



Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

January Meeting

JANUARY 9. Dr. Richard Palmer will present "Hawai'i no ka oi' Natural History of the Hawaiian Islands".

A native of Leetsdale, Richard began his studies at CMU. He earned a BS at UC Berkeley in Plant Molecular Biology while working as a technician, then chemist/biologist for medical diagnostics research 1972-1990.

Richard received a PhD in Botany from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1996, with a specialty in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology.

He has worked in Environmental Consulting, taught Biology at Hawaii Pacific University, and worked for the Environmental Health Division of the Hawaii Department of Health.

In the past year Richard moved back to Leetsdale to be near family. He has been a Research Associate in Botany with CMNH for about 15 years and is a sponsored visitor at the CREATE Lab at CMU Robotics Institute.

If the weather is inclement, a BSWP meeting will cancel if Carlow University cancels classes. To learn if that has happened, call the Carlow Weather Line at 412-578-6677.

A REMINDER TO SHARE YOUR STORIES THROUGH JANUARY

Through the end of January Jeff Irwin will be collecting and collating stories related to your botanical activities and adding them to the Society record (see last issue's cover for more info; the exact format to be determined). If you would like to contribute your story, please con-

BSWP meetings are held on Mondays at 7:15 p.m. at Kresge Theater, Carlow University, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). Kresge Theater is on the top floor of the

February Meeting

FEBRUARY 13. Ephraim Zimmerman will present "Restoration of the Black Oak Savanna at Erie Bluffs State Park".

Ephraim, with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) since 2003, received a BS in Wildlife Biology in 1997 from Colorado State University and MS in Forest Ecology from the University of Michigan in 2003. He served in the U.S. Peace Corps, working on community development programs in the Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine.

At WPC his work includes assessment and mapping of plant communities in the field, identification and monitoring of rare plants and habitats, ecological restoration, and analyses of plant community composition, structure, and distribution at multiple scales. Increasingly, his work has focused on the landscape impacts of energy development, particularly shale gas and wind energy. He is also responsible for developing the long-term strategy and implementation for plant community research and managing the Ecological Assessment and Monitoring Staff.

tact him at jsi107@hotmail.com or by phone at 412.302.7959. Handwritten notes can be mailed to President Bonnie Isaac, Collection Manager, Section of Botany, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Grace Library and is accessed from the upper campus. Place a note on your dashboard saying "Botanical Society Meeting," or use your parking permit.

Wildflowers, Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania, is published bimonthly 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 address below. Deadline for submissions is the 16th of the previous month. *Wildflowers* is printed on recycled paper.



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

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual dues are \$10 for individual and \$15 for family. Students can join at half-rate. To join, mail your name, your address, and check payable to "Botanical Society of W PA" to Judy Boyer, 211 Lee Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Your membership includes a subscription to the bimonthly bulletin *Wildflowers*.

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.

Jean Stull Cunningham

Jean Stull Cunningham, of Waterford, died July 30, 2011. Jean was an artist and teacher, and a spokesperson and exemplar for environmental stewardship. With her late husband, James G. Stull, she founded the Presque Isle Audubon Society in 1960. She also began banding birds on Presque Isle, and continued this effort for nearly 40 years. In recognition of the Stulls' important work in preserving the natural history of Presque Isle, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1993 named the nature exhibition building the Stull Interpretive Center. In recognition of Jean's excellence in the fields of art, education, and the environment, she was the recipient of the 2010 John C. Oliver Environmental Award.

Jean loved bogs, and was an early advocate for the conservation of Titus Bog. With her help and support, Titus Bog was purchased jointly by the Botanical Society and the Presque Isle Audubon Society in 1968.

She is survived by her husband, Harry Cunningham; a son, BSWP member James A. "Sam" Stull and his wife, Barbara Mitchell, of McKean. In lieu of flowers, friends are requested to send a contribution to a charity of one's choice, particularly those dealing with animals and the environment.

Barbara Diane Schomer

Barbara Diane Schomer died November 2, 2011, after a year-long battle with cancer. Barb served as Recording Secretary for the Botanical Society, but she will be remembered foremost among us for her keen study of lichens, and for sharing their uniqueness and beauty with us. She was recently involved in volunteer work in Everglades National Park helping to inventory the lichens there. A newly discovered lichen, *Calopadia schomerae*, is named after her. She was an inspiration to many and touched so many lives as an English teacher, a caver, a mentor, a photographer and a peace corps volunteer. She is survived by her loving husband Bru Randall and daughters Mary Kay and Sharon McCaffrey. In lieu of flowers, donations to Women for Women International, PO Box 9224, Central Islip, NY 11722-9224 or Food For the Poor, Inc., 6401 Lyons Rd., Coconut Creek, FL 33073 or Life With Cancer, 8411 Pennell St., Fairfax, VA 22031.



If you would like to donate a copy of *Wildflowers of Pennsylvania* (BSWP's labor of love, coauthored by Dr. Mary Joy Haywood and Phyllis Monk) to a library in one of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, contact Dr. Haywood (contact information is inside newsletter front cover). Book donation information will also be on www.botsocwpa.org.

