



*G'nun**

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

P.O. Box 31317 Seattle WA 98103
<http://wabutterflyassoc.org>

*G'nun is the official greeting of WBA. It is derived from the name of common Washington butterfly food plants, of the genus *Eriogonum*.



Hoary Comma from the Cascade Butterfly Project.
(M. Weiss)

In this issue:

President's Message [p 2](#)

Watching Washington Butterflies [p 3](#)

Cascade Butterfly Project [p 5](#)

Upcoming Programs

November 4, 7:00 pm – Gary Bernard: Cool Ants on Hot Desert Sand, Cool Moth Pupae, Hot Vision, and Blind *Vanessa cardui*.

How do ants survive the afternoon heat, running around in the Saharan Desert? How do tropical moth pupae keep from being cooked by the sun? Answer: High-tech layered overcoats. Heat is required for high-performance vision of flying butterflies and moths. Watch them heat up. Another requirement for good vision is proper diet. Beware of commercially supplied lab diets for rearing *Vanessa cardui*.

December 2 – To be announced – Center for Urban Horticulture – 7:00 pm

January – To be announced – Winter Party / Potluck / White Elephant Gift Exchange

February 3 – To be announced – Center for Urban Horticulture – 7:00 pm

Tom O'Connell 1925-2015

Marty Witt



Tom O'Connell (R. Youel)

Tom O'Connell, one of the original founders of WBA, died on Tuesday, October 20 at the age of 90. Tom was active in the club until about 5 years ago. He had been living on the assisted living floor at Bayview Manor for the last couple of years and was in their nursing unit for the last month after a hospitalization in September. Although he had not been recognizing people for some time he remained remarkably physically capable and walked without benefit of a walker. Tom was of the Idie variety which is to bird by ear while butterflying. He loved to ramble through the meadow, butterfly net at the ready while calling out bird identifications with his great hearing. I was lucky to spend many of those times with him - and Richard Lindstrom, of course. Good memories to live on.

Richard Youel



Marty Witt. (M. Weiss)

One of our butterfly friends, Marty Witt, passed away on September 26 after an extended illness. Marty was a mountaineer, a lover of birds, butterflies, animals, plants and preserved them all in her stunning photographs. Her infectious laugh will be missed by many.

Melanie Weiss

President's Message

You deserve a great round of applause, and you got it! Three dozen butterfly lovers, scientists and photographers, gathered in Corvallis, Oregon for the annual Northwest Lepidopterists Workshop broke into cheers and put their hands together *for you*, the members of the Washington Butterfly Association, when I announced to them that we had just completed the long paper trail to become formally recognized as an independent non-profit. The feds had sent word two weeks previous that we of WBA are now an independent 501(c)(3)! I want to thank you all for your support of this bold move, and, in so doing, for deepening our link to a vibrant community of scientific lepidopterists of the Pacific Northwest. We also hereby retain significant financial assets for the work we can do at home to develop awareness of our area butterfly fauna, protect their habitats and assist educators and naturalists who want to help us get out our message. I would add that we are especially indebted to Al Wagar and Richard Youel of the WBA leadership for their perseverance in managing the myriad of rather unrewarding particulars involved in working all this through, and Carol Nygren, for her legal counsel.

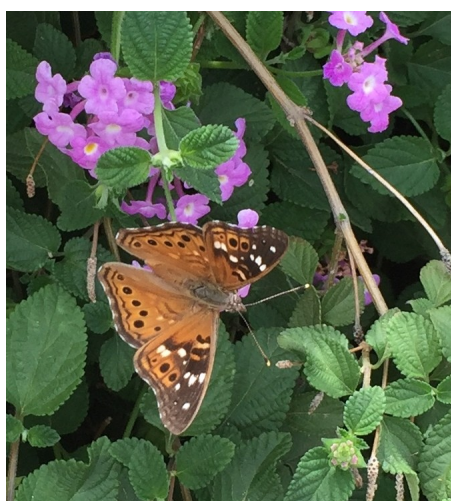
Many of you took part in visioning conversations that Brenda McCracken, myself and other Board members initiated during the past summer to better determine what additional experiences you would like us to offer as an organization. Moreover, WBA is now blessed with funds through some recent bequests that need to be put to use. Through a review of your feedback and consultation with one another, we became determined that we shall help more youth get involved

