

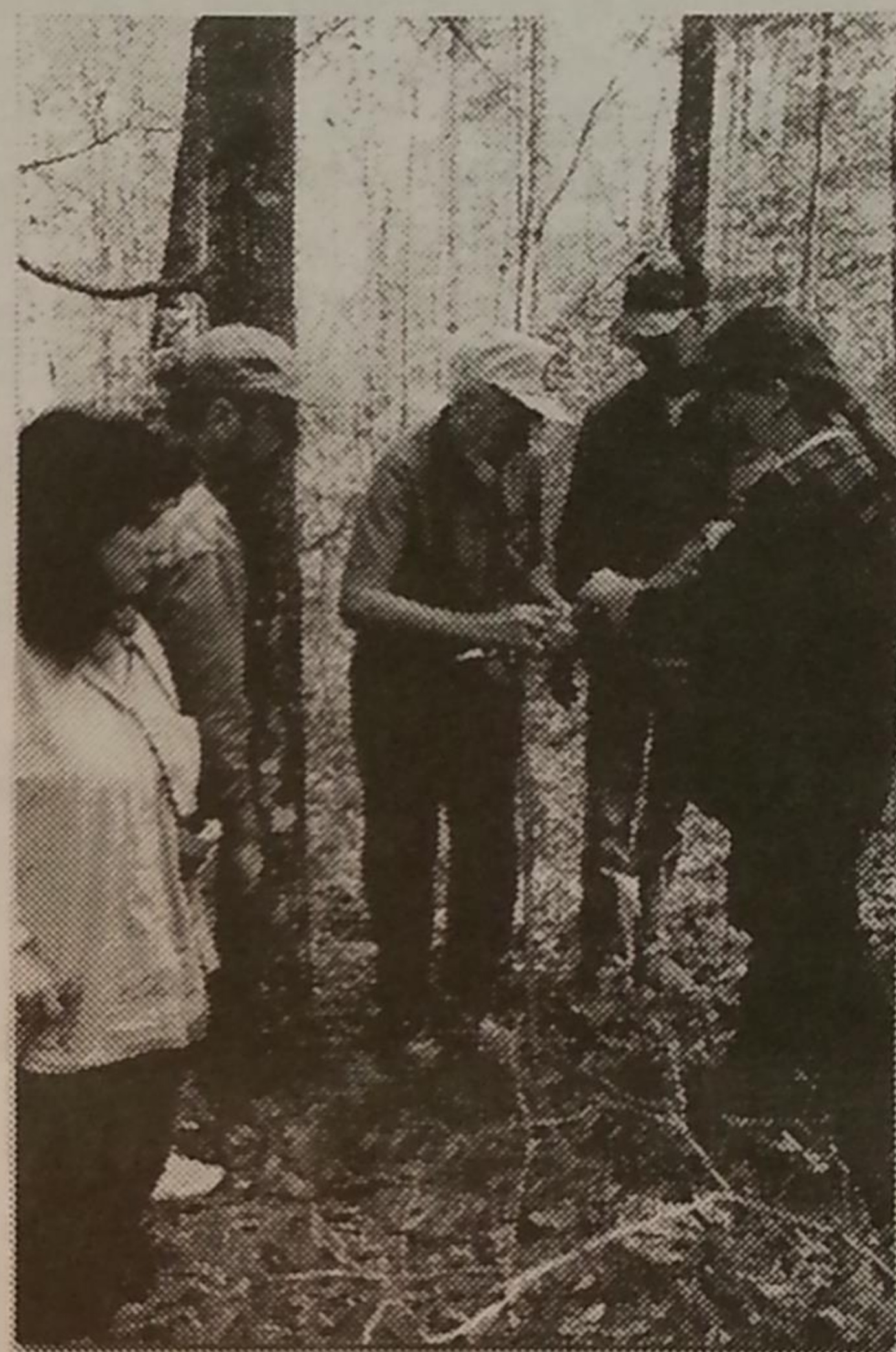
LNPS Loses a Favorite

Robert E. Murry, 80, of Simpson died Tuesday, November 24, 1998, in St. Frances Cabrini Hospital in Alexandria. Robert was a native of Pearl River County, Mississippi, and a graduate of Hattiesburg High School. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and was stationed in the Philippines.

