006	Riverlands E.D.A. Meet at the Teal Pond Parking Lot (Cont'd next page)	8 AM	C. Alwood

May 14, 2006	Tower Grove Park	8 AM	S. McCowan
Meet at Gaddy Bird Garden			
May 28, 2006	Busch C. A.	8 AM	T. Parmeter
Meet at Headquarters Parking Lot			

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

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

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

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

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

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

SPECIAL NOTICE *SPECIAL NOTICE *SPECIAL NOTICE

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

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

Call The Nature Line!

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

Nature Notes Deadline and Mailing Info.

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

NN Deadline	Mailing Party
Fri 5/5	Mon. 5/15

Next Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 7, 7 PM, at the University Club Tower, 1034 South Brentwood. We meet in the conference room near the elevator on the 15th floor. The Board encourages members to attend. Come see your Board in action! (NO MAY MTG.)

Publication Policy

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

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Society Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions? Call Margy at 314-966-4582

RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY, APRIL 24

I would like Spring Banquet Reservations for _____ persons

@ \$25 per person = _____

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

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

Membership categories (circle one):

Individual or Household.....\$20

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

Student.....\$10

May, 2006

Please mail this form with check to:

Treasurer: Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook
Lane, St. Louis, MO 63132

Make check payable to Webster
Groves Nature Study Society