

New England Botanical Club – Minutes of the 924th Meeting

10 January 1997 Prepared by Lisa A. Standley, Recording Secretary

The 697th meeting of the New England Botanical Club, Inc., being the 924th since the original organization, met on Friday, January 10, 1997 at the Harvard Biological Laboratories with 32 members and guests present.

Following the reading of the minutes, Vice President Dr. David Conant (presiding) called for the introduction of guests, followed by a request for old or new business, announcements, or gossip. Pat Swain announced that the Natural Heritage Program is requesting proposals for the Small Grants program and distributed information on the 1997 grants. She also noted that the Program is soliciting applications for the position of restoration ecologist. Dr. Lisa Standley announced that her firm has an open position for a wetland ecologist. Dave Conant reminded members that March 15 is the deadline for applications for the Graduate Student Research Award of \$1000. He also reported that the Council is discussing a symposium and invited interested members to a "brainstorming" meeting at 3:00 PM on Friday, February 7. Dave noted that there is a new Club telephone number, which members may use to obtain information on meeting cancellations (617-460-3057). Dave reported that he had recently visited Les Eastman, who appears to be recovering well from a series of health problems.

As is traditional, the January meeting was entitled "Annual Exchange of Botanical Explorations, Exploits, and Excursions". Nine members participated in presenting slides showcasing summer travels or recent research.

Pam Weatherbee, Dr. Paul Somers and Ray Angelo showed slides from the Club's Centennial trip to Newfoundland in early July. The slides, however, appeared to show a trip taken in a foggy, windy, and wet September. As they demonstrated, Club members who did not attend the trip missed spectacular plants (*Cypripedium pubescens* var. *planipetalum*, *C. reginae*, *Rubus arcticus*, *Lychnis alpina*, *Adiantum aleuticum*, *Mertensia maritima*, *Carex pauciflora*, *Botrychium lunaria*, *Schizaea pusilla*) as well as caribou, moose, icebergs, outstanding Bed & Breakfasts, and the world's largest blueberry.

Dr. Lisa Standley reported on a backpacking trip north of Alaska's Brooks Range, where familiar arctic/alpine species such as rhodora and *Dryas mingle* with western *Pedicularis*, *Oxytropis*, arctic poppies and *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, as well as the world's smallest willow. Caribou, grizzly bear, wolves, and wolverine were also highlights of the trip.

Dr. Norton Nickerson described a wetland mitigation project associated with replacement of salt marsh affected by construction of the MBTA's Neponset River Bridge. He and his team successfully transplanted *Spartina alternifolia* into a mud flat that lacked vegetation and created new high marsh and low marsh by excavating an upland area. The team reported a very high level of success with *S. alternifolia* and mixed success with the high marsh *S. patens* area, probably because of too much tidal inundation.

David Hunt has been surveying natural communities in the Adirondack Mountains for the NY Natural Heritage Program, attempting to locate and document the best example of each of the 100+ communities in this region. He showed examples of a variety of Adirondack communities, including fir forest, spruce/fir rocky summit, rocky summit grassland, pine heath rocky summit, a 2000-acre blueberry heath, and an unusual patterned peatland. David also described a new "sea level fen" community located at the upper edge of salt marshes, containing *Scirpus pungens*, *Cladium*, *Eleocharis rostellata*, *Iris prismatica*, and *Carex hormathodes*.

Neal Sawyer took the Club to Central and South America, showing pictures of his favorite genera (*Deprea* and one other) in the Solanaceae and their habitats from Costa Rica to Bolivia. Neal showed photos of several taxa in this group, which is related to *Physalis*, and discussed taxonomic challenges. Neal has collected these plants in cloud forests in Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Bolivia and travelled through the highlands of Peru, northern Ecuador, and Bolivia's high elevation grasslands.

Dr. Barre Hellquist travelled in northern regions in search of water lilies. In route, he saw a unique dark pink form of the Great Lakes endemic thistle, *Cirsium pitcheri*. With John Weirsma, Barre succeeded in locating true *Nymphaea tetragona* in Manitoba and discussed the characters that differentiate the true *N. tetragona* from the dwarf water lily of the lower 48 states, *N. leibergii*. The team found a hybrid of *N. tetragona* and *N. tuberosa*, documenting the occurrence of all possible *Nymphaea* hybrids except *N. tetragona* and *N. leibergii* - next year's goal.

George Newman ended the evening with a return to arctic/alpine vegetation, this time at sea level on Brier Island, the westernmost point in Nova Scotia. In a hurricane, they located the only occurrence of *Geum peckii* outside of New Hampshire, growing with *Sarracenia* in a sea-level bog. Another notable find was the southernmost stand of *Betula michauxii*. George closed with photos of a new large stand of *Veronica alpina* along the Tuckerman's Ravine trail.

During the traditional refreshments, Dr. Nancy M. Eyster-Smith displayed photographs taken at the Centennial Banquet in November 1996. Members wishing copies of any of the prints may request them. A set of photos will be deposited in the NEBC archives.