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# WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • February and March 2007

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## Next Meeting is February 12

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The next meeting will be Monday, February 12, 7:15 p.m., at Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). Kresge Theater is on the top floor of the Grace Library and is accessed from the upper campus. Place a note on your dashboard saying "Botanical Society Meeting," or use your parking permit.

Member **Joe Isaac** will present "Growing Greene - Pennsylvania Botany South of Pittsburgh."

Joe is a botanist for the Ecology and Life Sciences Division of Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc (CEC). He earned a Masters in biology from Youngstown State University in 2001. Prior to joining CEC, he had worked as an urban forester and as a botanical consultant for the Carnegie Museum and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Growing Greene will feature some of the more interesting botanical finds south of Pittsburgh.

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## And the Following Meeting is March 12

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The following meeting will be Monday, March 12, **7:15 p.m.**, at **Kresge Theater**, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland).

**Patrick Bonislawsky** will introduce us to **tall native warm-season grasslands**. He will discuss the dominant grasses of the tall grass ecosystem, such as bluestem, Indiangrass and switchgrass, as well as its general flora and

fauna. He will also discuss the migration of the tall grasslands into western Pennsylvania and how to recognize remnants of this ecosystem. Establishing and managing tall native warm-season grasses through the no till and prescribed burning methods will also be covered.

Patrick is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and Fisheries Scientist. His knowledge of grasslands stems from a career as a biologist for the Kansas Fish and Game Commission in the Osage Cuesta physiographic province. He has also worked with fisheries management and habitat creation on mined lands.

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## Upcoming Programs

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The following programs have been scheduled for the spring 2007:

On **April 9**, member **Gene Thomas** from Vallejo, California will discuss milkweeds of California. Fern expert **Joan Gottlieb** recently attended a "Ferns of New Zealand" workshop and will share her discoveries with the Society on **May 14**. On **June 11**, **Phyllis Monk** will share her botanical experiences from a trip to Russia. (Thanks to Phyllis for delaying her program so that Gene Thomas could join us on his spring break in April.)

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## Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Wood Geranium

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May is the time when Wood Geraniums, native to Pennsylvania, will be blooming. Since they are common throughout the state, they should be relatively easy to find and observe. What you see may not be new to you, but it astounded the late-eighteenth-century German botanist,

Christian Konrad Sprengel, when he was studying a European species of Geranium, Forget-me-not, and other flowers. What he learned was not generally known at his time.

He watched insects pollinate flowers. He noticed that the tufts of hair near the base of each petal of the Geranium flower and the yellow ring around the center of the Forget-me-not were protecting moisture from diluting the nectar, the plant's enticement and reward for the insect pollinators. He saw that the markings on petals of many flowers were guide lines to the nectar for the pollinators. He believed that every part of a flower served a purpose.

Later studies by some botanists indicated that Geranium seeds, after they are released from the flower and have fallen to the ground, are able to move. This is the process. What appears to be one, long, pistil is actually five, very close together, each pistil with its own stigma, a long style, and a one-seeded ovary. When the ovaries mature, each style contracts, swinging its ovary out and up. The ovary shell is lost and the seed and style subsequently fall to the ground. When the style gets wet it relaxes and the seed moves. When it dries, it contracts and the seed moves. The surmise is that the movement may put the seed into a protected space where it will not be eaten.

Wood Geranium, also known as Wild Geranium, Crane's-bill and numerous other common names, is botanically *Geranium maculatum*. *Geranium* is Greek from *geranos*, a crane, for the crane-like beak on the seed. *Maculatum* is Latin, spotted, for the marks on the aging leaves. The family is *Geraniaceae* and includes *Pelargonium*, the garden Geranium, and *Erodium*, forage and rock garden plants.

*Anne Bahl*

"Rather one must investigate the flowers in their natural habitat...In brief, one must try to catch Nature in the act."

Christian Konrad Sprengel, "Das entdeckte Geheimnis der Natur, 1793"

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## Pennsylvania Rare Plant Forum will meet at French Creek State Park

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The Pennsylvania Rare Plant Forum will be held Saturday, March 24, 2007, at French Creek State Park, in Berks County in southeastern Pennsylvania.

All people interested in the conservation of Pennsylvania's native flora are encouraged to attend. The primary task is discussion of proposed changes to the list of Plants Of Special Concern In Pennsylvania (POSCIP).

Presentations will also be scheduled. If you would like to give a presentation on recent work you have done related to the conservation of the flora of our region, contact Steve Grund. For detailed information about the Forum and suggested overnight accommodations, contact Steve at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Telephone: (412) 586-2350; e-mail: [sgrund@paconserve.org](mailto:sgrund@paconserve.org)

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## In Memoriam

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David R. Allen, husband of member Esther Allen and of 107 Idaway Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, died peacefully Saturday, January 27. Dave had just celebrated his 88th birthday on New Year's Eve.

