

The purpose of the ONPS is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma native plants.



Volume 7 Number 3 Fall 1992

## Jaillardia

The Oklahoma Native Plant Society Newsletter

## Sixth Annual Meeting

The ONPS Annual Meeting and field trips will be headquartered on the Northwestern Oklahoma State University campus in Alva on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 3-4.

Registration will be from 9:00 am until noon on Saturday in the Science Building. At 1:00 p.m. there will be a field trip to the Cimmaron Sand Dunes. At approximately 4:30, a brief business meeting is scheduled and election of officers. Saturday evening there will be a dinner with awards presented and a speaker. The dinner will be in the Student Union.

Sunday morning the group will breakfast together and have a field trip that will last as long as participants can stay.

Fees for registration, dinner and breakfast will be about \$17.00.

Members will have already received a registration form and list of area motels. If you did not receive the special mailing, and would like to participate, please call Paul Nighswonger at (405) 327-2752, or Ruth Boyd at (405) 872-9652.

## Inside this issue:

Bog Tripping • Wild Orchid finds • Rocky Mtn. Flora • Two views on "landscaping" (pg. 6) • and more!

## 1992-1993 Officer Nominees

A nominating committee consisting of Betty Kemm, Tulsa, Chair; Susan Chambers, Oklahoma City; and Paul Nighswonger, Alva, present the following slate of officers for your consideration for next year:

> President Secretary Treasurer Historian

Ruth Boyd, Noble Vice-President Paul Buck, Tulsa Patricia Folley, Noble Rebecca Ovrebo, Edmond Marjorie Franklin, Oklahoma City

**Board members** for 1993-1995:

Connie Taylor, Durant Danny Wann, Poteau

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting on October 2 (see above).

> Copy & art deadline for next Gaillardia: Dec. 1.

## Black Mesa calendar note

The schedule of events for this year as determined by the Board of Directors included a 4-day trip to Black Mesa State Park in late May. We found, however, that the youth camp had to be reserved a vear in advance, so we went instead to the Clayton Lake area for three days.

We have now reserved the camp near Black Mesa for the Memorial Day weekend in 1993. Details will be carried in later communications, but please mark your calendars.

**Ruth Boyd** 

## Conservation Corner -- by Nora Jones Bog Tripping

Imagine. You push through a towering thicket of horsetails, ancient plants that swish as you part them. Or you pluck a floating fern from mucky waters while you learn about predatory bladderworts flowering nearby. You sample the peppery nonnative watercress growing in a cold spring and smell the pungent composite Pluchea.

Dr. Ron Tyrl's wetland plant students experienced all this and much more as we toured some prime aquatic habitats in southeastestern Oklahoma. I say "toured," but this is too delicate a word. We really got into the habitat as we slogged along muddy banks, jumped up and down on quaking mats, or sank ankle-deep or deeper in the muck. Everett Laney (from the Corps of Engineers) joined Ron in plunging in chest deep to retrieve submergent plants.

ONPS members know that Ron is a wonderful teacher and field trip leader. He is tolerant of endless questions, and he helps students learn by injecting "pizzazz" into rote learning. Can we ever forget the difference between Virginia and Canada Wild Rye (Elymus virginicus and E. canadensis) respectively? Not if we remember that the Virginia Wild Rye has bowlegged glumes like Owen Wister's cowboy character.

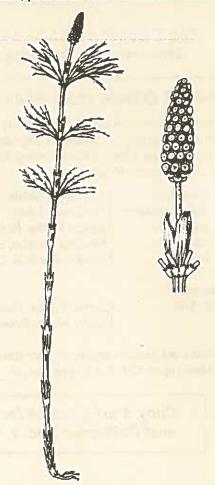
## Orchid find a highlight

Our class included Bruce Smith, a plant taxonomist and biology teacher from McCloud. Bruce likes lower plants, although he did light up when we found a lovely population of the Yellow Fringed Orchid (Habenaria or Platanthera ciliaris). This is the orchid that won Jim Norman top prize in a past ONPS photo contest. This plant makes all the mucking about worth it.

