

The purpose of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma's native plants.

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Winter 1996

**COPY AND ART DEADLINE
FOR NEXT ISSUE IS
15 February 1997**

☛ Contributions from members are welcome!

Gaillardia

The Oklahoma Native Plant Society Newsletter

CALENDAR

Note: the events dated below are identified either by a page number for a fuller description of the event or the name of a person to contact. A complete listing of the names and addresses of all officers, directors and committeepersons is enclosed, on the green insert. Please keep the green sheet with your other address references: it is good for the entire year.

- 9 December 96: NE chapter meets at the garden center at 6:30 for pot-luck dinner. See page 9.
- 18 January 97: NE chapter field trip for trees in winter condition, with Paul Buck. See page 9
- 1 February Indoor Outing; Phillips University, Enid. See gold insert.
- 21-22 February Biodiversity and Native North America: See white insert. (Free to the public)
- 24 February Central Chapter meeting. See page 9
- 5 April Statewide field trip to Boehler Seeps: p. 7
- 9-10 May 97 Wildflower Workshop, Duncan. Save these dates: details will be in Spring 97 Gaillardia.
- 31 May Annual Meeting, The Nature Conservancy, at Pontotoc Ridge Preserve. ONPS will provide field trip leaders. More in Spring issue.
- 7 June Statewide field trip to White Oak Prairie: more in Spring issue.
- 9-11 October Annual meeting, tentatively planned for Roman Nose State Park. Details in Summer issue. Mark your calendar now.

Note: all members are invited to all chapter field trips or meetings, and are encouraged to bring guests. Many field trips are suitable for children: ask first.

ONPS THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTORS

Anne Long Fund: Richard Bradley

Harriet Barclay Fund: Richard Bradley

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPH

by Frank Carl

I hope everybody departed the Annual Meeting as enthused as I have been. The entire event was very well organized, and it seemed as everybody pitched in to help when needed.

A special Thank you to Nora Jones, Mr. Harvey Payne and his staff, especially Sandy Stevens and docents Sue Wheeler, Doris Mayfield and Phyllis Connally (Tallgrass Prairie Preserve). Barry Carpenter with the Nature Conservancy and Jack Jones (with Nora) seemed to be everywhere.

The program, "Crosstimbers of Oklahoma" presented Friday evening by Dr. Bruce Hoagland with the Natural Heritage Inventory, was excellent. The banquet speaker, Dr. Kelly Kindscher, with the Kansas Natural Heritage Program, also made an excellent presentation on "Medicinal Plants of the Prairie". Both men are professionals in their fields and it was an honor to have them address our annual meeting.

The next Executive Board Meeting, scheduled December 7, 1996, has a full agenda, and several important topics will be addressed. Some topics are the annual budget, a calendar of events, field trips, the next annual conference and the scheduled Indoor Outing at Phillips University in Enid during February (details included in this issue of the *Gaillardia*.) Minutes of the December Board Meeting will be included in the March (Spring) issue of the *Gaillardia*.

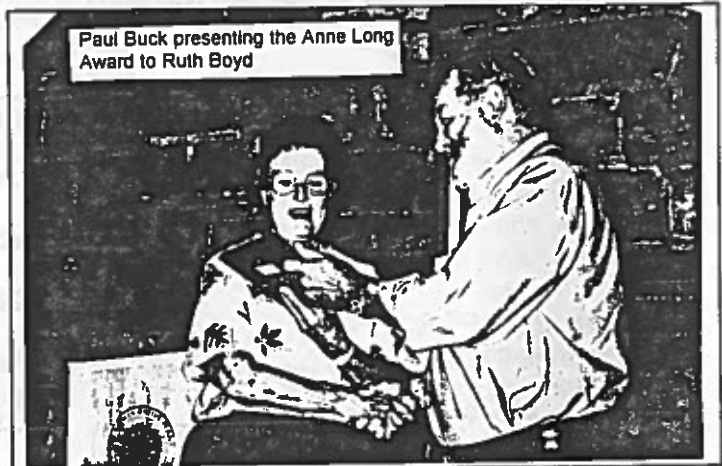
I look forward to working with you during this coming year. I encourage you to attend the Oklahoma Native Plant Society's scheduled events, and I challenge each of you to enroll at least one new member.



Kelly Kindscher, Speaking at the Annual Meeting

by Patricia Folley

Like President Frank Carl, I can't get the magic of that Annual Meeting out of my mind! The Speakers, of course, the Tallgrass Preserve, also of course: but, how about that beautiful setting? Osage Hills State Park is a standout among Oklahoma's all-great state playgrounds. Even the food was great! (This is from the ONPS' official diet-grouch.) Start with the welcoming committee, outside the community building at a table and well-staffed with friendly folks who had time to answer questions and solve problems. Continue with Nora Jones' welcoming remarks, setting a tone of informal good-will that continued through the weekend. Some of us asked what she had to sell to obtain that wonderful weather, but Nora wouldn't tell!



Then Bruce Hoagland chose to talk about the Crosstimbers, interesting in its own right and, as I live among them, a personal favorite. Add Nora's surprise treat of a cake to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the organization of ONPS. I should have been embarrassed to find it accompanied by a birthday cake for myself, but being a total ham, I loved it. Thanks, Nora.