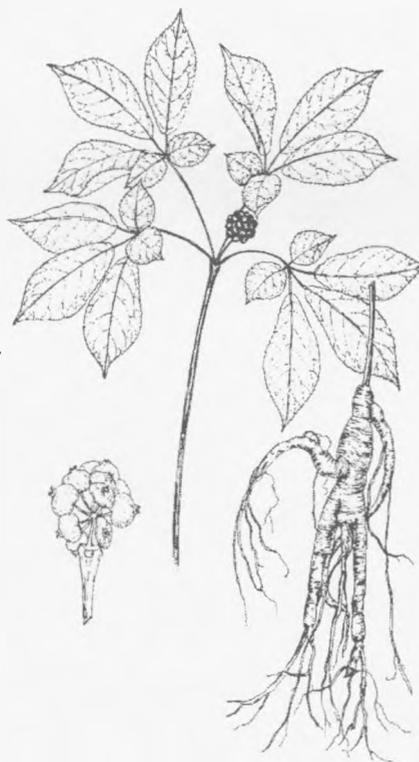
The Doctrine of Signatures by Guy L. Denny

Since the dawn of history, man has made magic and medicines with plants. Herbal medicine practiced by most primitive peoples was essentially founded on the supernatural and on the basis of trial and error. Plant remedies which worked have been in use for countless generations simply because they did work. Those that didn't were discarded. Many early cultures from the Egyptians and Greeks to the American Indians based their herbal medicine on a local "doctrine of signatures". This doctrine involved a belief that "like cures like" and for every illness there is a cure. For example, since the blossom of the bellflower (*Uvularia Sp.*) resembles the uvula which hangs down from the soft palate in the back of one's throat, this plant was thought to be a cure for throat disorders.



Although this concept was ascribed to many cultures throughout the world for thousands of years, it was Swiss physician Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1491-1541, better known as Paracelsus) who popularized what has become the famous doctrine of signatures. Paracelsus theorized that some plants had "signatures" to help man know what wild plants were useful and what purpose they served. This sign (or signature) was a part of the plant that physically resembles a part of the human body. For example, since the leaf of the hepatica resembles the human liver, it was believed that hepatica had been put on Earth to cure problems of the liver. A plant with heart-shaped leaves, such as wild ginger, was meant for treating heart disease, etc. Paracelsus influenced the underlying philosophy of medicine for centuries as his doctrine had a great following among physicians.

Many, but not all, tribes of Native Americans also practiced medicine according to their own ancient doctrine of signatures. In most cases the Indians interpreted this concept somewhat differently. They believed that to eliminate worms a plant that resembled worms was needed. For instance, the Micmacs thought that since a foul odor might induce a headache in a healthy person, smelling the foul odor of skunk cabbage could cure a headache. During the settlement of this country the doctrine of signatures played a major role in herbal medicine. Our forefathers not only brought European herbal medicine with them, but also readily adopted those used by the American Indians. Likewise, American Indians were quick to embrace European herbal medicine as such plants introduced to America from Europe became naturalized.



Top Left: The blossom of the bellflower (*Uvularia Sp.*) was thought to be a cure for throat disorders.
 Top Right: The leaf of the sharp-lobed hepatica resembles the human liver.
 Bottom: Native American Indians adopted the use of ginseng from the colonists who learned of its medicinal value from the Chinese.

Illustrations courtesy of the USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

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Fill out the form, detach with scissors and mail to:
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Wildflowers of Pennsylvania (400 pages, 612 color photos) can be purchased for \$20 (plus \$1.40 sales tax for PA residents). Add \$2 postage and handling for one book, \$3/two, \$4/three, \$4.50/four. Forward your check, made payable to Botanical Society of Western PA, and your request to Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, PhD, 3333 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3165; 412-578-6175; mhaywood@carlow.edu. Or go to www.botsocwpa.org.

Details of BSWP field trips & meetings are located on our website on easily viewable and printable pages!
Go to www.botsocwpa.org/calendar.php.



Botany and Philosophy by John Bright, excerpted from *Trillia V 1915–1919*

There is real joy in going out into the fields and woods to see the first flowers of spring, but we must go early to get the foremost. The usual warm weather late in March will bring forth the blossoms of the hepatica, rue-anemone, toothwort, spring beauty, whitlowgrass, willow, alder, hazel-nut, aspen, and snow trillium, and some of them we may find surprisingly early. While patches of snow linger in deep gorges the hepatica, along the warm south-eastern slopes, has already started to bloom, and in May it flowers merrily along in places where the ground was frozen in March and where the air is cool, even in mid-summer.

Blessed is the man or woman who truly enjoys the pleasures of nature-study and who can, for a few hours or days, forget business and plunge into the excitement of adventures in botanical contentment — the contentment that comes with complete mental relaxation, and a physical tiredness at the end of the day that gives assurance of a night's rest, with dreams of a still better day to come.

Walking is the best exercise, and with botany as a hobby there is something to walk for. When one is compelled to walk three miles daily for the sake of

[one's] health it soon becomes a wearisome task; but with the excitement that comes with the hunting of hidden treasures in the fields and woods, distance is no object. Tramping through swamps, wading streams, and exploring the woods from by-paths, distance loses its terrors. As we go deeper into the woods we look for newer things, and the turning back and starting for home are the most difficult requirements of the day.

During the winter season mounting, classifying, and filing our collections; with fond recollections of last season and already planning our next year's trips — a season of expectation with the realization, when we get out and see and feel the awakening of spring, we know that a love for nature when properly cultivated is a perennial thing of constant pleasure.