Wildflowers

THE BULLETIN OF THE
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF W. PA.

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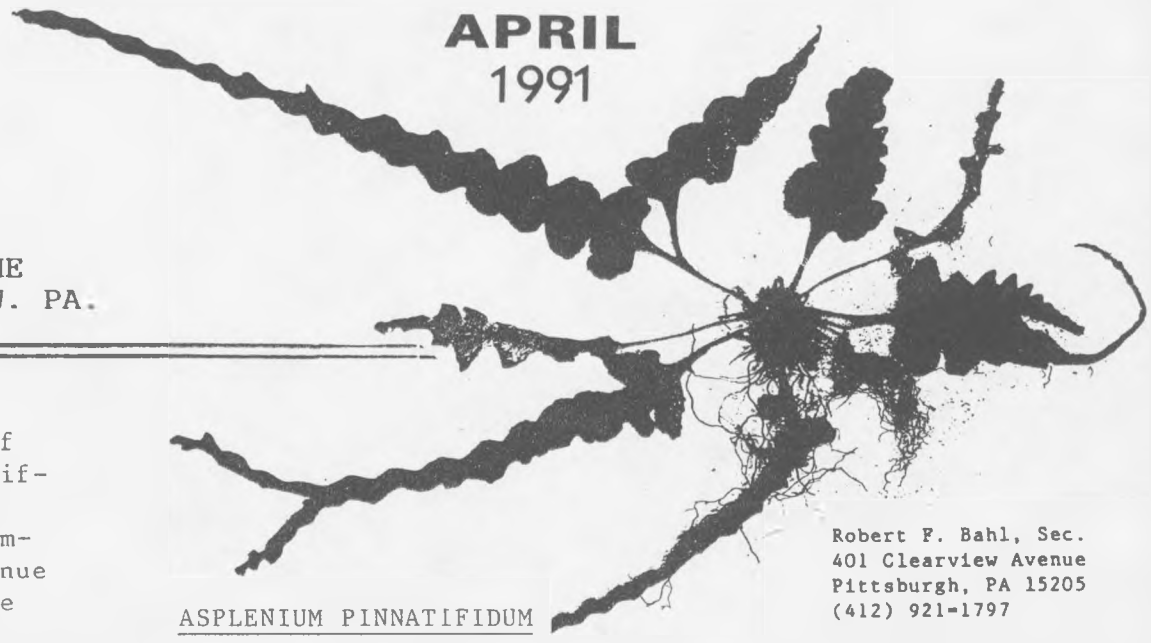

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ASPLENIUM PINNATIFIDUM

This specimen of the Lobed Spleenwort was collected in Jackson County, OH in 1972 by the famed Grandma Gatewood. It was mounted and preserved by her daughter, Esther Allen.

FIELD TRIPS

Over the past two years, I have found the role of Field Trip Chairman to be very challenging. It is difficult to consistently schedule exciting field trips for a group of botanical "nuts" as diverse as the members of the Bot. Soc. of W. Pa. I will try to continue to schedule field trips to new places as well as some of the old favorite botanical haunts...but I could really use a little help! If anyone would like to act as Co-Field Trip Chairman, I would be very appreciative! Also, if anyone has any ideas for trips this year...?... please give me a call.

The 1991 field Trip Schedule will (unless I get some more ideas) be a bit more limited than in 1990 with an average of about one trip every two weeks instead of a trip each week. Also, normal starting times this year will be 1:30 P.M. for local trips and 12:00 Noon for more distant trips.

Thanks, Scott

April 13 - WILDFLOWER RESERVE, RACCOON CREEK STATE PARK, BEAVER COUNTY, PA.
Leaders: Phyllis and Bill Monk
Start Time: 1:30 P.M.
Directions: Meet at the Wildflower Reserve Parking Lot, Rt. 30 just east of the park entrance.
Expectations: Get the old hiking shoes out of moth balls and spend a couple of hours with the Monks and fellow members as we walk the trails and view Nature's bountiful beauty of springtime. Expect to see Trailing Arbutus, Hepatica, Early Saxifrage, Lyre-leaved Rock Cress, Spring Beauties and many other species.

May 4 - ENLOW FORK NATURAL AREA, GREENE COUNTY, PA.
Leader: Bob Morgan
Start Time: 12:00 Noon
Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 South to I-70 West. Exit from I-70 at Claysville to Old US-40. Turn right, and in Claysville turn right on Rt. 231. Follow Rt. 231 south for about 3.5 miles to an intersection where 231 bears left downhill. Here take the road to the right and continue for 8 miles to a "T" intersection in West Finley. Turn left and continue 2.5 miles to a new highway bridge over Enlow Fork, and meet by the bridge.
Expectations: Bob will lead us through one of the most beautiful stream valleys in all of Pennsylvania. Expect to see a prime display of the spectacular Blue-eyed Mary (Collinsia verna) as well as Miami Mist, Bluebells, Trilliums and other spring flowers.