Bruce showed us the reproductive structures of the Horsetails (*Equisetum hyemale*) we found downstream of the spillway at Lake Murray. Bruce said we needed to remember four S's: the plant itself is a sporophyte, and its reproductive structures are the strobilus (the cone atop the stem), the sporangiaphores which bear the sporangia which bear the spores. Bruce shook out a mass of green spores from ripe sporangia.

Horsetails have hollow stems reminiscent of bamboo. Whorls of leaves are found at each segment. although the leaves in E. hyemale are much reduced. These plants formed the understory of forests 400 million years ago as amphibians were just emerging from ancient wetlands. Ron led the more musically inclined in a salute to Pan after he showed how to make whistles from the Horsetail stems. Native Americans, pioneers and modern day campers use the silicon rich stems to scour dishes clean, hence the common name. "Scouring Rushes."

Another day we went to Forked Lake, part of the Little River National



Wildlife Refuge. Forked Lake boasts a fine stand of Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). This is one of but a few sites in the state to have a natural population, although Bald Cypress has been successfully planted in other areas of the state. We were on the lookout for alligators which have been reported there but unfortunately we did not see any.

As much fun as the class was, there are serious considerations associated with wetlands. Humans have modified or destroyed most wetland habitats. Wetlands provide water, shelter and corridors for many plants and animals. Without wetlands much of the diversity of our state would be lost. So getting into wetlands is an important part of saving our natural heritage.

Protecting our natural heritage involves inventorving and monitoring sites. But at lease one important wetland site in the state has not recently been studied by botanists. This is Ferndale Bog, part of McGee Creek National Scenic Recreation Area in Atoka County. The area is managed by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, but our assistance is welcome. Ferndale Bog has wilderness designation but may need special management if it has rare plants which apparently rely on disturbance, such as the Least Pipewort (Eriocaulon komickianum). Mike Palmer, my co-chair on the Conservation Committee, and I would like to invite interested volunteers to do a botanical inventory of Ferndale Bog next spring and summer. Let us know if you are interested in this important project.

At left, horsetail (Equisetum sylvatic strobilus-bearing shoot, and a strobilus with whorls of sporangiophores Swink, Battiest, Honobia, Tom.

How do those names grab you? They're just some of the stops we made August 8 while searching for orchids in southeastern Oklahoma during the ONPS field trip.

"Orchids in Oklahoma! You gotta be kidding!" That's the response I often get when the subject comes up. But, according to Dr. Larry Magrath, Oklahoma's leading orchid authority, there are some 30 species of wild orchids that are known to grow in Oklahoma.

There were 21 of us -- members and guests -- from all across the state, and we had gathered at Raymond Gary State Park, just east of Hugo, in order to search out some of the several species of orchids that are native to the humid southeast corner of the state.

Our trip began on an exciting note. Someone discovered a nice, big, timber rattlesnake laying peacefully at the base of a tree. Obviously engorged with a rat, rabbit or some other rodent, it only half-heartedly rattled its warning as several of us gathered around for some not-tooclose-up photos. I was pleasantly surprised that no one insisted we kill it, which could have been easily accomplished, so we left it in peace -one very lucky rattler. But I digress.

The Yellow Fringed Orchid plant stands 2 to 3 feet tall, and is topped with a 4 or 5-inch cluster of about 50, inch-sized, deeply fringed yelloworange flowers. This orchid is arguably the most beautiful wildflower in Oklahoma. At least, that's been my opinion since I first saw it growing near Schooler Lake in Choctaw County in 1946. Since then, I've returned in early August, in an almost annual pilgrimage, to see how they look, fearful each time that the boggy wetland they occupy will have drained and cleared to make way for the never-ending, all-consuming pine tree industry.

Some of the other plants observed here were: sensitive and cinnamon ferns, smooth alder, farkleberry. Chionanthus, chinkapin, cedar elm,

Back on U.S. 70, en route to Idabel for lunch, we made a stop in the town of Valliant to admire and contemplate the age of a mammoth willow oak whose dimensions so far exceed those of the present state champion that I'm confident this one is a winner. When I first noticed and stopped to measure this big oak in February, there were a couple of young horned owls glaring down at us from their nest-cavity in the top of the truck.

