

Kentucky Lepidopterist

Newsletter of the Society of the Kentucky Lepidopterists

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Eric Metzler - 2001*
George Balogh - 2002*

*term expires

Message from the President

We are off to a great year for butterflies and moths in Kentucky. For the second straight year spring come very early and despite much cool and cloudy weather there was no late frost. Unfortunately, the date for the Bernheim Forest trip was rainy and the field trip did not come off.

We plan a July 4th butterfly count on Saturday, July 1, so please join me for this event. I will leave to Bill Black the details of a field trip planned later in the Jackson Purchase area.

The 27th Annual Meeting will be held in Louisville, Friday, November 10-11. I would like your suggestions for a special guest speaker to invite this year.

The Butterflies and Moths of Kentucky has been published and we are working on the first supplement. Loran Gibson, Don Wright and I have, with the help of several others, added 35 new species to the list, for a current total of 2,423 species. There are more being identified by specialists, and we hope to have this published before the end of the year. We welcome any chance to see your "UFOs", and will try to identify them for you.

It is my pleasure to announce the publication of "Checklist of Wisconsin Moths (Superfamilies Drepanoidea, Geometroidea, Mimallonoidea, Bombycoidea, Sphingoidea and Noctuoidea)" by Les Ferge and George Balogh. This book is No. 93 of Milwaukee Public Museum Contributions in Biology and Geology, and treats 1,209 species. Its 55 pages including three color plates of moths not figured before either adequately or at all. It can be ordered for \$6 (plus \$3 shipping and handling in US, \$4 abroad) from: Museum Shop, Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 West Wells St., Milwaukee, WI 53233. Congratulations, Les and George.

Some further good news is that a bill to establish a Kentucky Museum of Natural History in Frankfort passed the General Assembly just before adjournment, and was signed by Governor Patton.

Unfortunately, the new measure does not include any appropriation; so that will have to await the next session. However, it is significant in that efforts by those seeking to preserve and build on the collections made by many of us of Kentucky flora and fauna have been partly successful. It seems likely to me that the large insect collection at the University of Louisville will eventually be housed in such a museum, and that there will be support for storage, study, exhibit and learning through use of these collections.

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SOME 1999 HIGHLIGHTS

From top left, clockwise: Taylor and Thomson Paris collecting while Roger Zebold and Loran Gibson take a break at Massac Creek Bottoms, Paducah, KY, Sept. 4, 1999; Common Woodnymph, *Cercyonis pegala*; Charlie Covell visited Orley "Chip" Taylor at Monarch Watch Hdqs., Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, Sept. 1999; Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, landing on zinnias. Covell photos except one.



Memories of the Kentucky Lepidoptera Survey: 1964 - 1999

by Charlie Covell

The project took 35 years, officially. Why?

Well, a flora or fauna is never completed.

I once read in a humor-ous book called "Up the Ivy" some advice to the young college professor: Embark on a big project, never finish it, and it grows huge over the years as people anticipate it. I did not intend to test that hypothesis; but I am now glad that the book finally eclosed with a 1900's date line.

Now we have over 35 additional species, most collected by Loran Gibson and Don Wright, which will be published as a first Supplement to The Butterflies and Moths (Lepidoptera) of Kentucky. In addition, there are tons of data points to put into a computer database - many not accounted for in the original book text.

This work will begin this month under a small grant with the help of student Jennifer Lewis, who will transcribe the information from cards and notes into an Access database file. There are many unprocessed specimens, too from which data need to be captured. The Survey is still going strong; the book, however, is safely out, and over 250 of the press run of 1,000 have been sold.

The history of the Survey is to be read on pages 2 - 6 of the book, but I would like to reminisce a bit on some things that were not there. Many of you were part of these stories, and I hope you enjoy them.

I'm not sure how and when I met most of you, but the first person I met in the Kentucky Lepidopterist community was the late Jim Merritt was Dean of our Law School. I was here for an interview for the job I have held almost 36 years now, and was taken to lunch in the faculty dining room with the Arts and Sciences Dean, Department Chairman, and others. Jim came up and after we shook hands he complimented me on my little checklist of the Philmont Scout Ranch, New Mexico butterflies.

I had been to Philmont in August, 1951, and had collected a number of butterflies while hiking from campsite to campsite in what was called a Kit Carson Trek. I helped other Scouts earn their insect study patch on that trek while gathering information for what was one of the earliest New Mexico butterfly lists, short though it was. Anyway, Jim, who grew up in NM near Philmont, made such a big deal of that little paper that I am sure it went a long way in helping me land my position at UofL.