Esther and Dave were married for 67 years; he was the loving father of David Allen, Jr. and the late Nelson D. Allen. He is survived by four great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. He was a member of St Luke's Lutheran Church of West View. Those wishing to place a memorial in honor of Dave may do so to the charity of their choice.

Many of us will remember Dave's cheerful face at the end of field trip, reading science fiction and waiting patiently to shuttle us back to our cars and share a Dave Allen cookie.

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## In Memoriam

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Member Ted J. Grisez, 85, of Belmont Drive, Warren, Pa., died unexpectedly December 17, 2006. He was employed as a silviculturist for the USDA Forest Service, retiring from there in 1976 after 30 years of service.

He is noted as having a lifelong dedication to ornithology and botany, monitoring bluebird boxes, bird banding and collecting plants. He was currently serving as a co-coordinator for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas.

Ted led several field trips to the bogs and forests of northwestern Pennsylvania for the Botanical Society. He was a regular contributor of specimens to the herbarium of Carnegie Museum.

He was an early charter member of the Allegheny Outdoor Club and enjoyed many outdoor activities such as hiking and cross country skiing. He was an avid traveler, recycler and supported many environmental, social and health organizations.

Those wishing to place memorials may do so through the Jamestown Audubon Sanctuary or the Roger Tory Peterson Institute.

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## Field Trip Schedule

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**Saturday, March 10, 2007**

**Lichens at North Country Trail,**

**Butler County**

**Leaders: Esther Allen (412-366-0786) and**

**Barb Schomer**

**Time: 1 p.m.**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 North to Exit 99 - US 422/Butler/New Castle. Drive east on US 422 roughly 5.8 miles to the Prospect Exit, and turn left (north) onto PA 528. Travel PA 528 for 2.5 miles to the highway bridge over Lake Arthur. Continue on PA 528 for 1.7 miles to a parking lot for the North Country Trail on

the left-hand side of the road. If you reach Lindey Road on the left, you have gone too far.

Esther and Barb have been studying lichens and will share some of their discoveries.

**Saturday, March 17, 2007**

**Sewickley Creek near Hutchinson,**

**Westmoreland County**

**Leader: Tom Pearson**

**Time: 10 a.m.**

**Directions:** Take the PA Turnpike to Exit 67 - Route 30/Irwin/Greensburg. Take the US 30 West/Irwin ramp. Once on US30, travel to the first stoplight, turn right and follow the signs to Kohl's Department store. We will meet in Kohl's parking lot, farthest from the store entrance.

This hike is strenuous. We will hike an old railroad grade for about two miles to impressive cliffs along the Sewickley Creek to see Snow Trillium (*Trillium nivale*).

**Sunday, April 1, 2007**

**Little Sewickley Creek near Herminie,**

**Westmoreland County**

**Time: 1:30 p.m.**

**Directions:** Take the PA Turnpike to Exit 67 - Route 30/Irwin/Greensburg. Take the Route 30 East/Greensburg ramp. At the first stoplight on Route 30, turn right on Arona Rd, then another right after 0.5 mile. Travel this road 3.7 miles to a T. Turn right at the T. Continue 1 mile through a series of stop signs through the town of Herminie to a second T. Turn left, then turn right at the intersection with a Dairy Queen. Travel to the bottom of a hill; just before the highway bridge, park on the left side.

We will join the Botanical Society of Westmoreland County for an easy hike to see Snow Trillium and other spring ephemerals along Little Sewickley Creek.

## Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – February and March 2007

279 Orr Road  
West Newton, PA 15089

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### WILDFLOWERS - Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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WILDFLOWERS is published monthly by the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania. We welcome short articles of botanical interest, drawings, and notices of botanical events and group activities. Send to the editor at the above address. Deadline for submissions is the 23rd of the previous month. WILDFLOWERS is printed on recycled paper.

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### The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information

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The Botanical Society was founded in 1886. The object of the Society shall be to bring together those who are interested in Botany and to encourage the study of this science and a knowledge of plants. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individual and \$15.00 for family. Students can join at half-rate. To join, mail your name, your address, and check payable to "Botanical Soc. of W PA" to Loree Speedy, 279 Orr Road, West Newton, PA 15089. Your membership includes a subscription to the monthly bulletin WILDFLOWERS.

The Society meets the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:15 p.m. sharp, at Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland. All are welcome to the informative program and business meeting.

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### Wildflowers of Pennsylvania – Ordering Information – 400 pages of text and 612 color photographs

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Wildflowers of Pennsylvania can be purchased for \$20.00 (plus \$1.40 sales tax for PA residents). Forward your check, made payable to Botanical Society of Western PA, to Dr. Haywood at the address below. If you order by mail, add \$2 postage and handling for one book, \$3.00 for two, \$4.00 for three, \$4.50 for four. Send your request to Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, Ph.D., 3333 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3165 (412) 578-6175; mjhaywood@carlow.edu