

**New England Botanical Club – Minutes of the 1032nd Meeting
11 January 2008**

Robert Bertin, Recording Secretary

The 805th meeting of the New England Botanical Club, being the 1032nd since its original organization, was held on Friday, 11 January 2008, in the lecture hall of the Fairchild Biochemistry Building at Harvard University. Thirty members and guests attended this meeting, the *Eighth Ethnobotanical Exploration and Eating Event*, in which a potluck dinner was followed by presentations from nine members and guests. Announcements included details of the 6-8 June 2008 trip to the New Jersey Pine Barrens by George Newman, and a statement by Pat Swain on the availability through the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of funds in their small grants program (http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/conservation/pdf/src_rfp.pdf).

George Newman led off with several slides to whet appetites for the Pine Barrens trip. These images, culled from those taken in George's several decades of visits to the area, included showy species, such as *Arethusa bulbosa*, a Pine Barrens endemic (*Narthecium americanum*), several species with disjunct coastal distributions (*Schizaea pusilla*, *Pyxidantha barbulate*), and others whose range combines the New Jersey Pine Barrens with the mountains of North Carolina or Tennessee (*Xerophyllum asphodeloides*, *Leiophyllum buxifolium*).

Pat Swain shared images from an inland Atlantic white cedar swamp in Pelham, NH and Dracut, MA. Tucked between housing developments, the site includes cedar-dominated swamp with an often thick shrub layer as well as more open spruce-tamarack bog with *Sarracenia*, *Drosera*, and *Menyanthes*. Southern species, such as *Clethra alnifolia* and *Gaylussacia frondosa*, coexist with more northern *Picea* and *Larix*.

Bryan Hamlin provided an update on his effort, aided by several other Club members, to resurvey the flora of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, MA. Team efforts have yielded approximately 660 taxa to date, a little more than were recorded in Walter Deane's original survey. Native species have declined by 9%, but non-native species have increased to 33% of the total. New finds for the Fells included *Bartonia virginica* and an apparently natural stand of *Betula nigra*.

Kim Smith provided a zoological interlude with images of several butterflies and their associated plants, including the pearly crescent spot, silver-bordered fritillary, summer azure, and one of the northeastern most records of a pipevine swallowtail. She concluded with images of migratory roosts of monarchs in northeastern Massachusetts at densities that suggest those on the Mexican wintering grounds.

Irina Kadis provided an overview of our local *Quercus* species. She distinguished the major subgenera (*Quercus*, including white, swamp white and chestnut oaks, and *Erythrobalanus*, including red, black and scarlet oaks). The one hybrid that she encountered was *Quercus x saulii* (*alba* x *prinus*), with leaf characters intermediate between those of the parent species. She invited all to visit the plant gallery at the website <http://www.salicicola.com/>, developed with **Alexey Zinovjev**, which includes thousands of photographs of over 670 local plant species.

Nancy Eyster-Smith shared photographs from the NEBC June trip to Hawley, MA, which included a floristic inventory at the Trustees of Reservations Notchview Sanctuary. Her images captured our host, Julie Richburg, several Club members, and flora and fauna ranging from violets and an orchid to insects and the rare walking shelf fungus. She concluded with a video of a loon swimming under water from Squam Lake, New Hampshire.

Moving to more exotic locales, **Alice Schori** presented images from a trip to the Philippine island of Catanduanes. While assisting her daughter, Melanie, in the pursuit of rare *Gomphandra*, she and her traveling companions captured images of a *Hoya* with hirsute flowers, an even more hirsute water buffalo, and an endemic *Rafflesia* in flower. Her conveyances included a crowded motorcycle sidecar and a jeepney that certainly would not pass inspection in Massachusetts. She received an intermittent escort of machete-wielding children.

Janet Sullivan traveled down under, annotating *Physalis* (not native to Australia) at two herbaria in Melbourne and one in Brisbane. In the Glass Mountains National Park she captured images of local species, including *Velleia spathulata* (Goodeniaceae), *Grevillea* and *Banksia* spp. (Proteaceae), and many eucalypts (*Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia* spp. in the Myrtaceae). Several slides depicted the immense variation in texture and color of eucalypt bark. Many species have shedding bark, presumably reducing epiphyte loads, and in one species, the scribbly bark gum tree, insect larvae etch patterns reminiscent of a child's first efforts with a pencil.

Kanchi Gandhi wrapped up the evening with a slide of his family's holiday card featuring the pomegranate, and with stories on the theme of edible fruits from an inferior ovary. Some of our modern terms arise from the Greek term for fruit (*Malus*) and the Latin term (pome). The term "apple" is said to have arisen because this was one of the fruits offered to Apollo. A royal legacy of the inferior ovary of the pomegranate remains with us today. Legend holds that King Solomon was so impressed with the shape of the persistent calyx of the pomegranate that he used this pattern for his crown, a tradition that continues to the present.