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REVIEW

If You Missed the January Members' Night...

by Rosemarie Parker

...**YOU MISSED A GOOD TIME**. We started with a sing-along of "Goldenrod, the Flower of Our Nation," written in 1907 and sung by Mabel McKinley, a niece of President McKinley, and writer of many songs. **Val Ross** arranged for an accompanying slide show of historical and contemporary images while we learned the tune, then led us as her mom played the piano! We ended with an evocative poem and slides by **Bob Dirig**, extolling the virtues of nettles as hosts for butterflies, while acknowledging the sometimes-irritating nature of the plant (*see pages 6-9*).

And in between, a host of interesting short topics! We *ooohed* and *aaaahed* over exquisite miniature buildings made of acorns, bark, and other plant matter at the New York Botanical Garden's annual holiday train show, courtesy of **Anna Stalter**. We learned from **Arieh Tal** of the hard-to-view pollination of *Lechea* (the pinweeds, Cistaceae), one of those plants that rewards close viewing. We marveled at **Gin Mistry**'s handiwork on a lovely (and scientifically accurate!) butterfly quilt (*see below*).

Krissy Boys briefed us on the best fall grasses, asters, and goldenrods to grow; then read Robert Frost's poem "The Tuft of Flowers." **Nancy Richards** highlighted problematic invaders in her garden, but followed with a heartwarming story of her trillium. **Susan Larkin** had us guessing the species of her wonderful close-up images. **Robert Wesley** had us all longing to be outside again, with his lovely photos of spring flowers and scenic views. **Rosemarie Parker** explained the new page of seedling images on the FLNPS website (*flnps.org*, then click on PLANTS & PLACES, and SEEDLING ID). And **Rick Lightbody** had us all thinking about the intricacy of the landscapes we explore – what we see, what we miss – with a pair of poems (one by Rick, the other, "When I Am Among the Trees," by Mary Oliver).

The "silent auction" included art works and many books, and netted FLNPS over \$100! The display table featured photos of unusual plants, an antique botanical article, and a cartoon.

Written feedback from those who attended shows a strong desire to make this an annual event, so the Steering Committee will give this serious consideration. People loved the variety, and would like to see even more. Many attendees highlighted the opportunity to learn more about fellow plant lovers, especially those who haven't presented at prior FLNPS meetings.

Thanks to **Rick Lightbody** for organizing the evening, and to all the presenters for accepting the challenge. ୧୦୧



GIN MISTRY (left) interprets her quilt with life histories and foodplants of butterflies, including the American Lady (lower) and Baltimore Checkerspot (right).

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REVIEW

Members' Night, January 2016

by Rosemarie Parker

Our January meeting was the second Members' Night, where we enjoyed a “botanical smorgasbord.” The format is still being tweaked, but both attendees and presenters gave encouragement to continue this type of meeting.

FLNPS has so many talented people, with interesting stories to tell. We saw amazingly detailed art photos of Canadian Horse Balm (*Collinsonia canadensis*) by **Susan Larkin** (the calyxes looked luminescent), and discovered the fall colors in a Maine salt marsh (*Salicornia*, or glasswort — yum!), courtesy of **Ken Hull**. **Susanne Lorbeer** reminded us of the nature in Robert Frost’s poetry, reading “A Passing Glimpse” (trying to identify plants while on a train), “Birches,” and “Dust of Snow.” *Nyssa sylvatica*, or Tupelo, is known for its wild honey and gorgeous fall color. **Arieh Tal** presented a lovely portrait of *Nyssa*, which is not very common here, but *can* be found, notably on lower Durfee Hill Road. Arieh’s close-up images of the tiny flower structure were fascinating. Grow it for beauty and wildlife.

Rubus is a very messy genus, and **Carri Marschner** engaged the audience in a group effort to find traits to distinguish the local natives and naturalized species. (*My learning*: It is true that raspberry fruits come off the plant hollow, while blackberries keep the “white stuff”; blackberries have ridged stems, evenly green leaves and “palmately compound leaves,” vs. smooth stems, white leaf undersides, and frequently “pinnately compound leaves” for raspberries; and at least *here*, the spindly blackberry that trips you in fields is *R. hispidus*.)

VERNE MORTON was a Groton photographer in the late 1800s-early 1900s, who documented the local scene, human and natural. **Gin Mistry** showed a framed original *Trillium* print, and a book of his black-and-white images; books and prints can be obtained at the History Center (check some out via Google — my favorite is the billion *Trillium* shot). Some native plants, e.g. *Hepatica* and *Trillium*, can work in a shady rock garden, as **Nari Mistry**’s photos showed. He also brought out the “plant lust” with images of his rock garden beauties from western North America and farther afield, all grown in Ithaca.

Stark views of Iceland’s landscape were presented by **Robert Wesley**, along with close-ups of species that can also be found in the higher elevations of New York and New England. There were many sighs (and travel plans?) evoked. The formal program ended with another round of “ooooohhs” and “aaaaahhs” for the stunning plant portraits of **Rick Lightbody** (“stupendous lighting,” says my note).