He received a master's degree in Wildlife Biology from LSU School of Forestry and Wildlife and was a retired wildlife ecologist with the State Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. He served as an associate professor at LSU School Of Forestry. He also worked for the U.S. Fish and Game Service and retired from Environmental Services at Fort Polk. He was a member of Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and the Louisiana Native Plant Society. He was a recipient of the Karlene DeFatta Award of Excellence in conservation from the LNPS several years ago.

Survivors include his wife, Retha Pollock Murry of Simpson; three sons, Robert E. Murry Jr. of Corpus Christi, Texas, Harold Alan Murry of Alexandria, and Franklin Turner Murry of Houston, Texas; one daughter, Marilyn Murry Parker of Pineville; one sister, Francis Ira Murry of Summit, Mississippi and seven grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 65239, Baton Rouge, LA, 70896.



Robert Murry (center) examines & discusses a mammal skull found on the 1996 Bogs & Birds trip with LNPS members & his son, Harold (2nd from Left).

Photo by Rector Hopgood

Remembering Robert.....by Charles Allen

Robert Murry was a wonderful naturalist. He had, and was always happy to share it, much knowledge of plants, birds, geology, and of nature. He never met a person whom he could not talk to. His work ethic was tremendous. I remember the Fall trip to the Florida Parishes a few years ago. Robert, my son, Andy, and I camped. Later, a wheel came off of Robert's truck and we could not find the correct studs and lug nuts to fit his truck. Finally, he had to engineer the old ones. Andy was eating an ice cream sandwich and Robert took the wrappings from the ice cream sandwich and put them on the threads and then put the lug nuts on. He drove all the way home with the ice cream wrappers. Later, when he saw Andy, he said "I need you

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Prose from the president's pen...*Jim Foret, Jr.*

Greetings from the prez. This is my last chance to preach to ya'll the wonderful captured audience that you are. Sad news, Robert Murry is passed on. What a guy, I miss him already. We are all better because he chose to associate with us. Our friendship was brief, so I connect him with Vernon and Kisatchie districts KNF. I'm sure I'll feel his spirit when I visit there.

We must vote on a new slate of officers at this meeting. I feel you will like the group. If you don't, nominations will be accepted from the floor.

At the last annual meeting I had to turn the planning of the program over to another. This is my last hope to taint a program with my views of the world, especially the natural world. Our stated purposes as an organization are listed on the back of this cover (see back cover). My horticulturist side screams that I want our organization to better promote native plants and natives landscaping within our won communities (our Bird Man Bill F. has written a wonderful series on what is happening in Austin with relation to this, perhaps he will let us reprint it in our publication). We should lead by example and by encouraging and illumination; whether we promote our beloved native plants on their own merit or as habitat

for the accompanying hordes of animal life, it matters not, since the end is the same and we all win. We must help our fellow man feel that common strand that binds us all (animal, vegetable, and mineral) together. Only then can we hope to preserve "this wet green one that we live on," our spaceship Earth. Only then, by respecting the Earth and each other can we hope to enjoy what is just fine as created.

Watch out, I'm preaching to the choir again. Sorry.

Our fight to preserve wild areas is illuminated by small victories. Overall, we are not doing well in my humble opinion. In urbia and suburbia it is ditto again. Our neighbor is manicuring fence row to fence row, mainly because he knows no better, he actually thinks that this is how God intended our world to look. My hope is that the program this January will give us all fresh ammo to use in the war against ignorance. If each of us can go back home and influence one or two or five to develop a native plant/wildlife habitat, back yard or front yard, wouldn't that be just peachy. A grand start.

I have enjoyed working with you over the last two years, it has been my pleasure.

THANKS

Jim Foret, Jr.