(Continued on page 6)

Watching Washington Butterflies with Bob Pyle

Number Twenty-three Are There Hackberry Butterflies in Washington? Part Three: The Second Expedition

Reviewing, both Ray Stanford and Charles Rogers had made convincing autumn sightings of Hackberry Emperors along the Snake River in southeastern Washington near the Oregon border. In Part I (August 2013), I reviewed the butterfly's range and natural history, and set up the challenge. As Part II (November 2013) ended, David Branch and I had retreated from deepest Asotin County into driving snow, having enjoyed a fine October field trip with lots of butterflies, while making no progress in confirming the species' occurrence in the state. This year, I resolved to return in the season of the Hackberries' accustomed flight during summers of my youth in Colorado. I hadn't reckoned on it being the hottest, driest summer on record.



Male Hackberry Emperor, on *Lantana camara*, Dove Mtn. Tucson AZ. (D. Branch)

Starting from Clarkston on July 3rd, I neared the habitat at 10:30 A.M. South of Captain John's Rapid, small seeps off the cliffs with Teasel and White Sweet-clover proffered just a lone Gray Hairstreak and a Cabbage White. The rocky shoreline of the Snake, flowery and full of puddles last fall, was an arid alkaline line of bony white above the water. At Heller's Bar, the river itself thrummed with dozens of big-engine watercraft of fishermen and holiday boaters seeking the cool of the water. I made my getaway from the noisy, smelly fleet by turning up the Grande Ronde River. This confluence was where my party found the first (and still only) Dainty Sulphurs in the state, in August of 1975. Forty years! I couldn't believe it.

My objective was a substantial grove of mature Net-leaved Hackberry trees across the dusty, stony road from the Grande Ronde River, a mile above the Snake, not far below the bridge over to the private riverside settlement of Rogersburg and the steep little jeep road to Oregon. I'd spotted this grove with David, and thought it looked just right for *Asterocampa celtis*. Used as a hunters camp, it had a fire circle in the middle, and gave good shade from the hot and heightening sun. There was no nectar, but Hackberry Butterflies don't come to flowers much anyway, if at all. But they love noxious substances, so I had been

working on a bait for them all year. Now, at noon, I took out my special preparation: rotted blackberries and bananas, months-old oyster and clam juice, stale beer, and several other disgusting ingredients. I missed a bet by failing to stop and gather in a fresh rattlesnake roadkill that morning, but I did collect and employ some still-moist road apples from cattle foraging on slim pickings. After spreading these delights on log and stone and trunk and stump, I anointed them with the ever-popular uric acid, and then sat back to watch the butterflies flood in, powerless to resist my bait's olfactory draw.

And it really was like that! Within ten seconds of opening the bottle that I poured over the trunks, a Red Admirable popped up and perched until I'd finished before imbibing. Within one minute, a worn, bird-struck Large Wood Nymph appeared and took up a perch on the smelly bark. Both of these, and others of their kinds, remained all afternoon. But the bait-loving Hackberries did not deign to accept my sweet offerings. It was a problem that the liquids tended to evaporate in no time, and the solids (cut oranges, overripe bananas) dried out too soon, diminishing their ability to broadcast volatile scent. It was another problem that the temperature hit, then exceeded, 100 degrees Fahrenheit. And before long, I found it obligatory to retreat from my stifling grove to the cool, refreshing ripples of the Grande Ronde.

In that oven, the river was heaven. And there were butterflies: Woodland and Colorado Skippers, Mylitta Crescents, Purplish Coppers, Orange Sulphurs, and a big female each of Lorquin's Admiral and Viceroy (I have caught a hybrid between the two species here before). Most interestingly, I came upon a colony of tiny Acmon Blues, associated with

Twin Clover along the streamside; a few thousand yards from where we'd found the autumn brood on Snow Buckwheat. But on the whole there were far fewer species and individuals than in October 2013. The great heat seemed to be draining life out of the butterflies almost as much as out of me.

