

The WBA Newsletter

February, 2000

From the President's Desk

by Idie Ulsh

Welcome to the first issue of the WBA - Washington Butterfly Association - Newsletter! We are a young group, and very enthusiastic in our pursuit of watching and photographing the butterflies of Washington! There are several ways to reflect on what we are doing and why we are here:

- Watching, photographing, and (sometimes) rearing Washington butterflies, enjoying their natural beauty, diversity of form and color, and learning more about how they live in their natural environments.
- At one end of the spectrum are those interested in the basic appreciation of butterfly form and color, while at the other end some want to learn and understand the scientific details. Most of us fall somewhere in between - there is room for all of us, no matter what level we might be interested in pursuing.
- Our activities range from Butterfly Gardening at home to campaigning to preserve species and habitats in whatever way we can within WBA, and with the support of the parent NABA, and other organizations..
- Most of all, we want to have fun watching butterflies, promote and enjoy the fellowship and connection among members, appreciating our own diversity and learning as we expand and grow WBA activities.

Here are some particulars that you will want to know:

WBA Meetings are the FIRST Wednesday of each month in 2000: January 5, February 2, March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, December 6.

Meetings are held at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture (3501 NE 41st Street), begin at 7:00 p.m., using the first fifteen minutes for social reception and viewing of displays.

Officers/Board Members:

Idie Ulsh	President
Dave Nunnallee	Vice President/Web Page
Kathe Watanabe	Secretary/Membership
David Branch	Treasurer
Jon Pelham	Science Advisor
Richard Lindstrom	Field Trip Coordinator
Tom O'Connell	Field Trips
Mike Van Buskirk	Newsletter Editor
Jo Nunnallee	Hospitality
Richard Youel	Member-at-Large
Vivian Gross	Annual Conference

Announcements and Coming Events

WBA Meeting Programs

- Feb 2: "Springtime Blues - Part 1" Jon Pelham and Dave Nunnallee will show slides and discuss key characters to help identify members of this group.
- March 1: "Butterfly Gardening" - Claire Hagen Dole shares invaluable tips on attracting butterflies to your yard.
- April 5: Butterflies of the Amazon - Dave & Jo Nunnallee share their recent adventures to the Amazon

Washington Field Trips in 2000

General Field Trip Notes:

- Be prepared to pay drivers for gas - - costs may differ depending on the length of the trip (Carpool drivers do not pay, and receive the gas money).
- Trip limits are 14 people + the trip leader, WBA members have priority.
- Before March 12 contact Idie Ulsh , after March 12 please contact Richard Lindstrom for further trip details

March 2000 1) Saturday, March 25, 2000 Schnebley Coulee *, Kittitas County (Eastern Washington) April 2000 2) Saturday, April 8, 2000 Juniper Dunes *, Franklin County (Eastern Washington) <i>* Trip dates may change (earlier, later, or be canceled) depending on the upcoming season. Also, additional trips may be scheduled on a short-term basis. Updates and further announcements will be made by the trip leaders prior to and during that month.</i>	May 2000 3) Saturday, May 6, 2000 Lake Cushman *, Mason County, (Western Washington) 4) Saturday, May 13, 2000 Scatter Creek *, Thurston Country (Western Washington) 5) Saturday, May 20, 2000 Durr Road/Umtanum Ridge *, Kittitas Country (Eastern Washington)
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- NABA Biennial Meeting, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, May 18-21, 2000. See NABA website for details
- WBA Annual Meeting, Dates to be announced

Welcoming Words from Tom O'Connell

What could be more fun than being a part of something brand new? Especially if that something is likely to last a long time and prove to be important in the future of lots of people like ones self? That "spirit" pervades WBA, as some of us have taken to calling our new Washington Butterfly Association.

Exactly forty years ago, I had a hand in starting another institution: I was the founding president of the first community college in what was to become a bustling state system in Massachusetts. The few of us folks who were in on the start-up of that two-year college even got to name it (Berkshire Community College), and to choose the college colors (Blue and Green).