You can e-mail Jim Foret at QRAZ36C@prodigy.com and Terry Erwin, the editor, and Beth, the LNPS Secretary at kalorama@iamerica.net

Letter to the Editor

Dear Terry,

While I am not a very active member of the LNPS, I do read your newsletter thoroughly and enjoy it very much. The articles are always very interesting and sometimes provocative. The latter so much so, that I feel the need to make a couple of comments about Kelby Ouchley's article on, "North Louisiana Prairies" (Spring '98)

First, in commenting about the name of Prairie Mer Rouge (red sea), he dismisses the idea that the name could have come from an abundance of red clover in the area. I'm sure that red clover was not introduced until later, but surely there are other native, prairie plants with red blossoms which could have inspired the name. What about one of the salvias (e.g., *Salvia coccinea*) or scarlet Gilia (*Ipomopsis rubra*)? The prairies were certainly much more than just green seas of monocot grasses, and early explorers often described them as full of

color. (ref. *America as Seen by Its First Explorers*).

Then about the bison not being common here. There was a forest buffalo that was very numerous in the open areas of the Eastern Woodlands from Pennsylvania south to Florida and Louisiana. (ref. *America as Seen by Its First Explorers*.) Iberville mentions them several times in the journal of his first visit to Louisiana in 1699. (ref. *Iberville's Gulf Journals*.) The French called them, "boeuf savage," to distinguish them from domestic cattle, and it is quite possible that Bayou Boeuf was named for them. So there were definitely buffalo along the Gulf Coast and they certainly could have helped maintain our prairies.

Thanks for making the newsletter so enjoyable.

Sincerely,
Marie Standifer
1244 Pastureview Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70810

Are Your Dues Due?

Check your mailing label. If the number above your name is highlighted, your dues are due with this issue. Please send your dues to the treasurer, Jessie Johnson, 216 Caroline Dormon Road, Saline, La. 71010. **Remember to send us your change of address.** The newsletter is sent bulk mail and will not be forwarded to you by the postal service.

Student or Sr. Citizen	\$5
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Corporate	\$100

The Louisiana Native Plant Society News is published four times per year. It is the official publication of the Louisiana Native Plant Society. The editor welcomes articles, notices of upcoming events, and book reviews of interest to native plant folks, as well as illustrations, poems, and prose. Deadlines for submissions are June 1st, September 1st, December 1st, and March 1st. Send any address changes to LNPS News, P.O. Box 126, Collinston, La., 71229.—Terry Erwin, editor.

Fall Field Trip Report: CAJUN PRAIRIE AND ARBORETUM TOUR.....by Charles Allen

Some came to photograph; some came to preview slides; some came to point; some came to look at praying mantises; some came to get painted; some came to look at prairie; some came to look at papillions (butterflies); some came to party; and most did all of the above. The Cajun Prairie and Arboretum Tour of October 16-18, 1998 was attended by more than 50 enthusiasts from all over Louisiana (New Orleans, New Iberia, New Llano, Baton Rouge, Elizabeth, Monroe, Lafayette, Coushatta, and Eunice).

The Friday night slide show included an overview of the prairie plants by Charles Allen. His show concentrated on the major families (sunflower, bean, grass, and mint) and also included others such as milkweeds, phlox, gaura, and meadow beauty. Malcolm Vidrine emphasized the butterflies of the prairie and showed slides of many including monarchs, buckeyes, gulf fritillaries, and zebra swallow-tails. He also talked about plants to attract butterflies and feed the larvae. Bruno Borsaria wrapped up the night with a discussion of how prairies could be used as sustainable agricultural systems. He pointed out with slides how prairies build soils.

Saturday morning at nine, the largest group of the weekend assembled at the Eunice Restored Prairie. The first "Kodak" moment was the emerging of a butterfly (gulf fritillary) from a cocoon on back of the restoration site sign. Close by were larvae of the gulf fritillary and adult gulf fritillaries were drinking nectar from wildflowers. The group



"In Over Their Heads"

LNPS members experience the tallgrass prairie as they wade around in big bluestem at a remnant prairie strip. Photo by Charles Ancona

wandered through the restored prairie enjoying the color and odor (or is it aroma or scent?) of the flowers and plants. The group broke up and re-assembled at the Duralde Restoration Site, a branch of the Lacassine Wildlife Refuge. Here the group viewed areas with restored prairie of different ages and restored by different methods. Several praying mantises were the stars of the shutters here.