But I was revived by the extravagance of life attracted and allowed by this little river. Along with the flurries of whirligig beetles, there were thousands of pairs of bluet damselflies of at least two species, some in hoop, but most positioned with the females laying eggs in the submergent vegetation, accompanied by the protective males still clasping them behind their heads. Then there came along a spectacular big pair of Green Darner dragonflies, our state insect, in the same posture but in flight. And as if they weren't sexy enough, as I emerged from a wade onto a tiny beach, I spotted at one end of it an enormous fat pair of Western Toads in happy amplexus. Golly, did they look content and complacent! Turkeys and deer came down to drink, and there were otter tracks.



Ovipositing Green Darners (T. Tetzner)

Late in the afternoon, the day cooling just a little, I walked back and forth along the county road downstream from Heller Bar, above the canopy of the Hackberry forest that lines the Snake River here. This is where Charles Rogers had his sighting. Viewing conditions were perfect. But all I saw were hundreds of big, handsome orb weavers and their webs strung from bough to bough, and whole families of insect-hawking Say's Phoebes: from both of which I deduce that the predation rate for butterflies here could be formidable. Nor could I see any evidence of the feeding damage characteristic of Hackberry larvae, or the caterpillars themselves, or their chrysalides. Both of these stages are beautiful and cryptic, but distinctive when one has the search image, as I still do from great Hackberry hunting in my boyhood neighborhood. As the evening song of the Canyon Wren began to climb the hot basalt walls, I withdrew to Asotin for the night, to cool off at last and make plans for a renewed search the next morning.

Came the Fourth of July, and an even crazier scene around the boat launch at Heller Bar. Once again, my Hackberry grove up the tributary was a quiet oasis. And then came the first really promising event in this whole enterprise to date. As I was investigating a probable Common Sootywing along the dusty track between the grove and the river, a butterfly appeared around the edge of a large Hackberry occupied by a Lazuli Bunting in full throat. It ducked into the foliage for a moment, then emerged again, and zoomed off across the road and the dry steppe toward a big stand of Hackberries in the rimrock and broken flow of the canyon walls to the north. I got one decent look at the ventrum in fast flight past me, at maybe ten feet. Definitely a nymphalid, it looked purply-tan—the right color, size, and flight pattern for a male Hackberry Emperor. The only other candidates I could imagine were a dull Buckeye (also never collected in the state, though seen and photographed last year), or an even duller Painted Lady. But the "jiz" I got (as the birders say) was definitely that of a Hackberry Butterfly.

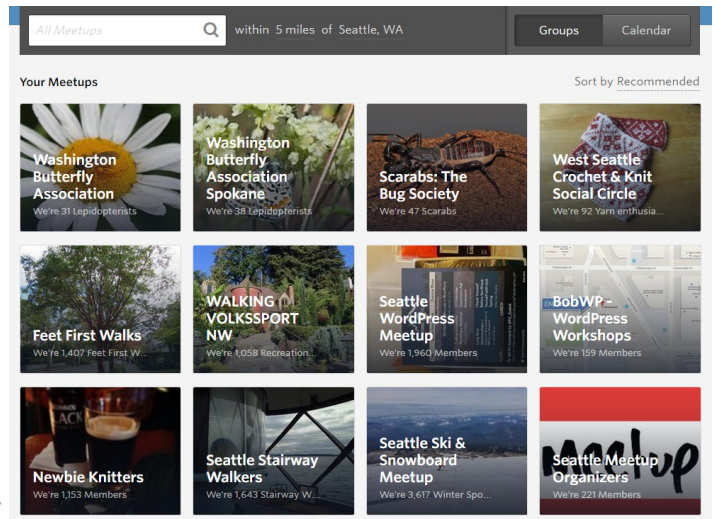
And so, thus encouraged, I retreated from the torrid canyon of the Snake, up Couse Creek, to the long, steep Sherry Grade, past Oregon Swallowtails, and finally up into the green hay, wheat, and pines of the Anatone plateau, where great numbers of Horned Larks and Western Meadowlarks harvested an outbreak of grasshoppers. Then way down to cross the Grande Ronde far upstream from where I'd been, and way back up, and on into Oregon. In the following week, I would spot twenty-five species of butterflies on the Zumwalt Prairie of Wallowa County; and then twenty in Klickitat County on my way home. But it was that one purply-brown flash on the Fourth of July that really got me excited, and made the whole trip worthwhile.