During our lunch stop at my

favorite restaurant, the Catfish King in Idabel, someone expressed a desire to see the palmetto. What few dwarf palmettoes I've seen in the state were south of Tom, almost to the Red River, in the Gulf Coastal Plain Region. So we headed south among the loblolly pines of the **Ouachita National Forest, toward** Tom and the Red River. But on the way, I had to show them Bokhoma Campground, which I consider one of the beauty spots of the whole area. Here, on the pretty little lake, we examined water-shield, with its gelatinous-coated stems and undersides, and Utricularia, with its floating yellow blooms and tiny carnivorous bladders. Along the edge was a stand of bright blue-flowered Hydrolea.

Well, eventually we did get south through Tom, where, thanks to Sallie Webb of Broken Bow we were able to see one long palmetto growing. believe it or not, just two feet off of the paved highway #87! Unfortunately, many of these scarce plants are being stripped to decorate various churches in the vicinity for Palm Sunday.

Suddenly it dawned on me (and probably everyone else) that it was getting late in the day and we still hadn't seen the other two orchids I'd promised earlier. So we hastily headed north through Idabel and Broken Bow, and finally turned west off U.S. 259 and on, finally, to park at a wooded bottomland just west of the Choctaw settlement of Battiest, Here we had only to step out of the cars and into the woods to see dozens of blooming Tipularia, the crane-fly orchid, and the equally numerous, low-growing Triphora, or three-birds -- all of these growing up through a veritable carpet of partridgeberry.

By now it was really time to go our separate ways, and so we did.

## With apologies to Photo Contest winners:

Corrections regarding "contest winners" published incorrectly in the Summer 1992 Gaillardia... winners are:

AMATEUR CLOSE-UP

1st Place - David Willard, Tulsa

2nd Place - D.A. Nunneley, Sand Springs

3rd Place - Donald "Chip" Cooper, Bristow

(Above names were totally left out of the article.)

ADVANCED CLOSE-UP

1st Place - Jennifer Lindsey, Sapulpa

2nd Place - Ruth Miller, Sand Springs

3rd Place - Bob Lindsey, Sapulpa

(The above names were listed in the article as AMATEUR CLOSE-Pointed out by Sue Amstutz

UP winners.)

Photo Committee

## 2 Thoughts from the Rockies: August, 199

Vice President Paul Buck at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory on the Colorado Western Slope

field equipment and meager belongings and head back In a very few days it will be time to pack my books, Rocky Mountain Flora course at the Rocky Mountain down to the plains. Another summer presenting a Biological Laboratory on the western slope of the Colorado Rockies is drawing to a close.

are all very eager to learn more of the earth upon which been particularly delightful due to the stimulating young the world in the care of these students it would be safe they live. I have the feeling if it were possible to leave people gathered here as students. It is obvious they -- they are aware of carrying capacities, the need for beautiful, magic places to be, but this summer has This part of the Rockies, and the laboratory, are species diversity and ecosystem stability and are clearly gentle with their Mother Earth.

Perhaps with young people like these there is the

become extinct due to generation would not disease ravaging an overly dense human widespread overnuclear conflict or pollution, a global chance a future population.

up the mountain above Although not very long, place. I've just walked to which I have invited special to me and one place, one that is very 've nestled down in a activities. Once here dense growth of field Enough! These are the lab to an isolated any sight or sound of this special time and pletely isolated from horsetail on a small not the thoughts for enough to be comridge, am leaning humans or their very few people. the hike was far

looking out over a view so beautiful it would be impossible to describe it accuratedly.

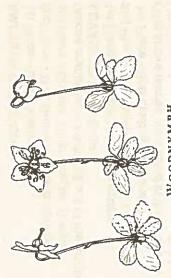
To my right is a small mountain stream trickling down that appear to be quite old have become established. I inds of low willows. Wherever there is an accumulawere here when Lewis and Clarke made their "Journey tion of drier soil amid the willows, large spruce and firs the slope to join a large beaver pond perched on the Discovery" into the Louisiana Territory in the early suspect many of these trees, plus the beaver pond, shelf below. Due to beaver activity the soil on the ige is saturated and is covered mostly by dense 1800s. <u>e</u> Sta

Gazing down on the willows they appear to be bordered by a brilliant band of blue, a dense population ranchers for their poisonous nature, and yet even they of fringed gentians in full flower. The gentians are at gentians are the much taller, late summer blooming purple larkspurs and Monkshoods, despised by the their flowering peak and I am blessed to be able to share this special day with them. Mixed with the will speak to the beauty.