Many of the group ate lunch at Mathilda's and enjoyed Cajun Barbecue. The only complaint that I heard was that there was too much food.

A meeting of the Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society was held on Saturday afternoon. This Society recently cranked up with the main purpose of preserving Cajun Prairie. The group was the recipient of 4.5 acres of land in Eunice and will be restoring that land. Watch for announcements of dates and help with this endeavor. You may join

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this organization by sending \$10.00 to Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society; C/O Dr. Charles Allen; Northeast Louisiana University; Monroe, La 71209.

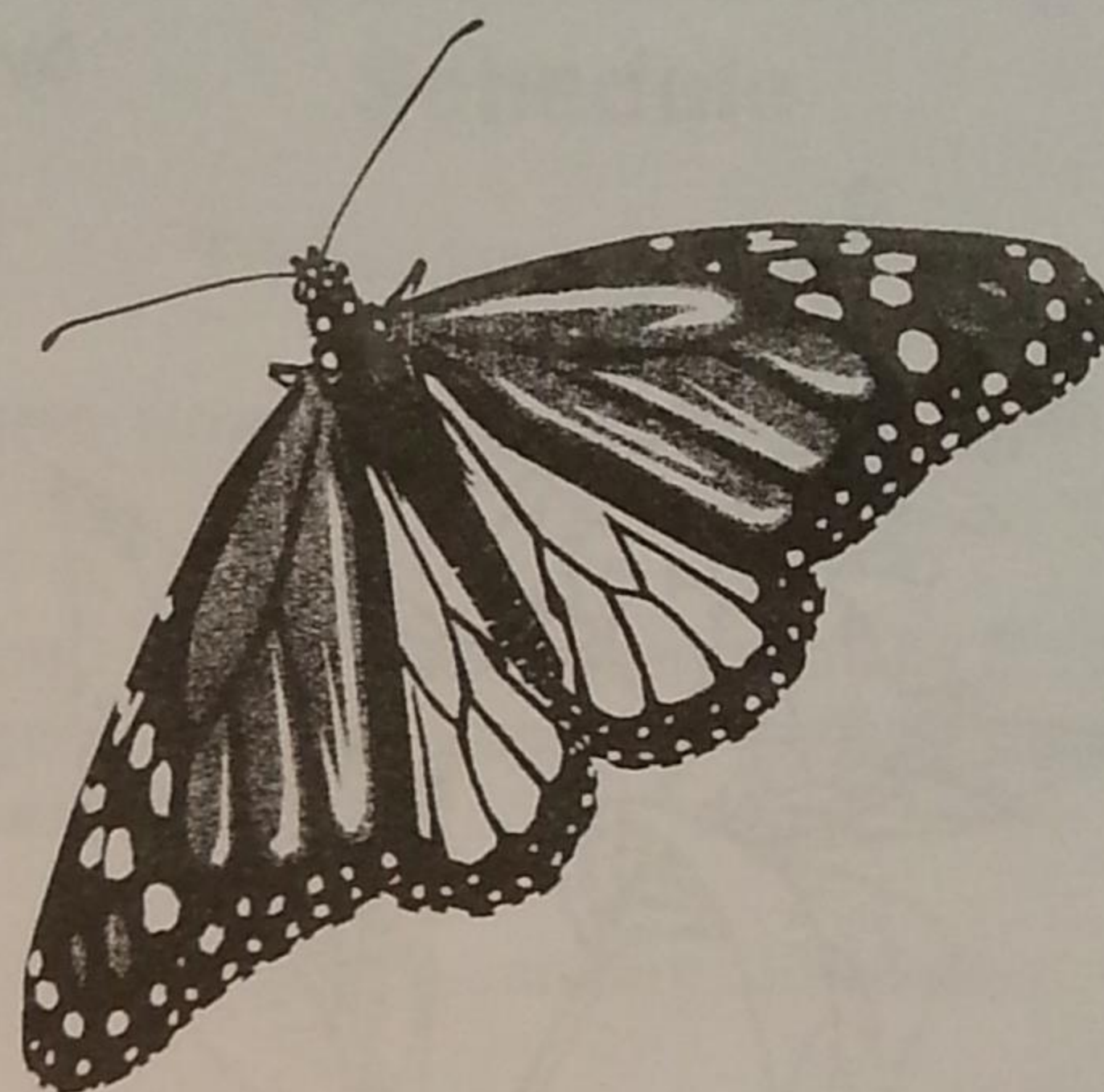
The group then traveled a short distance to view a remnant strip of prairie. The strip is near the community of Frey along an abandoned railroad track. Big bluestem, switch grass, drop seed, and Indian Grass were observed in their fall splendor. Flowers included Maryland Golden Aster, grass-leaved golden aster, common sunflower, one milkweed, sweet goldenrod, and mist flower.