Many years of sharing youth-camp quarters with OAS campers have convinced me of the virtues of bunking with Ruth Boyd, so this year I got there first and picked out her cabin ahead of time — and moved in. Ruth's first act on arrival anywhere is to oil all the squeaky doors (not to mention all the squeaky/cranky people). Next, she fills up that cabin with adult ladies, who go to sleep on time, except for Joanne Orr, who is quiet when creeping in at midnite.

Well, there were field trips and casual walks with friends, the rescue of a tree by Jack Jones and Paul Buck, my adoption of a Polyphemus moth caterpillar which built a cocoon in a paper cup under my bunk overnight, a fun visit to the nearby creek, ostensibly led by Connie Taylor and me, but actually led by Leslie Cole-Jackson's precocious 5-year old son, Cole. What a wonderful world a bright little boy can find!

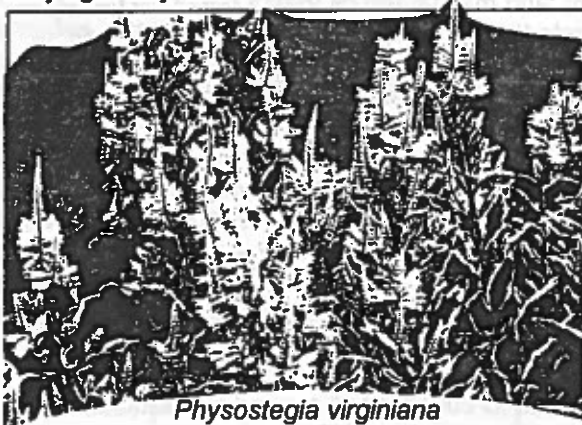
It seems only fitting that this is the year when our best booster, Ruth Boyd, won the Anne Long Award for her outstanding support of the goals of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society.

GARDENING ON THE WILD SIDE

by Susan Chambers

Physostegia virginiana

When autumn blows in, we're usually so ready to put the garden to rest, we will settle for anything in bloom. Traditional fall colors have usually been shades of yellow, orange and red, but there are many fall-blooming perennials in the pastel range. In this group is one of our most common and widespread perennial natives, *Physostegia virginiana*, or false dragonhead. The species is purplish-pink with cultivars available in white through rosy crimson. Height at bloom time (summer through early fall) is about three feet, but spread is something to seriously consider. Given its preferred conditions of moist soil with a slightly elevated pH, it will blaze new territory through and around all other plants in the garden. The cultivars are more subdued and are a better choice for smaller gardens. If your choice is to grow the species, you can inhibit its wandering ways by keeping the soil drier or by planting in very tight clay soil.

*Physostegia virginiana*

The plant itself is very attractive, being dark green and very stout and weather-resistant. It will thrive in full sun to light shade (deep shade encourages weaker stems), with better blooming qualities in higher light conditions. Be aware that the plant will grow taller than normal in more shade; shorter in the sun.

False dragonhead is in the mint family (pretty obvious if you've grown it for a while), so it has the familiar tubular, lipped bloom, about 1½ long. Even after the flowers have passed, the bloom spike is attractive with a squarish pattern of bracts where the petals dropped. The flowers have no scent, but are mildly entertaining, in that if you bend the florets, they will stay bent. This lends the plant another common name, "obedient plant". These interesting little blooms start appearing in mid-summer and will continue up the bloom spike

through early fall, coinciding with some of the earlier *Chrysanthemums* and native asters.

If you've decided you have room in your wild garden or perennial border for this sturdy little plant, getting a start will not be difficult. Divisions can be made in the spring every two or three years. A pair of digging forks can be used to pry sections of the clump apart and lift them out of the ground. Replant at the same soil level and press into the new spot firmly, watering thoroughly. If you would like to try cuttings, take pieces of the stem between 4" and 6" long, with at least 2 nodes (the joint where the leaves are attached). Strip off the lower set of leaves and insert in potting soil, keeping moist until rooted. The cultivars can be started by either of these methods. The species can also be started by seed collected in late fall and sown in damp soil, either where the plants are to grow or in flats in a cold frame or cool window-sill. This is one of those native perennials that is truly easy to start and keep.

[Susan Chambers, with husband Wayne, operates "Red Rock Landscaping" in Midwest City. Both are professional horticulturists and organic gardeners.]

Mini-Review

Walking the Trail, One Man's Journey Along the Cherokee Trail of Tears, by Jerry Ellis. Pub. paperback 1993 by Delta.

You won't find this book in the botany or gardening section of your bookstore or library, but it is interesting as a first-person story of a remarkable attempt to come to terms with a conflicted life, and most Native Plant admirers will find Jerry Ellis a kindred soul. He gets hungry and footsore on his walk against the grain of the late twentieth century, but by the time he figures out what it is that he is walking for, he is able to say "I have gone beyond the point of no return into an odyssey".

Ellis, a part-Cherokee from Alabama, is descended from those Cherokee who escaped the Trail, and when he decides to trace the trail on foot and in person, he starts at the destination, in Tahlequah, and goes east. Along the way he meets other Native Americans, mostly Cherokee, and other Americans, mostly sympathetic, and these encounters become a part of his odyssey. When not visiting with the "friends I haven't met yet" along the way, he discourses with himself and the reader about the land and man's relation to it. "If I think about our environment too much, I become not only sad but outraged", he writes.

