



From Our President

One of the great aspects of serving as chapter President for the year is working with our dedicated board members. The more I work with them, the more I appreciate and admire the high level of talent, accomplishment and dependability they are contributing.

Jim Smittle's and Betsy Farris's efforts seem non-stop and without them we could not function as a chapter. Betsy serves as Treasurer for both the state and our chapter. Linda Smittle has been an effective, yet gentle, newsletter editor and Dolores Williams has revitalized our WebPages. Carole Clark brings in depth experience with our local native plants and is a delightful trail guide. Tony Manasseri adds great energy and people skills to the board as well as an intimate perspective on organic gardening. Fran has provided us with first-rate speakers for the last several years.

This month I'm particularly appreciative of our vice president, Rodney Thomas. Few of my friends work as long and as hard at their day jobs as Rodney and a precious few give as much to promoting the appreciation of our natural world. His dedication is inspiring but I want to sing his praises month because of the wonderful field trip he arranged for us to BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas) on Saturday, August 15th.

I had not visited BRIT for 5 or 6 years and had not been in touch with any of the staff other than informally with several of the botanists affiliated with it. On our Saturday visit we were met by Gary Jennings, the librarian, who told us of the history of their book collection beginning in 1945 when Lloyd Shinnars started the herbarium at SMU that would later be acquired by BRIT and moved to Ft. Worth. Though Shinnars lived on a very modest academic's salary, his passion was such that he purchased and contributed the core of a collection that would exceed 6,000 volumes by the time of his death. The collection includes a number of volumes from the 17th and 18th centuries – and Mr. Jennings showed us several of those!

These older volumes were in good to very good condition and I learned that much of this was because books published prior to the mid-1800s were not printed on paper. When trees began to be harvested for paper the cellulose made for a high acid content and relatively rapid deterioration of the pages. Alas, the several books I have paid a bit of money for over the last 40 years were all published after the 1850s.

Following Mr. Jennings presentation. Ms. Tiwana Franklin spent over an hour introducing us to the herbarium. Raised in the Philippines and having done fieldwork in Peru, Ms. Franklin has had a rich botanical experience. She showed us samples of a number of north central Texas plants including poison hemlock, which is known to grow in

Sept. 1: Foristics & Herbaria

Presentation: Floristics Defined and the Role of Herbaria in North America with Dr. Nelson Rich of CCCC

Special Location for this Presentation: Collin County Community College: We will meet at 7:00pm on Tuesday, Sept. 1 in the Conference Center section AB at the Spring Creek Campus, Plano (2800 E. Spring Creek Parkway). The Parking area at the NE part of the campus would be closest to the Conference Center. The Herbarium is in the H wing (south end of building) and is closer to the parking area on the SE part of campus. A campus map can be found at <http://www.ccccd.edu/aboutus/springcreek.html>

From Our President (continued)

Bob O'Kennon who was at BRIT that morning working on a paper pointed out that simply chewing a leaf of the hemlock and spitting it out would leave enough toxin in your saliva to be fatal.

The paper Bob plans to publish regards an aesculus species that is a cross between Scarlet buckeye and the horsechestnut. This hybrid originated in Germany 200 years ago and the seeds probably came to Texas in the mid 19th century with the German immigration into coastal and central Texas. Coincidentally, several examples of this tree are growing by Hwy 5 in Fairview.

Sometime this month construction is to start on a new, and green, \$47 million home for BRIT. It will contain environmentally appropriate conditions (temperature 65 degrees, humidity 50%) for the books and the herbarium and should be completed in less than two years.

BRIT is a rich resource for all of us interested in our botanical heritage and seeking to improve our knowledge of plants. Rodney and I hope to return with more time to browse the books and periodicals and to learn more of the many ongoing activities. We should definitely schedule a return chapter visit after the new building is completed.

Bill Woodfin, Chalk Hill Farm

Monthly Meetings

January – October at the Heard
The Heard Natural Science Museum
(Laughlin Hall)

1 Nature Place; McKinney, TX
www.heardmuseum.org (972) 562-5566

7:00 p.m. – Doors open; visiting

7:15 p.m. – Program starts

After program – Short business meeting

October 6: How to Know the Grasses of the Blackland Prairie

Rich Jaynes

NOTE: No monthly meeting in November or December.

In place of the November/December meeting, plan to attend the annual pot luck dinner:

Sunday, November 1 at 4:00 p.m.

Pot luck dinner at the home of Jim & Linda Smittle
798 Highland Court; Allen, TX
(just a few miles from the Heard)
972 562-7356

2009 OFFICERS

President: Bill Woodfin
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Newsletter: Linda Smittle
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Questions? Contact 214-693-0103.

NPSOT News

Betsy Farris

LBJ Wildflower Conservation Conference

The conference is being held on September 16-18, 2009. NPSOT has donated \$1000 in support of this program. Click on the link below for information about the conference: <http://wildflower.org/tpcc/>

NPSOT will also have a joint Symposium with the Wildflower Center in 2010 with the theme of Conservation and Control. Sessions will include talks such as Conservation Compromise and Invasive Management Control. Tentative date is March of 2010.

2009 Symposium in Wichita Falls:

Host hotel is the Howard Johnson Plaza hotel in downtown Wichita Falls. Rooms will average at \$64 and will include discounts on breakfast and lunch.

Field trips added to the symposium agenda are Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge and Wild Catter Ranch.

2010 Symposium in Denton:

Will be held on the UNT campus. The Holiday Inn, two other large hotels and an RV park will be available for lodging.

Display(s) will honor the Founding members of NPSOT.

The Collin County chapter is on the symposium Education committee. If you would like to be a contributor on this committee contact Treasurer Betsy Farris.

Strategic Planning committee:

The immediate past president is responsible for forming any committee's related to this long range plan. A

Fundraising committee is currently being formed by 2008 past President Carol Feldman.

Calendar Updates

Oct 15-18, 2009: 2009 NPSOT Symposium (Wichita Falls)

Nov 1 (4:00 pm) Annual pot luck dinner at Jim & Linda Smittle's home

Oct 7-10, 2010: 2010 NPSOT Symposium (Denton)

Native Plant Society of Texas

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that promotes research, conservation and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach and example.

<http://www.npsot.org/CollinCounty/>