Several of the participants assembled in downtown Eunice on Saturday night to enjoy the Folklife Festival. A large painted butterfly landed on the head of Charles Allen and remained there until Sunday.

On Sunday morning, the group was greeted at the Louisiana State Arboretum by Jim Robinson, Manager. He talked about Caroline Dormon and her influence on Forestry in Louisiana and her efforts in getting the Arboretum established. The enthusiasts then walked slowly along the trails and enjoyed the forest. This is a mature forest with lots of beech and magnolia and other woody plants such as witch hazel, spice bush, and paw paw. A few wildflowers were found such as cardinal flower, blue lobelia, pink mist flower, jump seed, and wild lettuce.

The Friends of the Louisiana State Arboretum held a meeting at 11 AM in the Caroline Dormon Lodge. This group works to improve the Arboretum and you are encouraged to join. Membership is \$10.00 per year per family. Mail checks to P.O. Box 173, Ville Platte, La 70586.

Thanks to the two sponsoring organizations: Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society and Friends of the Louisiana State Arboretum and to all who came and shared in the great outdoors.



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to eat some more ice cream sandwiches because I am having more problems with my tires"

Robert was talking once to the General at Fort Polk regarding the red-cockaded woodpeckers. Robert told the general that red-cockaded woodpeckers were terrible because they made your gumbo taste like turpentine. Robert's easy going nature and sense of humor made him a pleasure to be around. Robert was a kind-hearted person. I visited him once to pick blueberries and left with more blueberries than I paid for, plus squash, beans, corn, and several plants in pots. Robert knew more about the ecology and the plants and animals of baygalls than anyone else. He was the world's authority on baygalls. The annual Bogs and Birds Tour was his idea and he was a leader of that trip for many years. He figured out the secret to propagating the Carolina Lily and many of us Native Plant Society People have Carolina Lilies that Robert grew in pots from Simpson.

I have always felt that I was fortunate to have crossed and shared paths with Robert Murry. He will be missed.

Some notes on *Amsonia tabernaemontana*

by Carl Amason



***Amsonia* sp., Bluestar**
illustration by Julia Larke

One of the most satisfactory wildflowers that I grow is *Amsonia tabernaemontana*. It is easily grown from seed and easily grown in the garden. It has a wide distribution pattern in the state of Louisiana. It seems to be indifferent as to whether the soil is acid or neutral and I suspect that it does well in a slightly basic soil as well. I have seen it growing in well-drained sandy soils and in poorly drained clay soil. An excellent plant for beginners, it is mostly at home in light shade or sunny margins of woodlands. The growth pattern of the mature plant, which is a long lived perennial, gives the impression of "coming up blooming." In early to mid spring, immature leaves and buds elongate quickly into several stems (three to five) that grow up to twelve or more inches tall. All the while, leaves are enlarging and the buds turn into a cluster of true steel blue small star shaped flowers. In fact, one of the common names is Bluestars. It is a welcome and distinct flower in its time of blooming. Individual flowers are small; about one-half inch across in a

corolla of five narrow petals and the terminal cluster has perhaps 20 to 25 blue flowers. In the wild, the growing sites are usually poorly drained soil that becomes quite dry in early summer. Leaves are smooth (glabrous), and they vary a bit from alternate lanceolate to broadly elliptic, up to about two to three inches long and an inch or slightly more wide. It has a milky sap, is in the Dogbane Family, and is probably poisonous to the human system. The open flowers are eagerly sipped by passing butterflies. Otherwise, the plant has no serious diseases or insect pests. I recall no deer damages to the ones that I grow on the place. The plants are not demanding in their water or fertilizer and the leaves are green until late summer when they begin to show signs of going dormant.