Listen to Ellis recalling hunting ginseng as a boy: "When the Cherokee searched for ginseng, they passed the first three plants. They dug the fourth one and placed a bead in the hole to thank the plant spirit. As I walk on I wonder how many such bead offerings hide all around just beneath the surface in the night." When European settlers arrived in North America, ginseng (*Panax quinquefolia*) was common. Now it is an endangered species, carefully guarded, where it survives, by jealous proprietors.

By the time Jerry Ellis arrives at his Alabama home, we are all a little bit Cherokee. Possibly, like Ellis, we are all also a bit more sure of the meaning of home.

CONSERVATION CORNER

(Editor's note: it has been more than 6 months since I had any input from the Conservation Committee. In their absence, here is a reprint of a very fine article published in the November, 1996 edition of the National Council of State Garden Clubs' conservation Newsletter, The Columbine.) it was written by Anukriti Sud.

Saving the Species: the Center for Plant Conservation and the National Effort to Save the Rare Plants of the United States, by Brien A. Meileur, PhD. President and Executive Director.

"The first prerequisite of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces."...Aldo Leopold

Biological diversity, the variety of living organisms on this planet, is a global resource that urgently needs to be preserved. Plants are a central part of this life system; they provide us with food, shelter, clothing, fuel, medicines, the air we breathe, and an incredibly rich and aesthetically pleasing environment in which to live. Plants are also integral parts of natural ecosystems. Functioning ecosystems provide many essential services, such as the regulation of air and water quality, climate moderation, and waste disposal. Although some species may not have a direct use by humans, we need to keep all the pieces of the puzzle, to save as many species as possible, for they may hold clues to preserving our own future and the majority of them stimulate and please us beyond calculation.

Of the 20,000 plant species native to the United States, one out of every ten is in danger of extinction. A national survey completed by the Center for Plant Conservation (CPC) in 1988 found that over three-quarters of the endangered flora of the United States are found in five areas: Hawaii, California, Florida, Texas, and Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. While extinction is a natural process, it is the rate of extinction that is alarming. The causes of plant endangerment are mainly human-induced; population growth that has led to rapid urban development, conversion of wildlands to agricultural and grazing lands, over-collection of "unusual" plants such as pitcher plants, orchids and cacti, and so on. These actions have caused habitat loss and degradation, and plant extinctions.

In the United States, many governmental and non-governmental organizations work together to preserve rare plants. This cooperative effort involves both protecting species where they live (*in situ*) and maintaining conservation collections of rare plants in safe sites (*ex situ*). These off-site plant collections are usually

housed at botanical gardens or in seed and germ plasm banks.

The Role of the Center for Plant Conservation

The Center for Plant Conservation is a national network of 25 leading botanical gardens and arboreta that holds a living collection of many of the most endangered and threatened plants of the U.S. The goal of the Center for Plant Conservation is to conserve the rich, native U.S. diversity of plant life for future generations.

The Center's National Office at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri, provides coordination and support services, while the 25 gardens around the country collect, maintain, and store the plant germ plasm. The primary objectives of the National Office are: (a) to develop the National Collection of Endangered Species and to coordinate the conservation, research and educational projects that are associated with it; (b) to maintain a national database concerning the biology, horticulture, and conservation status of all imperiled native U.S. plants; (c) to work with colleague organizations on collaborative projects combining species-level research, habitat management, and restoration of rare plants in the wild; and (d) to assist U.S. botanical gardens in developing public awareness of plant endangerment and conservation issues.

The National Collection of Endangered Plants

The National Collection is made up of nearly 500 of the rarest plants on this country. The plant material is collected, grown, and maintained by the 25 botanical gardens and arboreta that make up the CPC network. These gardens grow plants that are native to their regions. The plant material is kept in different forms; as cuttings, seeds, and whole plants.

The National collection is a "back up" in case a species should become extinct in the wild. Material from the National Collection has been used by state and federal agencies in their efforts to reintroduce imperiled plants into the wild. The Collection is a resource for scientific study on the nature of rare plants, their life cycles, their germination requirements, and so on. It is also useful in informing people about threatened and endangered plants.

The CPC continues to expand the National Collection. Although about 500 plants are now held in the network, the CPC goal is to remove these species from danger, through cooperative efforts with other organizations, and the National Collection is one of the many tools that help us to achieve this goal.

Sponsorship of the National Collection

The Center for Plant Conservation offers opportunities to sponsor species in the National Collection. Sponsorship provides for the protection and care of a rare plant in perpetuity within one of the 25 participating institutions. For more information about sponsoring a species in the National Collection, or about the Center's efforts, please contact CPC at (314)577-9452

(There follows a list of the participating institutions. The nearest to Oklahoma are in Missouri, Nebraska and Texas)

BOTANY BAY this month is provided by a guest article reprinted from the Newsletter of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society for Fall, 1996. The subject is also native to Oklahoma. This is part of a series by George Ellison entitled "Botanical Excursions"

By George Ellison

QUESTION: What do the following plants have in common: dodder (love vine), mistletoe, squawroot, beechdrops, pinesap, gerardia, one-flowered cancer-root, false foxglove, Indian paintbrush and Indian pipe?

ANSWER: All are partially or totally parasitic on the nutrient systems of other plants.