I also learned, from a Snake River authority I met in Wallowa, that the site of Ray Stanford's original encounter with a Hackberry Butterfly that landed on him at a jet-boat rest area opposite China Garden Landing, was actually in Oregon—not Washington! (It's so close to the unmarked border that it was very difficult for Ray to tell which state he was actually in.) So we now have putative sightings from both Washington and Oregon, as well as obscure records from Idaho, across the river. If the population is in fact there, it must be in very small numbers so far. But I feel we are closing in—and I will be back next year! I hope it won't be so darned hot.

Publicity by Carolyn Heberlein

In a publicity effort to increase membership in the Washington Butterfly Association, a Meetup.com group was created on August 12, 2012. After 26 months, we now have 32 people who have joined the Seattle group. I cannot say how many of these people have attended a meeting or joined us on a field trip. Nor can I say how many have become paying members. However, it does show interest in our programs.

At the same time, I reached out to Scarabs: The Bug Society. They now have 49 people who have joined. They encourage their members to sign up with Meetup.com. They feel that in addition to publicity, it also is a vehicle for announcing upcoming meetings. People who RSVP for a meeting are sent a reminder a few days before the meeting. There was some fear that too many people would show up and that the small class room at the back of the Burke Museum would be overflowing. That has not happened. The meetings are full with 25-35 people attending each one.



On March 19, 2015, we started another meetup group: Washington Butterfly Association: Spokane. In a short 7 months, there are 45 members. The second meetup was needed because of the way meetup works. We needed a group in Eastern Washington to get the nature lovers in that part of the state who were looking for groups within 50-100 miles of where they live. Classes at Spokane Falls Community College taught by John Baumann were listed in this Meetup. Also the September 29 "Share the Wealth" meeting at the Spokane Library was listed.

By now, you are probably asking how this all works. Meetup.com is free for participants. You sign up, then indicate what your interests are. Then they look for groups in your area. I usually look for groups within 5 miles of Seattle. The distance from you can be set to 2, 5, 10, 25, 50, 100, or any distance. My first group was Feet First Walks where I am a walk leader. My interests are walking, knitting, nature, and WordPress (which is what I use for our new web pages). Meetup.com collects fees from the groups that are set up on its web pages. WBA and Scarabs share this expense.

Cascade Butterfly Project



Naches Loop Trail. (M. Weiss)

The Cascade Butterfly Project is a long term citizen science project monitoring butterflies at Mt. Rainier National Park and the North Cascades National Park. We had an interesting summer this year given the early hot weather. As a result, the snow melted out in many areas in June, and the plants flowered several weeks ahead of the normal time frame. WBA is participating by monitoring the 1,000 meter transect on the Naches Loop trail. We had 8 enthusiastic WBA members volunteer this past summer. Volunteers monitor butterflies and plant phenology along the transect. We generally stop for lunch at a stunning overlook of Dewey Lake. Then we finish the 4 mile loop. This year some of the species we detected were: Clodius Parnassian, Lupine Blue, Anna's Blue, Hydaspe Fritillary, Arctic Fritillary, Mormon Fritillary, Colon Checkerspot, Ediths Checkerspot, Painted Lady, Hoary Comma, and Woodland Skipper. Due to the heat and resulting dryness, the plants

went to seed early. As a result, the butterfly season ended earlier than in the past few years at this location. If you would like more information on the project or would like to participate next year, thanks to all those who volunteered their time this past season.

(Continued from page 2)

in the casual or scientific study of butterflies. We might accomplish this by joining with summer programs, scouting groups, school or other community organizations. We are also interested in recruiting more adult members who will volunteer their time to learn about butterflies and pass on what they have learned to the next generations.