During the while, seedpods develop in long slender pods or follicles in pairs. Usually there are only two or three pairs of follicles from each flower cluster. The follicles are characteristic of the Dogbane Family. Each follicle is about three or four inches long and contains about ten seeds each. The pods look like a tight roll of dried leaves rolled into a bundle the length of the firm pod covering that has been cut by scissors into sections of one-half inch by one-eighths inch in diameter, all dark in color and ready to plant. One of the easiest ways to plant the seeds is in a pot of good soil, slightly covered and set aside to the elements of the weather and next spring tiny green seedling appear. From time to time fertilize the developing seedlings with liquid fertilizer, or just keep them moist with plain water and grow them off for the warm growing season. Then they can be potted into larger pots or planted into the beds or borders or they can be left alone to grow winter roots. Usually just setting on the ground is adequate, as they don't seem to suffer from winter freezing.

There are several other species of *Amsonia* in

sides of the leaves and beneath the opened petals. It will grow in more sun and is as easily grown as the more common *Amsonia tabernaemontana*. There are many other forms and species of *Amsonia*, all variations on the same theme as a musician would say. Mostly the leaves are the major differences. Some are very narrow (ciliate), but all have blue flowers very much alike and seedpods or follicles almost identical in every feature. Perhaps the major fault is the short blooming season and then the rest of the growing season there no flowers, only leaves and developing seeds.

As much as I enjoy growing plants and seeing native plants used in the gardens of other people, generally I work mainly with common plants. There is nothing that pleases me more than to see large expanses of showy native plants in bloom or uncommon plants growing in sunny edges of woods or in their special habitats. It certainly excites me more than to see rare plants growing and holding their own in their special locations of special needs. Rare plants are for all to enjoy but please leave them alone. There are so many common plants to enjoy and the *Amsonia* species are easy to enjoy at home and in the field. *Carl Amason is a superior plantsman who lives and gardens near Calion, Arkansas. Carl suffered from another round with Lyme Disease this summer along with the drought, which put him out of circulation for a while, but he reports that he is recovering.*



Attention: All of you who have plants, t-shirts, books, and other items of interest to native plant folks to sell, display, share, and/or trade—please bring your wares to the winter meeting.

LNPS Winter Meeting Schedule

Friday, January 29, 1999

6:00pm: Covered dish meal shared by all present

8:00pm: A fine slide presentation by Rector Hopgood, entitled "Rector's Prairie: Time, Fire, & Space"

Saturday, January, 30 1999

8:00-9:00am Registration, visiting and shopping for native plants, t-shirts, reference books, herbal stuff, new clubs to join and so on. Great fun.

9:00-10:00am: **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**-Paul Davidson, Executive Director, Black Bear Conservation Committee and representing the La. Wildlife Federation-"Backyard Wildlife Habitats".

10:00-10:30am: Break and shopping spree.

10:30-11:30am: Dr. Malcom Vidrine-"Landscaping with Native Prairie"- this translates to lots of butterfly plants

11:30-noon: Ken Wilson- "Wilson's Wonderful Wildflowers" (split show, more to follow)

12:00-1:00 Lunch by caterer or on your own, followed by shopping extravaganza and a brief meeting of Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society.

1:00-2:00pm: Annual LNPS business meeting

3:00-4:00pm: Bill Fontenot- "Landscaping with Natives; Plant Selection and Placement".

4:00-5:00pm: Ken Wilson - "Wilson's Wonderful Wildflowers"; continued

Notice: A separate registration packet for the winter meeting will be sent to the membership, shortly.


The Louisiana Native Plant Society was founded in 1983 as a state-wide, non-profit organization. Its purposes are:

- œ to preserve and study native plants and their habitats.
- œ to educate people on the value of native plants and the need to preserve and protect rare and endangered species.
- œ to promote the propagation and use of native plants in the landscape
- œ to educate people on the relationship between our native flora and wildlife.

LNPS News

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