Mutualism or symbiosis occurs when both species in plant relationship benefit. In commensalism, one species benefits from the alliance while the other is neither harmed nor helped. When a plant is **saprophytic** — as are many fungi — it derives nutrients from dead or decaying organic matter in the soil.

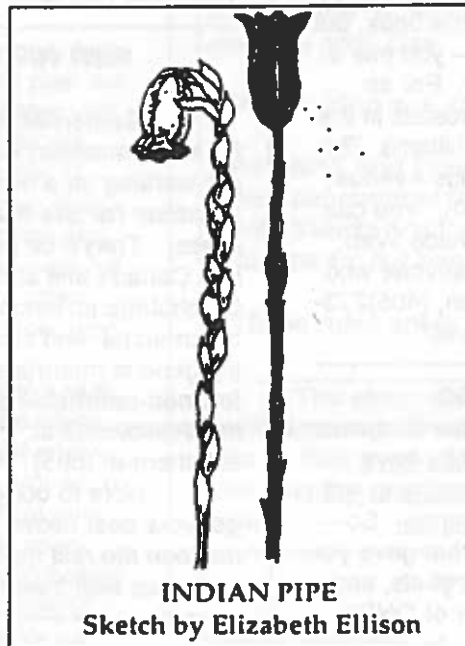
The term **parasite** derives from the Greek word meaning "to eat at another's table." A plant is totally parasitic when it invades another plant in order to obtain all of its food. If a plant derives only a part of its nutrient requirements from a host plant, it is a **hemiparasite**. Mistletoe, for instance, obtains water and mineral ions from host trees, but produces carbohydrate nutrients through the photosynthetic activity of its own prolific green leaves.

Dodder, pinesap, one-flowered cancer-root, beechdrops and Indian pipe do not have green leaves. They are totally parasitic. Many parasites penetrate the host plant's above-ground tissues with a special structure called a haustorium. If you unwind a dodder vine from its host, you can observe these structures, which resemble blunt hypodermic needles.

Others are parasitic on the underground tissues of various plants. Of these, Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) has per-

haps the most interesting life cycle.

These curious three- to eight-inch tall flowers appear from midsummer into fall. When in their prime, Indian pipes are pure white or pinkish with nodding flowers, stems and clasping scaly leaves that have a waxy consistency. Their ghoulish appearance and



INDIAN PIPE

Sketch by Elizabeth Ellison

clammy feel have led some to call them ghost flowers or corpse plants.

As the flower matures, the crook at the top of the stem straightens so that the plant assumes an erect posture, at which time it becomes very tough and turns black. The fruit is a capsule at the top of this blackened stalk with splits down its sides through which fine brown seeds are blown out by the wind.

Indian pipe is considered by most authorities to be a member of the heath family (*Ericaceae*), which includes the

rhododendrons, laurels, wild azaleas, doghobble, blueberries and similar leafy denizens of woodlands and rocky mountain sides. Look closely at an Indian pipe and observe that it adheres to family characteristics in regard to basic structure. Its single terminal bell-like flowering head of five petals strongly resembles that of other heath flowers.

But whereas its cousins have opted for a life in full or partial sunlight, Indian pipe flourishes in dim - almost dark - recesses on the forest floor. To fill this niche it has made some startling adaptations. The most noticeable is that it bypasses the chlorophyll-producing process its brethren thrive upon. To produce chlorophyll a plant requires sunlight and Indian pipe thrives where there is little enough of that.

With its waxy appearance and clammy feel, the plant resembles many mushrooms; indeed, for years it was supposed that Indian pipe was a saprophyte. But recent studies suggest it can exist only in association with a special type of fungus that enables it to be parasitic.

The roots of Indian pipe consist of a hardened ball of tiny brown segments that resemble coral. These segments become tightly interwoven with strands known as mycorrhizal fungi, which live in a mutualistic association with various green plants. According to this scenario, the ensnared fungi serve as a bridge that transfers carbohydrates and mineral ions from the photosynthetic plant to the wily ghost flower.

THIS 'N THAT

HOSTELLING, ANYONE?

by Jane Boren

At the recent meeting at Osage Hills, some of you expressed an interest in information about hostels. There are more than 300 hostels in the United States and Canada which offer comfortable, environmentally sensitive places for budget travelers to spend the night. Rates generally range from \$10-\$18 dollars where I've stayed.

There are two sources of information that I know about. HI-AYH, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 840, Washington DC 20005 (1-800-444-6111) will send a booklet packed with pictures and information about their hostels. A membership fee is required to get the book, but it is not required to stay in hostels -- you pay a little more if you are not a member. For an inexpensive booklet listing all the hostels in the US and Canada call or write Jim Williams, *The Hostel Handbook*, 722 Saint Nicholas Avenue, New York NY 10031 (212-926-7030). You can also find information on the WorldWide Web.

I will be happy to talk with anyone who wants more information: Jane Boren, (405)273-4079.....Thanks, Jane!

INDIVIDUALS ACT, TOO

Sometimes, it seems that the Chapters get all the press. That's because they have someone charged with the responsibility to write the news and forward it to the Gaillardia! So -- if you've done something yourself that gave you an opportunity to further one of our goals, and especially if you did it as a member of ONPS, please let us know.

Some examples:



Susan & Wayne Chambers tending the ONPS booth at the Natural History Museum closing.