I have been reminded several times of those heady days since Idie Ulsh assembled some of us ardent butterflyers to form a new institution - our very own. We would be following the lead of several dozen other states and regions to be part of a parent organization - also very new - the North American Butterfly Association, Inc. (known as NABA).

Some of us who formed part of that tiny group called together by Idie in early 1999 were relatively new butterflyers, like me, and some had butterflyed for decades and had become professionals, like Jonathan Pelham, or long time, capable amateurs like Dave Nunnallee and Idie Ulsh. Some of us like best to go out into the field to identify butterflies we spot. Some of us are interested in photographing butterflies. Some of us are active butterfly gardeners (do I qualify if all I have is to plant one butterfly bush - *Buddleia davidii* - in my tiny Seattle patio? Well, never mind about my qualifications, since I started to write this I have enjoyed watching a Woodland Skipper and A Cabbage White flitting around my solitary bush. I FEEL like a butterfly gardener.)

And now our small group of starters-up have been joined by more than sixty others of you (now more than a 100! - Ed.) who have signed up to be part of our new "WBA." We're off and running! I'll bet we'll some day be nearly as active and bubbling as our older sister in Los Angeles - called "LANABA," if you please! I've been privileged to butterfly with some of the "LANABA's," and have learned a lot from them.

I'm glad that, like some of you, I have added butterflying to birding as among my favorite activities, and I'm glad I'm one of you in being "present at the creation" of WBA.

By Tom O'Connell (September 2, 1999)

Special Notes - Mardon Skipper Now Considered "Endangered"

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has recently changed the status for the *Mardon Skipper* (*Polites mardon*),. The following excerpt is from the December, 1999 Wildlife Diversity Division Monthly Report.

"Listing Activity - Presented listing activity proposals for the Mardon Skipper, Northern Leopard Frog, and Olympic Mudminnow to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The Commission unanimously approved the recommendations to classify the *Mardon Skipper* and Northern Leopard Frog as endangered species, and to designate the Olympic Mudminnow as a sensitive species."

WBA Open Positions

The WBA is looking for members who want to contribute some time and energy into supporting various aspects of our organization. We are looking for:

- A Program Chair Person
- A Book Sales Person (also T-shirts and other items sold by WBA)
- Publicity Person

If you have interest in these positions, please contact Idie Ulsh, for more information. Washington Butterfly Association,

PO Box 31317, Seattle, WA 98103-1317

It was 1970, long ago in a galaxy far, far, away. We all were still feeling the magic of having landed men on the moon for the first time the year before, Vietnam was raging, and Haight-Ashbury was the seat of a rebellious youthful culture, entertained by the music of such icons as Janis Joplin and The Doors. ATM cards, cell phones, CD's and other electronic wizardry had not hit us yet, and computers were mostly large, ungainly machines that took up space in large rooms at NASA or the UW. However, there still were lots of butterflies...

I was a student at the University of Washington, studying Zoology and Botany, intensely interested in butterflies and moths. You might not have recognized me then, through all the curly muttonchops, tall and skinny with those ugly black-framed glasses that characterized the times. My butterfly buddy was also an unlikely looking sort, a burly football player from Yakima Valley College named Jon Pelham. Like me, Jon had been interested in butterflies since childhood. We were young, and we were intense about butterflies!

During the previous two or three years, we had spent time in the field getting to know each other, energetically going out to find every Washington butterfly in whatever way we could. In the "in-between-trip" times and off season, we reared butterfly species as well as an assortment of the larger Silk and Sphinx moths that we obtained as eggs from other Lepidopterists all over the U.S. Jon was quickly becoming expert on just about every butterfly—identification, host plant, habits, and overall ecology.