During the break, and before the program, we perused the exhibit table, admiring a large duck nest box made by **David Keifer**, and discussing plant microfossils from 18,000-year-old lake deposits brought by **Dan Karig**. Interestingly, both Dan and Robert Wesley mentioned *Dryas* — in NY now, and long ago. The Silent Auction featured books, sculptures, and several botanical prints (donated by **Camille Doucet**), and the proceeds will help cover travel costs for speakers.

Thanks to everyone who displayed, donated, and presented. The great part of this night, repeated frequently on the feedback form, is the diversity of topics — the opportunity to find so many neat botanical factoids in a short time. And, like the weather, if you aren’t thrilled with what’s happening now, just wait a minute. The goal of this event is to share experiences, ideas, fascinations, and items that wouldn’t make a 45-minute talk, but are nonetheless nifty. *So please think about what you might like to present or show next winter.*



*Quote from **Rudyard Kipling** (1917), *Just So Stories for Little Children*, “The Beginning of the Armadillos,” p. 112.

See answer on page 9.



What Is It?

“Curls up, but can’t swim —
Stickly-Prickly, that’s him!”*

(Fruits of a usually subtle native herb of the Finger Lakes Region.)

Contributed by
Mary Weiss-Andersson
Ithaca, N.Y.

REVIEW

Members' Night 2017

by Rosemarie Parker



If you missed this year's Members' Night, you missed an eclectic mix of botanical topics and presentations (and I hope you will help us ensure that future programs are equally interesting by looking at the end of this article under "Feedback"). Thanks to **Rick Lightbody** and all the presenters for putting together a very pleasant and informative evening. Here is a quick rundown, according to my notes.

Gin Mistry has a great native garden, sharing space with **Nari Mistry's** rock garden (remember last year's Members Night?). Gin gave a photo tour of spring, with lots of hints about what species are easy, how to get more Jack-in-the-Pulpits, etc. Everyone was invited to visit; Gin and Nari love showing their gardens to fellow plant lovers.

David Keifer encouraged us to visit Death Valley to see native plants, in a very different environment than the Finger Lakes. He recommends a visit in late March to early April, for reasonable temperature and lots of bloom. The desert bloom is spectacular in high rainfall years, but his shots from a "normal" year showed many treasures to find.

We explored the Shaw Nature Preserve near Gray Summit, Missouri, with **Arieh Tal**. The Preserve is 2400 acres of reconstructed tall grass prairie, and most of the plants are familiar to central New Yorkers. Arieh's photos showed lots of butterflies, lots of great blooms, and encouraged me to take a small detour the next time I am near St. Louis. Arieh recommends July-September for peak bloom.

Mary Squyres showed a very lively, time-lapse video progression of seasonal greening, blooming, shifting, and fading in a large perennial garden around her home. Native plants and ornamentals popped up, shriveled, and keeled over in time with the music. Fun!

Norm Trigoboff kept us guessing with his offbeat trivia contest. The connection between native plants and electronics? "Big Beautiful Roses Occupy Your Garden But Violets Grow Wild" or "Black Bananas Really Offend Your Girlfriend But Violets Get Welcomed" are both mnemonics used to remember the increasing strength order of color coded resistors. Factoid of the night for *my* mind was that Flying Squirrels are the most common squirrels in our Finger Lakes woods. We see the diurnal Grey Squirrels all the time, but those nocturnal guys are more numerous. Huh! [See Norm's "Plant Trivia Quiz" on page 8 and the Answers on page 16 in this issue.]

New York has some fascinating and beautiful rare flora, and **Ken Hull** is always on the lookout for a new spotting. He took us through a series of his finds, often traveling with botanists to undisclosed locations. And then hunting. He said that it took two hours for four people to find *one plant* (I think it was the White Camas) in an area about the size of the meeting room. That's dedication, and I am glad the single plant didn't get stepped on. Also glad that Ken brought a photo so I can enjoy it vicariously.

Robert Wesley showed some stunning photos of plants, landscapes, and rural scenes through the seasons. It is always such a pleasure to see Robert's photos. I particularly enjoyed his images of old graveyards.

Jean Gerow has been exploring the Ithaca Children's Garden, and she closed out the evening with a view of the many species (beyond plants & mini-people) that inhabit this oasis. Many native species have been planted over the years, especially in the bioswale, and the local fauna have noticed. Visit the bioswale for lots of amphibians, at least one Snapping Turtle (living, not concrete), and loads of late summer bloom.

Displays on the exhibit table included a 120-year-old Hemlock round from a Cornell Natural Area that had clearly had quite a range of conditions over its lifetime. If you were lucky, you might have caught **Susanne Lorbeer** with a display too small for the table: It was a wooden thimble, carved and painted by **Bill Dilger**, with recognizable species of purple, white, and yellow violets.



Feedback

Feedback forms were handed out at the event, to help the Steering Committee determine interest in continuing Members' Night, and what to change or maintain. If you did not attend, especially if it was not due to a conflict, we would really appreciate hearing from you about why you chose not to attend. We try to present programs of interest to the broad range of FLNPS members, and it helps to hear your opinions. Please send comments to flnps-mn2017@ricklightbody.com or info@flnps.org.

Thanks!