Ruth Boyd serves on the advisory board for the about-to-become Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. When the old museum, fondly remembered as the Stovall, closed recently so the staff could

prepare for the move, they held a lawn-party and participation day. Jerry Brown, Susan and Wayne Chambers and Pat Folley were drafted to assist. We had a good time, though the day was windy and cold. We also answered lots of questions about native plants (our booth had sample shrubs and grasses in pots and fruits and nuts for the table). Jerry's neighbor, 8-year-old Christopher Hill, was busy all day demonstrating the table displays. He has a remarkable memory. Pat did one of her slide shows, twice. We also provided materials for a sand-painting booth for kids to decorate a Gaillardia color-book picture.

Another idea: does your school have an Outdoor Classroom? If so, you will probably be very welcome as a helper on a nature walk. Many school teachers have very little education on nature, and those who do, welcome some help. Questions seldom get more technical than "does that bug bite?" or my favorite "are plants alive?"

NEW WASOWSKI BOOK ANNOUNCED
HELP WANTED!

Garden writers Sally and Andy Wasowski (Requiem for a Lawnmower, Native Gardens for Dry Climates, etc.) are working on a new book tentatively titled *Native Gardens for the Prairie States*, (University of Minnesota Press). They'll be traveling throughout the Midwest and into Canada this spring and summer and are on the lookout for photogenic landscapes. These may be residential or commercial, and should be composed of at least 50% indigenous materials. A brief description and if possible, a few non-returnable photos would be appreciated. Contact the Wasowskis at: PO Box 607, Arroyo Seco NM 87514, or call them at (505)776-1499.

Note to our good gardeners: here's your chance to get your best native plant display into the big-time, not to mention the fact that the Wasowskis have been very generous with their time and expertise, and we owe them.

OUR EARTH 2

Medea Langdon, not an ONPS member but a friend of Bonnie Ashing's, sends this note of interest to our members:

OUR EARTH 2: The Second Annual Conference on Sustainable Living. Friday & Saturday, April 19-20, 1997 at Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 104 N. College Ave., Tahlequah, OK. (918)-456-7900. fax (918)456-9576.

The program includes a stellar array of speakers: Sally and Andy Wasowski; Phil Rinaldi (who builds straw-bale homes), Dru Meadows, architect on the Green Team at BSW International in Tulsa, Jim Scott; musician and environmental activist, Chad Smith, Cherokee Nation attorney and builder of a solar envelope home.

Plus, a children's program, art display and sale, and openings for exhibits by commercial or organizational groups with related interests. (Booth rental costs \$25 but includes one admission to the conference) Friday evening program \$10, Saturday Conference \$5; children's program \$5, free child-care.

FIELD TRIPS PAST

FALL FOLIAGE TOUR

Your editor didn't make the Foliage Tour, due to a combination of bad weather the day before and getting old-and-tired, but Connie Taylor forged ahead with her forestry class members and four ONPS members -- all of them from outside Oklahoma. Reports are that the weather was beautiful, and the foliage pretty, but it had apparently peaked a few days earlier. That's Oklahoma weather for you! Thanks to those hardy souls who braved the weather reports and came on anyway, and to Connie Taylor, a "pro" in every respect.

A Homily on Field Trips

by P. Folley

ONPS has two field trip chairmen, both hard-working and very effective. They plan our state-wide spring and fall outings and help with planning of other events when field trips are included. If you have attended a number of these events, you may have noticed that they tend to use Nature Conservancy holdings and State Parks as areas to explore. These are, of course, wonderful places, but they are often used because they are available, and the rules for their use are well-understood.

Once in a while, though, we get a real bonanza, like the Payne County Prairie which Leslie Cole took us to in 1995. This privately-owned and exquisitely beautiful area proved to be one of the most diverse and beautiful wild-flower meadows most of us have ever seen. How did it happen? Leslie remembered having visited the prairie as a child, and was able to find the owner and secure permission for the visit. More such events would enrich our field trip repertoire.

Any ONPS member who has lived in Oklahoma for several years will know of such a place. Most are privately owned, and most would not be available to casual visitors. Our trip leaders welcome suggestions of such opportunities, but as they are busy people, it will help them plan the event if you, who propose use of a site, would first locate the owners and, promising to treat it gently, secure permission for a visit. Our experience has been that owners are often eager to have knowledgeable admirers come to visit, and usually want to accompany us.

After securing permission, then contact either Jeff Burkhart or Nora Jones. They will want to know about the kind of site (whether wooded, prairie, wetland, or dune, for example), any special attractions, and how much parking space could be available. If the special attraction is a wildflower, the season when that wild-

flower will be most attractive will determine the date of visit. Oklahoma is chock-full of such jewels, but we'll never get to see most of them until someone takes the initiative.

FIELD TRIP RULES

> **Pre-registration is now required for all field trips.**

> Announcements will include the name, address, and telephone number of the leader. If you have doubts about terrain, difficult, etc., ask.

> Field trips take place rain or shine. Proper dress and shoes, hat, etc., are essential. Long pants and sleeves are best, as some of the best flowers grow in thickets.

> Bring lunch or a hearty snack and water, unless advised that they will be provided. Sunscreen and insect repellent are always a good idea.

> Participation is at your own risk.