ELEPHANTELLA

roughly over the rocks, except perhaps during spring snow melt. As a result of its gentle nature, soil has The little stream is not large nor does it tumble least three additional gentians, the Little, Star presence of the minute speedwell and mixed banks. Tiny flecks of bright blue betray the Parnassus, elephantella, saxifrages and at accumulated along its length and an abundance of beautiful flowers line the narrow with it are Monkey flowers, Grass of and Bottle gentians.

Today in one small, moist, very special area observe five species of orchids, four in flower under a cluster of spruce and fir trees t



WOODNYMPH

Englemann spruce and

MONKSHOOD

against a young

flower, two pyrolas and the wood nymph, two species of Bishop's cap with minute sometimes called "Shy Maiden" for the flower is always turned away from the sented by several true saxifrages and flowers just as beautiful. Three memviewer. The saxifrage family is reprebers of the wintergreen family are in and one in fruit. But there are other

Of course, I've taken photographs as a flowers so beautiful they must be seen to be appreciated.

in the mountains, but they cannot tell the

STAR GENTIAN

way to share some of this small garden

am coming back down on the plains but I'll return to this and listen to the wind through the trees and eventually experience the deep feeling you are one with nature. duties, real and imagined, of a faculty member. Yes, story. One must be here to sit quietly is time to leave, to return for a few more days to the small bit of heaven, if not in this life, in the next

similar isolated nature gardens in Oklahoma that are as beautiful? One day we must pack a lunch and visit one Incidentally, have I told you I know of a number of together. 🌣

Line drawings from Ruth Nelson's Rocky Mountain Wildflower

## Contributions to Memorial Funds

made one or more contributions to the Anne Since November, 1991, the following have Long Fund:

Dorothy Thompson Dianne McGee Jeanne Fowler Nora Jones Anonymous Ruth Boyd

1992, the following have made one or more contributions to the Barclay Fund: During the same period, ending 10 August,

Ed and Elsie Nelson Leila Schultz D.E. Phillips Nora Jones Pat Bergey Ruth Boyd Paul Buck

ONPS gratefully acknowledges these generous contributions; they become part of on-going memorials to individuals who embodied the ideals of ONPS.

In future newsletters, contributions received since the Fall issue will be acknowledged.

# Patterns in nature using Phyllotaxy -- by Linda Watson

one of three definite ways: 1) if they are paired at the and 3) where only a single node, close inspection will same height, one on each alternate arrangement the complete turn of the spiral than two are found at the case alternate. With the number of leaves in each side of the twig, they are opposite; 2) when more arranged in spirals about show that the leaves are whorled or verticillate; eaf is attached at each the twig and are in this is important since it is same node, they are determination of the

should not be used; and the inspection In determining spiral phyllotaxy, the season's growth. Neglecting to count and including the upper leaf, and also two leaves are chosen, one of which lwig is held in a vertical position and chosen, ascend the spiral and count deformed, or very slow growth twigs the number of leaves passed, up to applies to all members of the same note the number of complete turns directly above the other; twisted, the lower leaf of the two leaves should be confined to a single made around the twig. family. often the same throughout Leaves are arranged in

as the denominator. If this is done, it will be found that one of the following numerator and the number of leaves using the number of turns as the A fraction may then be formed fractions has resulted:

first three are common in broad-leaved simplest arrangement and results in a some of the conifers. The 1/2 phylloalders, while the 2/5 is found in many the leaves. The 1/3 type is typical of trees including the oaks and poplars. so-called "two-ranked" placement of 1/2, 1/3, 2/5, 3/8, 5/13, 8/21 ... The trees; the higher fractions occur in taxy typical of elm and birch is the S

are added, the result is the next higher applies to all the rest of the members immediately evident in this series. If respectively, of the first two fractions same as the denominator of the first, Several peculiar relationships are as one ascends the scale; also, the the numerators and denominators, raction of the series, and this rule that of the fourth the same as the numerator of the third term is the

a genus and sometimes

(Cont. on pg. 7)

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## Why the native plant industry is doomed -- by John J. Clegg

Letter to the editor of Native Plant Society of Texas' NEWS

For years we have been trying to promote native plants for use in the landscape on the basis on their low-maintenance, low water use, and low cost characteristics. We have assumed that home landscapes were functional and that homeowners were rational in their selection of plants. After years of dealing with homeowners, code enforcement officials, landscapers, and nurserymen, I have come to believe that we have overlooked the function of the home landscape as a conspicuous display of wealth.

