

# New England Botanical Club – Minutes of the 954<sup>th</sup> Meeting

7 January 2000 Prepared by Don Hudson, Recording Secretary

The 727th meeting of the New England Botanical Club, being the 954th since its original organization, met on Friday, January 7, 2000 at the Biological Laboratories of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts with 33 members and guests present.

President David Conant started the meeting by introducing the names of two new members and inviting items of business and announcements from those assembled. Dr. K. Gandhi announced the merger of three plant name indices (Index Kewensis, the Gray Card Index, and the Australian Plant Name Index) into the International Plant Name Index (IPNI) that can be accessed via <http://tc.huh.harvard.edu/>. Barre Hellquist stated that mid-March is the new expected due date for the book on aquatic plants that he and Garrett Crow are co-authoring. Lois Somers announced the publication and availability of "The Vascular Plants of Massachusetts: A County Checklist" by Bruce A. Sorrie and Paul Somers. Handouts for the Gaspé field trips in July were also provided. Vice President Lisa Standley then took the floor to oversee the evening program.

The first program of the year 2000 was titled "First Friday Foray into Fantastic Flora," better known as the annual "show and tell," where members are invited to make short presentations that typically involve showing and narrating a small number of slide images. As exemplified by first presenter, **Donald Lubin**, however, slides are not a necessary prerequisite. Don explained that he had prepared 62 laminated fronds of fern taxa and would have them available for examination after the meeting. He also spoke of fern exploration with Ray Abair which resulted in three wood fern hybrid taxa being discovered in the Blue Hills south of Boston and the verification of 39 pteridophyte taxa at Wachusett Mountain in Worcester County, including eight that had not been reported previously. **Lisa Standley** started the slides with images from the Okavango Delta in Botswana. We were shown a relatively flat landscape with enormous wetlands that resemble, according to Lisa, marshes of Manitoba. Here she saw many familiar genera such as *Typha*, *Phragmites*, *Nymphaea*, *Eleocharis*, and *Scirpus*, but mixed with them stems of *Papyrus*. Several trees from upland habitat were featured including the sausage tree, *Kigelia*, a species with bat-pollinated orange flowers and large, sausage-shaped fruits, and baobabs, all large trees up to 10-12 ft. in diameter at their bases. Not seeing any immature baobabs, Lisa expressed concern about whether or not they were reproducing. Close-ups of African large game, including one showing a group of side-by-side lionesses in crouched position lapping water, ended the brief glimpse of Africa.

**Nancy Eyster-Smith** brought us back to the U.S. for a look at vegetation management activities witnessed in national parks on a family trip across country this past summer. At Glacier National Park, she saw propagated native species being planted along walkways, as part of a revegetation project, and new metal boardwalks that had been installed to prevent further trampling near Logan Pass. She also observed sites where exotic taxa had been spot-sprayed with herbicides. At Little Bighorn Battlefield National Memorial, people were seen pulling an invasive species of *Hypericum* by hand. Jumping to the Caribbean, **Richard Falcona** illustrated some arid landscapes and scenic views from the island of St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Plant taxa shown were turk's cap cactus, *Melocactus intortus*, and century plant, *Agave missionum*, both native to the island. **Paul Somers** illustrated a few non-indigenous species encountered on a trip to the islands of Nevis and St. Kitts. Examples shown were *Momordica charantia* (Cucurbitaceae), and *Calotropis procera* (Asclepiadaceae), both indigenous to the Old World tropics, and cashew trees, *Anacardium occidentale*, a native of northern South America. Paul also showed a few shots of wetland plants taken in Massachusetts, including *Utricularia cornuta* and *U. inflata* from Plymouth County, *Potamogeton ogdenii* from Berkshire County, and a possible new record of *Lycopodiella alopecuroides* from northern Worcester County. Sticking with the Massachusetts theme, **Pam Weatherbee** illustrated some habitats and plants encountered during a biological survey of the Hop Brook Wildlife Management Area in southern Berkshire County. Despite a long history of land utilization on the property, Pam reported finding some relatively natural wetland habitats with species such as *Iris versicolor*, *Galium palustre*, *Salix candida*, and *Salix serissima*, forest communities containing an interesting association of *Quercus bicolor* and *Carpinus caroliniana*, and even a couple of rare plant species. Also catching Pam's eye during the survey was a beautiful Baltimore checkerspot, a butterfly species thought to be switching from *Chelone* to *Plantago* as a food plant.

**Andy Finton** then took us across the Berkshires to the Hudson River Valley of New York for a presentation on plant community inventory work recently completed there by himself and colleagues at the New York Natural Heritage Program. We learned about remnant serpentine barrens on Staten Island, oak dominated forests with heath understories in the river valley and rocky summit communities, beech-maple, and spruce-dominated old growth forests in the Catskills, where one conifer swamp yielded a black gum aged at 485 yrs. Other communities highlighted were calcareous cliff communities with calciphile ferns in Albany and Greene Counties and bog, sedge meadow, and spruce flat communities of the Rensselaer Plateau

The closing presentation was by **George Newman** who visually transported us to the Gaspé Peninsula for a preview of sites to be visited and things to do during the NEBC summer field trip in July, 2000. George emphasized the extensive serpentine barrens above timberline on Mont-Albert and the many calciphiles that could be found in sea cliffs around Mont Ste. Pierre. At Forillon National Park, options of boating to watch sea lions and seals or botanizing the talus slopes of Cap-Bon-Ami were offered as enticements. In the Perce vicinity, exploring calcareous conglomerate formations of Mont Ste-Anne, sea cliffs occupied by gannets and puffins on Ile Bonaventure, or limestone river beds of Grand Riviere were presented as interesting options.