> All ONPS field trips are open to the public at no charge, unless per-member charges are indicated in the announcement. Visitors and friends are always welcome. Many of our field trips are suitable for children. If in doubt, ask.

> **These rules apply to chapter-initiated field trips too.**

The winter quiet-time, when plants sleep and plant-lovers are free to dream about the season to come and write up their notes about the season past, is a good time to think over the great places you'd like to share with a few friends.

SPRING FIELD TRIP

A "fairly firm" date of April 5, 1997 has been set for our spring outing to visit Boehler Seeps and Sandhills Preserve, a strange and beautiful site that is owned and cared-for by The Nature Conservancy's Oklahoma chapter. Many of us have been there before, and we'll be first to sign up to go back, but if you haven't had the privilege, this is a golden opportunity.

Boehler is, however, not a good place for small children or people with difficulty walking. It is a great place for bogs, swamps, seeps, sand-loving plants, and plant-loving people. There are several rare species and many unusual and especially beautiful ones too. Located about 20 miles SE of Atoka, it is well-blessed with snakes and other swampy hazards. Boots or stout shoes and long pants should do it.

Registration required: please let Jeff Burkhart, (phone and address on the green sheet) know you are coming, by contacting him before March 15. There will not be time to put this notice in another issue of the Gaillardia, so be sure to mark the date on your calendar -- you won't want to miss it. A brochure and map will be sent to each registrant, and car-pooling is encouraged.

Quote of note: this appeared in the Native Plant Society of Texas NEWS, by their president, Terry Tate:

As members, we relish the opportunity to learn all we can about native plants and sometimes fall into the habit of letting others, whom we assume are more knowledgeable, bring all our information to us. As we learn more, we should be maturing in our relationship with our plants. A part of that process should be our willingness to begin to share our knowledge with others, and that means increasing our activity. As these opportunities with other organizations begin to unfold, NPSOT must exercise caution to not offer what we are not able to or will not deliver.Don't let all this knowledge you've been absorbing over the years just ferment between your ears -- air it out!



Bruce Hoagland

BOARD MEETING

The ONPS Board met on Saturday, December 7 at St. Stephen's Methodist Church in Norman for its annual day-long planning meeting. A good turnout was enjoyed, despite a conflict with the Flora of Oklahoma board meeting on the same date, and the busy-ness of the season.

As this piece had to be written by the light of midnight oil, it is decidedly not official, but as best I remember, we took care of the usual business of minutes of the last meeting, treasurer's report, etc., and proceeded to plan an outstanding tenth year of activities and events for the Society.

Some of these are described on the two inserts to be mailed with this issue. Plan now to make time for all or most of the activities planned. They are all worth doing, and you can take home a load of information, fun and fellowship from any one.



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Other actions include a new printing of Darlene Michael's book on native woody plants. The price is going up, but it is still a bargain at \$5. This is a popular gift for gardeners and home-owners. Sue Amstutz reported on the wide use and appreciation of the posters, made up from past entries in the photo contest. They are kept busy being displayed in schools, libraries, and civic events statewide.

In other actions, the Board voted to accept the organization of chapters for special interests, in addition to the two local area groups. This is because of a surge of interest in studying the mushrooms and other fungi statewide. We'll keep you posted on the progress of that group. Anyone interested in a chapter for Sedgeheads? The Board also agreed to obligate funds for the duplication of enough slides to make up three carousels which can be loaned, with accompanying text or tape, to interested school, garden club or civic groups. More about that later, too, and expect a demonstration at the Indoor Outing in February.



The Welcoming Committee

The snapshots on this page were made at the Annual Meeting in October. Hurry Spring!

NE CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

by Betty Kemm

NEXT MEETING: (Sorry Betty, but this meeting will be history by the time the Gaillardia comes out: written up as it was submitted.)

Monday, December 9. This was originally scheduled for December 2, but reset because of a conflict with Garden Center schedules. We will meet at 6:30 for a pot-luck supper. Bring something to share -- salad, main dish, dessert or bread or crackers. Drinks, plates, utensils are provided. The program will begin about 7:30. The speaker is Ralph Lindgren from Joplin, Missouri. Ralph is an active member of the Northeast Chapter. He will show slides of Missouri wildflowers and his special interest -- wild orchids.

WINTER FIELD TRIP: Dr. Paul Buck will lead a winter three identification field trip on Saturday, January 18, with an alternate date of February 15 in case of bad weather. Meet at Oxley Nature Center in Mohawk Park at 1:00 p.m. to confirm that the trip is on, call Paul at 743-3397 or Betty at 742-4351.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: March 10, 7:30 p.m. at the Tulsa Garden Center.

CENTRAL CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

by former Chairlady, Ruth Boyd

When this column was written for the last newsletter announcing our September program to be presented by "personnel of Blue Thumb Water Quality Service", this reporter had not heard of that organization. Since they provide such a vital service for Oklahoma and there may be others as ignorant as I, here's a brief description of what they try to do.

Blue Thumb is a cooperative agreement between Oklahoma's Conservation Districts, OK Cooperative Services, National Resource Conservation Service, OK Conservation Commission and the EPA. Its mission is to educate the citizens of Oklahoma how each of us can keep our water clean. The watch words are not the familiar "when it rains, it pours", but "when it rains, it drains".