We owe the concept of the Doctrine of Conspicuous Consumption to a turn-of-the-century economist named Thorstein Veblen. Veblen argued that only a modest amount of income was necessary to satisfy basic human needs, and that any disposable income beyond that was totally devoted to a quest for status.

"One's neighbors, mechanically speaking, often are socially not one's neighbors, or even acquaintances; and still their transient good opinion has a high degree of utility. The only practicable means of impressing one's pecuniary ability on these unsympathetic observers of one's everyday life is an unremitting demonstration of ability to pay.

"By further habituation to an appreciative perception of the marks of expensiveness in goods, and by habitually identifying beauty with reputability, it comes about that a beautiful article which is not expensive is accounted not beautiful. In this way it has happened, for instance, that some beautiful flowers pass conventionally for offensive weeds...". (Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class)

The consumer of home landscape plants is often the same person who has become accustomed to buying clothes on the basis of fashion. Decision to purchase a plant is often made on the basis of appearance in the nursery, a recent magazine article, or the use of the plant by someone in a social class to which the consumer aspires. It is interesting that the economics of the nursery industry are such that if a nurseryman sells you a plant that lives he is out of business. If he sells you a plant that dies, he can sell you the same plant next year.

The concept of the mowed lawn has become such a religious concept enshrined in city codes that its origins are cloaked in mystery. At one time the lawn was exclusively limited to the very wealthy and was maintained by gangs of peasants with scythes and hand shears. The average person had little buffer between his door step and the street, where the accumulation of animal manure, garbage, and chamber pot contents was ground to a fine powder by passing hooves and was blown into doors and windows by any breeze. Consequently, the lawn was a powerful status symbol. The invention of the mechanical mower has not only made the lawn available to everyone, but it also employs huge armies of otherwise unemployable people mowing vast stretches of land for which there is no reasonable justification.

In summary, it seems to me that low cost, low maintenance landscapes will continue to be perceived as undesirable and that homeowners will continue to use their landscapes as a means of displaying wealth. The middle class will continue to toil on weekends to make their landscape appear as if they could afford a gardener.

## A Backyard Fence -- by Rebecca Ovrebo

We live up-drainage from a little pond, in a wooded area. The backyard is enclosed by a chainlink fence. I don't particularly like fences and a chainlink fence is distinctly unsightly. We have considered planting shrubs to hide it but it is in a drainage easement that leads to the pond; storm drainoff can come through in tremendous volume; we hear that in years past several vines and others have volunteered. This summer, at least, we've been successful and our evesore has become a dynamic, iinteresting landscape -- almost pretty.

We planted passion flower (Passiflora incarnata L.) which has a

lovely blue-purple clock-face flower and clematis (*Clematis sp.*, some horticultural variety) which also has an attractive blue flower. One vine that has volunteered is a tiny gourd (*Melothria pendula L.*) with a little yellow flower and a correspondingly tiny melon-type fruit. A second is a member of the buckwheat family (*Polygonum scandens L.*) which has a small white flower and a winged fruit typical for that family. There is also some sort of a bindweed/morning glory but that hasn't flowered.

The volunteers haven't added much color, either because of the absence or small size of the flower, but they add a lot of interest when

you look at them closely -- and they nearly hide the ugly metal fence.

We'll continue to add to our fence next summer and try to turn it into an asset instead of an eyesore. I'd like to add trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans* L. Seem.) that does so well in central Oklahoma that it should do well for us.

Now that I look at our fence in an entirely new light, there's lots of potential.

Rebecca Ovrebo is professor, Rose State Colleg

## Patterns (from pg. 5)

denominator of the second, etc.