It was always a challenge to get out into the field in those days, since neither of us had a car, and we were captive to parents, sympathetic friends, and older Lepidopterists who would let us tag along. How frustrating were the many long, hot, summer days that we were stuck in Seattle. Once, in desperation, we even took a bus and hitchhiked to a good collecting area near Roslyn, "camping out" with nothing more than a few candy bars, nets, and sleeping bags, in weather that was thankfully forgiving of our youthful folly. The next morning we were "rescued" by a sympathetic Lepidopterist from Ellensburg.

We were quite lucky to have good mentors such as Dr. Dennis Paulson, Dr. Melville Hatch, Dr. Dave McCorkle, Don Frechin, Dan Carney, E.J. Newcomer, and others who did their best to guide our interests. Dr. Bob Pyle was a good friend and also an occasional companion of ours at that time, taking photographs for his first book, "Watching Washington Butterflies," which was also his Master's Thesis at the UW College of Forestry, and the first of many popular books he would write.

Now it was going to be different! My Dad, Floyd, stressed in his insurance business, was always looking for ways to relax and be active outside, offered a car, overnight hotel accommodations, and companionship for our first really big trip. We were going after The *Astarte Fritillary* (*Boloria astarte*)! For years we had heard about Hart's Pass and Slate Peak in the Pasayten wilderness area of Okanogan County, and the elusive arctic butterflies like the *Astarte Fritillary* that lived there. It had been mostly a dream, and we had not been able to find anyone who would take us quite that far (There was no North Cascades Highway yet, so it was a long drive to get there!)

And what a trip it was! We arrived on a sunny morning in early August, struggling to keep our balance in the howling winds and slippery rock scree of Slate Peak. Persistent snow banks lined the north side of the pass. It was warm, though, and we immediately could see butterflies! Grabbing our nets, we were quickly reduced to gasping, noticing despite our youth, running around at more than 7,000 feet took some amount of extra energy. The medium-sized dusky orange butterflies that whizzed by our faces and made us yelp turned out to be the *Astarte Fritillary*, and they were plentiful. It was one of the most exciting butterfly days I can remember, and one that I'll never forget! We also saw lots of other great butterflies, including the equally choice *Melissa Arctic* (*Oeneis melissa*), as well as the *Common Branded Skipper* (*Hesperia comma*), *Rocky Mountain Paranssian* (*Parnassius smintheus*), *Anise Swallowtail* (*Papilio zelicaon*), *Indra Swallowtail* (*Papilio indra*), *Western White* (*Pontia occidentalis*), *Mormon Fritillary* (*Speyeria mormonia*), *Arctic Fritillary* (*Boloria chariclea*), *Anicia Checkerspot* (*Euphydryas anicia*), *Edith's Checkerspot* (*Euphydryas editha*), and other species. That evening over dinner and in the hotel at Winthrop we talked for hours about how much fun the day had been. That evening, Jon and I smiled at each other across the table as we realized that we had also permanently converted my Dad into a Lepidopterist. And when the weather turned cloudy the next day, our spirits were hardly dampened, and we had a great time looking for caterpillars of the *Two-Tailed Swallowtail* (*Papilio multicaudatus*) on Choke Cherry saplings lower down in elevation along a creek, in between bouts with rattlesnakes (ask Jon about that one!)

We came back to Slate Peak in 1972, since the *Astarte Fritillary* only flies on even-numbered years, and it was even more exciting than the first trip! By then we were a little more seasoned, and had learned much in the two years away. During the first day walking along the ridge near Slate Peak, both Jon and I were standing next to Dr. Dave McCorkle as he netted the first specimen of the *Lustrous Copper* (*Lycaena cyprea snowi*) ever seen in Washington!

It was exciting to do those trips for the first time thirty years ago, and fun to realize we can do it again this coming season, since it is an even-numbered year, and good for the *Astarte Fritillary*, *Melissa Arctic*, and *Lustrous Copper*. I think a WBA field trip to Hart's Pass and Slate Peak this coming summer is one of the ways we can really celebrate the new millennium!