Laura Pollard of the OK City Conservation district presented our program, which began with a short video depicting how ordinary, usually caring, but uninformed people pollute the water system daily while going about our usual household, yard and automotive chores. We all learned lessons from the film, particularly what we all do it in some form or other and it is not just large corporations and golf courses!

Blue Thumb has numerous free brochures available, among them, "Private Water Well Construction and Protection", "Flea Control in the Home and Yard", "Alternative Insecticides", "Fertilizing Your Lawn: A Homeowner's Guide", "Household Hazardous Waste: What You Should and Shouldn't Do" and "Healthy Lawn -- Healthy Environment".

For more information or to arrange a program for a group, contact OKCity Conservation District, (405)84-THUMB, Tulsa Co. Conservation District at (918)744-1595, or your local conservation district or cooperative extension office.

28 of us were present at the OKC Horticulture Center on September 30 to hear Laura Pollard talk about Blue Thumb. We all learned valuable lessons that we can use to help protect our water system by just using common sense and a little education. There was also a small plant and seed exchange, but as most seeds were not yet mature, it was decided to do it again in late October.

There were 32 native plant/mushroom enthusiasts to hear Dr. Clark Ovrebo of the biology faculty at Central State University as he gave an excellent program on the common mushrooms of Oklahoma and a few exotic ones from here and other locations. The slides were magnificent. Special emphasis was placed on what is edible and what is not, and the difficulty of determining that in the field. This cautious reporter was amazed to find out how many there are that regularly gather and eat wild fungi.

A more successful seed and plant exchange was conducted and the '95 Photo Contest posters were on display.

The eagerly awaited November meeting with Pat Folley's beautiful slides of "OK Wildflowers: The Shy, The Rare, and the Wonderful" was called on account of an ice storm. As it turned out, most of the ice was gone by meeting time the next day, but the prospects had been grim when the decision had to be made on Sunday so that members could be reached by phone. Our sincere apologies to anyone who went and found us missing. With a loose organization like ours, you can only attempt to notify the core group of regulars. Pat Folley thanks those who provided answering machines, thus eliminating call-back time.

Vaughn Smith has been in the hospital for knee surgery. We've missed him lately -- now we know why. Vaughn, we hope you're soon up and about.

We were all pleased to have such a good turnout of Central Chapter members at the annual meeting. The entire weekend will remain as one of many outstanding outings in the history of this society.

The Central Chapter traditionally does not meet in December as the last Monday of the month is our regular meeting time. In January we skip our own to encourage members to attend the Indoor Outing. Pat's program has been rescheduled for Monday, February 24, at 7:30.

THE SHY, THE RARE, AND THE WONDERFUL

by Patricia Folley

It is my hope that this program (see the Central Chapter report on page 9) might be a program that the ONPS will want to duplicate and make available by mail to groups outside the metro area. There are 80 slides, covering some 38 species, plus titles. Unfortunately, there are many more rare plants than this, even in centrally-located Oklahoma, and the good folks at the Biological Survey and the Nature Conservancy already have their hands full with the ones already listed, so **some of the rest of us are going to have to get involved**. Yes, there is an opportunity for volunteers to monitor special populations.

ONPS Photo Contest Displays

Our beautiful posters of Oklahoma Wildflowers from past entries in the annual photo contest are available for display anywhere in the state.

Call Ruth Boyd at (405)872-9652 or Sue Amstutz at (918)742-8374 to schedule a display. You will need a secure location, where they can be locked up at night, if the posters are to remain in a location for several days.

BOOK REVIEW

BIG BLUESTEM A Journey Into the Tallgrass

by Annick Smith, Photography by Harvey Payne

"Oh, great!" I thought, when the letter came from The Nature Conservancy to announce a book signing and meet-the-authors event at an Oklahoma City bookstore. "TNC has hired a reporter to put some text under Harvey Payne's pretty pictures." But I went, dutifully, partly in hope of seeing some friends there. Of course, I bought the book, and Ms. Smith and Mr. Payne kindly autographed it for me. Another coffee-table decoration? Was I ever in for a surprise; and you will be, too, for this is an honest-to-goodness great book, and beautiful too.

The text is integrated into the pictures to an extraordinary degree, and that must be credited both to Harvey Payne's years of dedicated work in recording the Prairie in all its moods and seasons and to Annick Smith's well-researched and well-organized approach to writing a documentary that reads like a novel -- including a few skeletons-in-the-closet. The result is a book which provides an honest history of a place and of the people who loved it, worked it, and made of it a land that could still, after years of cattle-hustling, oil-hustling, and corporate management, be called one of the world's Last Great Places.

The "hero" is the land: rocky, thin-soiled, varied in terrain and too tough to plow, but the perfect support system for the "heroine": Big Bluestem. Actually, as we all know, there are many tallgrasses in a prairie, and this one has them all. In the author's words:

"Without wild grasses, old-growth forests, pure waters, birds, insects, and mammals, human beings will become a lonely species, turned in on themselves, hunting each other, perhaps doomed to a short life on old earth."

The supporting cast includes a chorus of Fires: lightning-caused, management tool of the Native Americans, the great enemy of the white settlers with their flammable wooden buildings. The Osage people, historic inhabitants of this land and its eventual inheritors, are shown as real people, some better stewards of the land than others, some caring and some not: real people, not cardboard icons. The white settlers -- no better than they had to be, yet eventually hammering out a civilization that might have worked had not the Osage been rich with oil. The hard-working, hard-living oil field hands who built the ephemeral boom towns that today are barely remembered and nearly vanished. The people, in short, who loved the land but for their own reasons and usually not with any deep insight into its real value.