May 11 - SHALE BARRENS AND FORT HILL RESERVE, MINERAL COUNTY, WV AND ALLEGANY COUNTY, MD.
Leaders: Clete and Doug Smith
Start Time: 12:00 Noon
Directions: From Pittsburgh, take I-79 South to Morgantown, US-48 East to Cumberland, and US-220 South. On Rt. 220 go about 7.5 miles and look for Barton's Restaurant (large plastic cow in front), where we will meet.
Expectations: Several members have hinted for a return trip to the shale barrens, so here it is! Our usual leader, Dick Sluss, will be on the West Virginia Wildflower Pilgrimage, so the Smith brothers will take over as leaders. Expect to see Hoary Puccoon, Kate's Mountain Clover, Shale Leatherflower, Bird's-foot Violet, Shooting Star and many other rarities.

Additional Notes on Upcoming Field Trips: Sinks of Gandy and Cranberry Glades, WV in June and July; Bergen Swamp, NY in August; Haywood's in Greene County, PA in September; Lynx Prairie, Adams County, OH in October.

(Scott Shriver 412-741-9249)

Educator wants to spread word about plant

Plant expert rebuts theories

By JIM HOOK
Staff writer

The authorities listen when Miss Marple or Sherlock Holmes put a mystery back on track.

Paleobotanist Dr. Anthony J. Miklausen should be so fortunate.

Miklausen, a retired Shippensburg University professor, has pieced together fossil evidence that challenges scientific premises about the earth's earliest land plants. Authorities have not embraced his ideas.

"They're skeptical of what I'm saying," he said. "I have to spread the word."

At age 78, Miklausen won't give up.

"I'm right. That's the reason," he said. "I know I'm right."

Miklausen presented his findings on the plant *lepidocarpon* at three annual meetings of the paleobotanical section of the Botanical Society of America. He has worked five years to describe the plant.

Miklausen retired in 1976 after a 42-year career in education and educational administration. But his doctorate and passion have been in paleobotany, the study of plant fossils.

"I was at the right place at the right time, with a little bit of the right know-how," Miklausen said. "For the first time in the history of the plant, I have all the organs."

He had developed a description of the plant from specimens that lived and died at one location.

The shrub that Miklausen describes isn't a garden-variety weed.

It lived about 325 million years ago, soon after the first land plants evolved and just before the age of the great coal swamps. Ancestors of frogs croaked, cockroaches crawled and sharks swam. Dinosaurs were 100 million years in the future.

The base of the plant spread like lichen. Hollow or pithy stalks rose 3 feet from the base. Clusters of needle-like leaves with spores the size of marbles were at the end of the stalks. The base was perforated with ventilation holes. Single roots with air chambers hung from the base.

Miklausen's description is radically different from the description that paleobotanists have accepted since 1901. Their description is that of a tree with cones and radiating roots.

Miklausen's unique root system predated modern radiating root systems. Miklausen has found evidence of vestigial organs from such a root system in more recent plants.

Another accepted theory says that land plants all developed from green algae. Miklausen has evidence that *lepidocarpon* descended from brown algae. He assertion has implications for the origin of some vascular land plants.

The plant died off after 50 million years because of widespread flooding at the peak of the Coal Age, according to Miklausen. Other experts have said that dry periods at the end of the Coal Age caused it to disappear. Miklausen said the plant's fossil record ends before the dry period.

Dr. Miklausen

Paleobotanist Dr. Anthony J. Miklausen a retired Shippensburg University professor, has pieced together fossil evidence that challenges scientific premises about the earth's earliest land plants. Authorities have not embraced his ideas. But at age 78, Miklausen won't give up. The shrub he describes lived about 325 million years ago.

Public Opinion/Jim Hook

Dr. Anthony Miklausen examines the fossil of a unique land plant that predates the great coal forests.

APRIL MEETING

The next meeting of the Botanical Society of W. Pa. will be Monday, April 8, 8:00 P.M., at Trinity Hall, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Ave., Oakland.

Our speaker will be Dr. Anthony J. Miklausen, who will present the program: "Lepidocarpon: Reinterpretation, Proposed Brown Algal Origin and Upper Paleozoic Continental Drift To Extinction."

Dr. Miklausen has been a member of our Botanical Society for 55 years!!! He was a student of the late Dr. O. E. Jennings.

Miklausen found his 7.00" specimens in a hillside on Broadtop Mountain. An insect wing in a previous stone had led him back to the Mauch Chunk layer of rock from the upper Mississippian division of the Coal Age.

Had it not been raining, he probably would have discarded the stones, Miklausen said. They did not appear interesting. In his basement workshop he split open the stones and was surprised to find the unusual fossils.

Miklausen said he had hoped to contribute something to the field during his retirement years.

A product of the Depression and a native of a coal mining community, he served as a high school science teacher in Imperial for 15 years and principal at West Allegheny High School for 17 years before joining Shippensburg University as a director of development and planning.

Throughout his career in education, Miklausen maintained his interest in fossils by collecting near Imperial or on Broadtop Mountain.