Here are just a few of the learning and volunteer opportunities I see coming up already for the 2016 season:

- Join David James in a statewide Monarch rearing/tagging/release study, nurturing some larvae through the summer until ready for their late summer migration. Though headquartered in Yakima, this is a statewide program.
- Teach classes on your local butterfly fauna. If you have expertise to identify species that frequent your area, please work with us to find a venue and develop materials in which you can share what you know. Your students might be of any age from preschool to retired, wherever you find the interest. I have begun this work in Spokane, and find it very rewarding. You may be paid for your work in many venues, such as Parks and Rec programs for children, or for adult enrichment classes.
- Participate in a butterfly species survey. I can show you how to apply for permission to survey butterfly species in protected areas like wildlife refuges. The data thus gathered has been of value to scientists who are updating local distribution maps on our fauna.
- Assist with David James' ongoing study of the migration of the Coronis Fritillary. Aside from helping you gain a sharp command of how to identify Washington's greater fritillaries -who can't use more skill at that?- you will spend time in some lovely valley and mountain habitats in an ongoing regionally based study whose early results have already been published in journals of the Lepidopterists' Society.
- Restore or maintain some butterfly habitat in western, central or eastern Washington. Assist with removal of noxious weeds, sow or plant host and nectar plants for butterflies of that region. Efforts are already underway in the Yakima and Spokane areas for such work to be done. We can supply you with the contact information you need.

WBA is also interested in partnering with other organizations dedicated to education, wildlife and conservation. Do you know of a school that would consider a summer STEM program related to the study of butterflies? Or a scout group interested in offering butterfly field trips and learning experiences that would lead to a relevant merit badge? We want to help write the science we know and the wonder we have shared on our own field trips into the curricula of any institution that will welcome us.

Finally, a note on some specific volunteer needs that the Board will be looking to meet. Our conference coordinator of many years, Joyce Bergen, is stepping down after 2016 but wants to help train an enthusiastic person to work with her on setting up our camp for the 2016 conference before leaving her post. Second, we will likely be recruiting a membership coordinator for our unsung hero, Marty Hansen, who has asked to retire from her position when we find another willing party. Third, you might consider offering your time to our statewide Board of Directors as we form our slate for vote next summer. You may email us at our website, wabutterflyassoc.org if any of these positions interest you, or if you have another role in mind for your own contribution. More opportunities will be outlined on our website soon.

In closing, do please take advantage of our late frost this autumn to see if you might see still another butterfly at one of your favorite sites. Just today, October 21st, I saw what had appeared to be a golden aspen leaf slowly sailing on a slow current, when it began to flap wings of yellow-orange, an Orange Sulphur flexing her wings in the sun and coasting like a miniature Monarch!

Yours, as ever, from Fort Spokane, John Bauman

Trip Reports

Quartz Mountain, August 8: The dry, hot summer weather transformed our scheduled August 8 Quartz Mountain field trip into a hike on Sauk Mountain. Choosing a higher-elevation destination on the wet side of the state turned out to be a good decision. There were eleven of us on the trip, and all but two of us were having too much fun to walk the two miles to the summit. We saw 15 species of butterflies, a family of sooty grouse walking nonchalantly down the road, spiders eating butterflies, and a base jumper landing in the parking lot.

Maureen Traxler

Correction

The last issue of Gnum, in July, had a misidentified butterfly photo on page 8. John Baumann sent the photo with a file-name clearly indicating the correct identification, which is of course a Zerene Fritillary. It was the editor's mistake, not his, in captioning the photo as a Silver-bordered Fritillary.

Board Members

John Baumann	President	
Maureen Traxler	Vice President	
Melanie Weiss	Secretary	
Jim Flynn	Treasurer	
Brenda McCracken	At-Large	
Al Wagar	At-Large	
David James	At-Large	

Committees

Science Advisor	Jon Pelham	
Membership	Marty Hanson	
Annual Conference	Joyce Bergen	
Field Trips	Available	
Programs	Available	
Publicity/Website	Carolyn Heberlein	
Newsletter	Regina Johnson	
Trip Leader, Central WA	David James	