Tallgrass, Fire, People, Cattle, Oil: what next? Bring on the Bison. Like an old-time Western, a herd of 300 half-domestic bison is released into the recovering Tallgrass while television cameras carry the event to the world (much like the moon landings of another day). Slowly, The Nature Conservancy makes itself another part in the ancient drama, with its own agenda for the land, its own relationships with the neighboring ranchers, the remaining Osage, and the inevitable scientists, environmentalists of all stripes, and tourists in shorts and sandals, hunters' camo, pickups and buses. There is a sense of urgency: that this time we had better get it right; that this time the rights of the tallgrass itself must be considered as equal to those of the other players.

What I did not get, thankfully, from this book, is depressed. For this is a success story, and the plot is hope, the moral is that it isn't too late. If you collect "coffee table" books with pretty pictures, you'll love this book; the pictures are there. If you love the Tallgrass Prairie, honest history, a good tale well told, you will find them in this book too. A bargain at \$34.95 from most bookstores, or add \$2.77 sales tax and \$4 shipping and order it from the publisher, Council Oak Books / 1350 East 15th St. / Tulsa, OK 74120.

"WANT AD"

ONPS member Maurita Nations hopes someone can tell her about a source for "botanical prints" that don't sell for fine-arts prices. She has room for several, and really isn't into investment-decorating! I suspect that several others of us would want to hear about this too, so please send your suggestions to the *Gaillardia*, and I'll put them into the next issue.

ONPS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Vanessa Burton, Atoka
 Bill Cox, Coweta
 Mary C. Harkey, Eufaula
 Steven D. Patterson, Pacific Palisades, CA
 Jane & Cleve Spillers, Tulsa
 Gloria Caddell, Edmond
 Cindy & Thomas Clawson, Cleveland
 Charles & Donna Pitts, Spencer
 Tim Snell, Poteau
 John O. Sterling, Pauls Valley

New names on the courtesy copy list:

Joe Roberts, Tulsa Urban Forester
 Barbara J. Barton, Tusker Press, CA

Know any of these good folks? Let them know
 we're glad to have them with us!

FORMING A NEW CHAPTER

Several members have mentioned that they are interested in forming local chapters. It's really very easy to do: first you ask our secretary, Clare Miller, to make you a printout from the membership data-base for your area. It is easier to do if you give her the zip codes that you want included. Then, contact your prospects (Clare can make your list on mailing labels, if you ask). Schedule a meeting at a place with parking available, maybe bring some

cookies and a pot of coffee, and stand back!

We've learned by working with the Central chapter that field trips are not very good for organizing -- all of us are more interested in the wildflowers than in electing officers -- and that you need a minimum of one Chairman, to schedule and preside at meetings, a Delegate to attend the statewide Board Meetings (can be a current officer who would be going anyway), and a Program Chairman. Titles are optional. Our first elected leader in the Central Chapter, Mike Bush, wanted to be called "Czar". A Secretary /Treasurer to take notes and keep records is good, too. The state board will pay the chapter's reasonable expenses, and chapters are not expected to raise funds unless for local projects.

Keep it light, keep it flexible, and make it interesting and fun. We're an educational and personal-involvement organization -- not a political party. When you decide to make it official, schedule a visit with the Board or with President Frank Carl.



The Officers and Board of
 The Oklahoma Native Plant
 Society wish you all the joys
 of the holiday season.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please renew my membership in the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, or add the name below to the membership list in the category checked.

NAME _____ HOME PHONE () _____

AFFILIATION (School, Business or Avocation) _____

ADDRESS _____ BUSINESS PHONE() _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ ☐ please don't list my phone

_____ \$15.00 Family _____ \$10.00 Individual _____ \$5.00 Student _____ ☐ Gift from _____

LIFE MEMBERSHIP _____ \$300.00 Family _____ or \$200.00 Individual. ☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

DONATION TO: ANNE LONG FUND _____ HARRIET BARCLAY FUND _____

☐ I am enclosing an additional \$2.50 (to cover cost of printing and mailing) for a complete ONPS directory.

Please make checks payable to Oklahoma Native Plant Society and mail to:
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The Gaillardia

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1999: Lynn Allen and Sue Amstutz

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Gaillardia articles may be reprinted at will. Please
acknowledge the source and author!

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

Each year at the Annual Meeting (usually, in October), an award is made in the name of Anne Long, one of the organizers of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, who died before it became a reality. Anne loved the native plants of Oklahoma and the people who cared enough to preserve them.

Nominations for this award may be made by any ONPS member, and are for a person or organization who has been a shining example of the execution of our Purpose during the past year or years. Members of the current Board, though, are not eligible for the award (those listed in the box at the left). To refresh your memory, the Purpose is stated on page 1, under the logo.

RULES: Send the name of the person or group you wish to nominate, with your own name and address to:

Dr. Paul Buck, 1623 S. Delaware Pl., Tulsa, OK
74104-5915.

On a separate sheet, explain why you think the nominee deserves the award. All nominations are kept confidential, and the names of the nominator(s) are not revealed.

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