Species Profile: The Painted Lady

by Dave Nunnallee

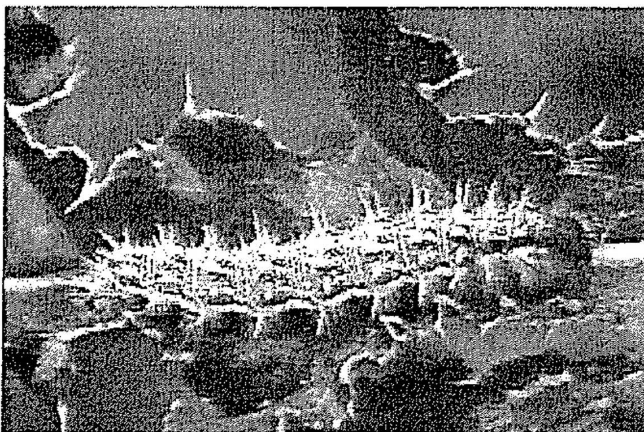
Although WBA is less than a year old we have already established a tradition, which we call the Species Profile. At each membership meeting one of our members presents an in-depth discussion, together with slides, of one species of butterfly. For the newsletter we will recap one of these profiles, and for this issue it will be the Painted lady.

The Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui* (kar'-doo-ee), belongs to the very large family of brushfoot, or Nymphalid, butterflies, the largest butterfly family in the world. This family includes admirals, anglewings, tortoiseshells, fritillaries, checkerspot and crescents, and is currently being expanded to include many other major groups.

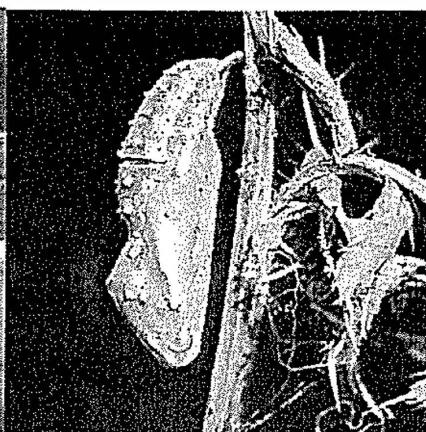
The Painted Lady is considered the most cosmopolitan butterfly in the world, occurring throughout much of Eurasia, Africa, North America, northern South America, and even Australia. Locally the 'Lady' occurs throughout Washington State, and has been reported here from early April to mid November.

But the Painted Lady cannot survive Washington's cool winters. Each fall some are thought to migrate south, probably to California, but most remain in Washington where virtually all perish, and each spring replacements must migrate back north to repopulate our state. The Painted Lady is a common species further south, but its abundance is extremely variable here in Washington, depending on population outbursts further south. During the summer of 1999 Painted Ladies were virtually absent from Washington State, but in some years the species is so abundant that television news broadcasts sometimes cover the event. As Painted Ladies are widely sold commercially for classroom use and for weddings, aberrant sightings may occur in Washington State at any time.

Painted Lady larvae (caterpillars) feed on a wide variety of food plants, which is surely critical to the worldwide success of the species. Locally the larvae most often prefer thistles, where they build individual silk nests for protection. The caterpillar pupates into a rather spiny, hanging chrysalis, gray to gold colored, sometimes on the food plant but more often on nearby plants.



Larva - Last Instar



Chrysalis



Adult - Dorsal View

Membership Form

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<https://wabutterflyassoc.org/membership/>

Links and Web Sites

Each month we'll add a few more electronic links for members, so that you will be able to access different butterfly references.

Butterflies of North America (Great photographs!)

- <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/bflyusa/bflyusa.htm>

Finally...

- Did you take some great butterfly watching trips last year that you'd like to tell us about?
- Do you have some butterfly gardening tips to share?
- Or, some other story to tell us?

Please consider writing these up, or anything that you would like to share about Washington Butterflies or your adventures with them. We welcome any and all of your contributions to the WBA Newsletter! Thanks !