The Italian mathematicisn Leonard Fibonacci (circa 1170-1230) proposed the series 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55...The numerators of the leaf arrangement series fit this pattern. Early botantists seeking to understand spiral phyllotaxy used this sequence and the principles of spirals of Archimedes to form what may be called the fractional Fibonacci series used above. Even though leaves of some plants show considerable deviation from the theoretical arrangement, they certainly do not occur in a haphazard fashion, but rather with almost mathematical precision.

More than a thousand years before Fibonacci, the ancient Greeks were interested in spiral leaf arrangement, and also observed some of the many other spirals found through nature. Actually, Fibonacci had rediscovered one of the 20 proportional series of Pythagoras (550 B.C.) Early geometricians were fascinated by the properties of the rectangle. Architects and artists experimented with rectangles of different shapes and finally decided that the most "ideal" one, most pleasing to the eye, had sides with a ratio of approximately 1:1.618. In the higher numbers of the Fibonacci series beginning with ...34, 55..., dividing the smaller into the larger 55/34 results in 1.618 or close to it. This was the first "golden triangle" famous throughout history. 🛣

## o the editor: a bit of history

The background on the Wildflower Workshop in the summer issue of *Gaillardia* was interesting, but stated that the Workshop was begun and planned by the State Garden Club with Dept. of Transportation (DOT) participation coming along three years later.

On behalf of the many DOT people who worked so hard on that first wildflower workshop, I thought you might be interested in the following:

The first workshop was held in 1977 in Tulsa and was very much a partnership project with the Department of Transportation locating half of the speakers, plus writing, printing and mailing the workshop flyers. DOT prepared biographies on all the speakers and prepared and printed the program. A display of wildflower photographs was prepared and erected by DOT. The eight-foot tall free standing panels held large 16 x 20" and 24 x 35" mounted photographs that attracted much attention. It was similar to a display shown in the Capitol Building that same year. DOT did all publicity, too.

The program listed the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Oklahoma Garden Clubs,

Inc., and the Tulsa Garden Center as sponsors but the hard-working workshop committee also included many people who were just interested in wildflowers and did not belong to any of the sponsoring groups. In fact, the Chairman of the first Wildflower Workshop was NOT a Garden Club member but a botanist, the late Anne Long of Tulsa.

The field trip had seven buses full of enthusiastic wildflower buffs and even a flat tire did not dampen their interest. Tour leaders were Dr. Harriet Barclay, Dr. Paul Buck, Anne Long and Russell Studebaker.

Most of the Committee on that pioneering workshop in Tulsa continued to guide the workshops in the following years. In fact, profits from the early workshops were used as the nest egg to found the Oklahoma Native Plant Society. ONPS is now one of the three continuing sponsors of the wild-flower workshop and as was pointed out, supplies all tour leaders and runs the popular wildflower photo contest tha is displayed at the workshop.

Joanne Orr, Beautification Coordinator, Oklahoma Dept. of Transportation

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## **Chapter Notes**

The Central Chapter next meets on Oct. 26 for a special treat by Dr. Paul Minnis, whose subject is "Secret Lives of Ugly Plants." The associate professor of anthropology at O.U. has a keen interest in archeological evidence that some native plants were prehistorically cultivated crops.

Meeting will also include the Chapter's Annual Seed Exchange.

Meet at 7:30, OSU Tech. Center, Oklahoma City.

The Nov. 30 meeting will be same place and time, subject to be announced. No December meeting will be scheduled due to holiday chaos.



The Northeast Chapter met September 10 for Jim Norman's wildflower photography, and will announce monthly meetings thereafter via telephone committee and/ or postcard.

Chapter members volunteered time and work preparing Gaillardia for mailing -- summer and fall issues, as well as proofreading.

## For your calendar

OAS Sept. 25-27 Fall meeting

ONPS

Oct. 3-4

**Annual Meeting** 

**Greenleaf State Park** Connie Taylor, 405-924-5163

Alva

Paul Nighswonger, 405-327-2752

Central Chapter Oct. 26 (SeeChapter Notes)

Oklahoma City Pat Folley, 405-872-8361

Northeast Chapter (See Chapter Notes)

Betty Kemm, 918-742-4351

ONPS Indoor outing Stillwater

Mike Palmer.

405-547-2621 or 744-7717

### The Gaillardia

Feb. 5-6, 1993

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