

## New England Botanical Club – Minutes of the 934<sup>th</sup> Meeting

9 January 1998 Prepared by Dr. Lisa A. Standley, Recording Secretary

The 707th meeting of the New England Botanical Club, Inc., being the 934th since the original organization, met on Friday, Jan. 9, 1998 in the main lecture hall of the Biological Laboratories, Harvard University, with 31 members and guests present.

The most severe ice storm in memory kept almost all of the northern New England membership at home. Following the reading of the minutes and introduction of guests, Barre Hellquist called for new or old business, announcements and gossip. One new member was announced. George Newman announced that he is going to be dividing his *Sarracenia* collection, and will bring excess plants to the March meeting. Paul Somers announced that members Matt and Nancy Hickler were married on New Years Eve. He also reported, sadly, that long-term former member A. J. Sharp, a renowned botanist and bryologist of the southern Appalachians, passed away in December. Dorothy Andrews noted that the newest volume of Charles Darwin's correspondence (volume 10) covering the year 1862 has recently been published, and includes a substantial body of correspondence between Darwin and Joseph Banks. Barre Hellquist distributed copies of the new Massachusetts DEM's "A Guide to Invasive Non-native Aquatic Plants in Massachusetts", which he authored. Leila Schultz announced that the NEBC Graduate Student Award announcement is posted on the Club's web site, and that there is a March 2 deadline for submittals.

Ten members stepped forward to share their slides and tales of botanical explorations throughout the world. George Newman traveled to the Bruce Peninsula of Ontario, and to a spectacular marl bog near Lake Huron, where *Pinguicula* covers acres. George also pursued *Sarracenia* in the Okefenokee swamp, despite the occasional hazards of alligators and water moccasins. Don Lubin traveled no further than his yard in Allston, where he cultivates more than 30 species of ferns. Don brought ferns grown from spores to share with other club members, and invited members to visit his garden if summer ever returns to New England. David Hunt confined his travels to New York state, but visited numerous unusual and unique communities in the Adirondacks and coastal oak forests. The sloping acidic fens which, although below treeline, support alpine sedges and rare sphagnums, were perhaps the most intriguing of these communities. Paul Somers shared slides of the Club's June and September field trips, artistic shots of fruiting shrubs, and unusual plants from the southern Appalachians. Pam Weatherbee visited Southern Illinois, where floodplain forests, limestone outcrops and rich woods support a wealth of spring-flowering species, including *Trillium flexipes*, *T. recurvatum*, and *Collinsia verna*.

The western United States were represented by Leila Schultz, who described testing a new GIS-based predictive model for rare species habitats and a new species richness map prepared for Utah. Field investigation of one locality predicted to contain rare species found that the model worked even better than anticipated, when the team discovered a new species of *Eriogonum*! Lisa Standley shared slides of the colorful flora of the East Mojave National Preserve in California, including Joshua trees and the spectacular Mojave mound cactus.

Three Club members traveled even further afield. Dorothy Andrews fulfilled a life-long dream of traveling on the Amazon, in the footsteps of Bates and Wallace. She traveled up the Rio Negro from Manaus, observing life in and along the river. Unfortunately, Dorothy's trip coincided with an unusual prolonged drought, which resulted in few flowers, fruits or birds along the river, and a complete absence of howler monkeys. Ray Angelo visited the Singapore Botanical Gardens, encountering kapok trees, orchids, and figs. Ray also demonstrated that he had successfully eaten durians, generally considered a real feat! Barre Hellquist shared pictures from his year in Australia, including the vast opium fields of Tasmania. Barre focused on the newly-discovered "Wollemi Pine", a species of *Araucaria* formerly known only from the fossil record, found recently to occur in the Wollemi National Park north of Sydney, with a population of only 38 individuals. Botanists at the Royal Botanical Garden have been propagating plants for distribution to other botanical gardens.

As usual, the Club adjourned for refreshments and conversation following the meeting.