In July, 1972 the late Gregory Florence, then a University of Kentucky student, and I were seeking Dianas in Harlan Co., along a curving mountain road near Line Fork. Greg was driving, and I said I thought I saw a male Diana on a

milkweed bloom on the right side of the road (which dropped off to the valley a little way past the milkweed patch). He pulled the UofL van we were driving to a stop on the right shoulder, and we both jumped out and headed for the milkweeds. Then, to my horror, I noticed the van beginning to roll backwards down the mountain! I ran to the driver's side and thought about jumping in to save it; but it seemed to dangerous. The van crossed to the uphill side of the road and fell backend first into a ditch. What a mess!

We had camped overnight in Lilley Cornett Woods and had specimens, battery acid, and broken blacklight glass all mixed up in the back end of that truck. We hitched a ride to Cumberland and a wrecker pulled the truck out; but the back doors did not close properly, being bashed in.

Later that day, enroute to Big Black Mountain, we passed a place where coal trucks entered the road. The blacktop was worn away, and the road was a bed of fine brown dust mixed with coal dust. As we drove through that, it got sucked into the truck, and we had a swirling mass of fine dust clouding the interior. You couldn't see anything in that truck until the dust settled. When it did we had a major cleanup to do.

Oldtimers in our Society know remember the famous greeting when Ky. Lepidoptersts got together in the field and a smiling face said "Hi! I'm Paul Pfenninger. Would like a beer?" Paul has been in Florida these many years, and we rarely see him. But he did leave us with a vivid memory of his big Cadillac which he drove on the winding dirt roads of Red River Gorge, and, while making room for another vehicle to pass, slid down the mountain sidewise and rested against a tree. He kept a supply of beer in his trunk to share, and also a box of papered Rajah Brooke Birdwings which he gave out to his friends.

Around 1970 a German expatriot, Siegfried Scholz, moved to Valley Station, a suburb of Louisville, and started building his huge collection of moths and some butterflies. He had been a carpenter in Hamburg during WWII, and the Nazis had impressed him into service to help build a Gestapo headquarters. His father and he had both collected Lepidoptera; but not being "educated" the stuffed shirt academics of the time treated them as inferiors.

He came to me and we bagan a checkered relationship in that he wanted equipment and identifications, and I wanted his records for the Survey. His English was almost as bad as my German; so we sometimes had misunderstandings about what specimens I was wanting to

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President's Message continued

Frank Rasche, father of two of Bill Black's prior Boy Scout lepidopterists, and member of the Kentucky House was enthusiastically in favor of the bill and gave us his support.

Special thanks go to Dr. Bill Martin of Eastern Kentucky University and members of the Kentucky Biodiversity Task Force and many others who laid the groundwork for this achievement.

As we go into the 2000 season I would like to ask those of you who make field trips to give special attention to finding new sites, to the search for populations of the Regal Fritillary, *Speyeria idalia*, and Swamp Metalmark, *Calephelis muticum*. These butterflies are under special study by the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, and we would like to know about any populations you discover.

We are also looking for new moth records, and one to expect before too long is *Noctua pronuba*, a rather large, narrow-winged European introduction that has been found now in Ohio and Virginia and other nearby states. The hind wing is yellow with an uneven black outer marginal band.

The photographic efforts for a future a field guide to Kentucky butterflies took a big leap forward when Dave Ahrenholz joined Loran Gibson and myself on Friday, April 14, to shoot color slides of spring butterflies at Bernheim Forest and Pine Creek Barrens Nature Preserve, both in Bullitt Co., KY. We had great luck, and Dave and I returned to the latter spot on Saturday.

Species photographed included *Erynnis icelus*, *E. juvenalis*, *Battus philenor*, *Pieris virginianensis*, *Anthocharis midea* (both sexes, and courting pairs), *Celastrina argiolus*, *Incisalia nippon*, *Strymon melinus*, *Fenesica tarquinius* (two combative males posed for Dave and me on Saturday in a rare opportunity), *Anaea andria*, and *Cylopsis gemma*.

The Goatweed Emperor flew right to a spot and opened its wings in front of me about one foot from my camera while I was crawling toward its former position on my belly.

We had a wonderful year with butterflies and moths last year. I am wishing you an even better season this year.

Let's get among 'em,

Charlie Covell,
President



Memories continued

keep at the University of Louisville, and what he wanted back. Later he got downright paranoid about me and told my students who visited him that I was out to destroy his blacklight setup in nearby Waverly Park (stored in a Park-owned shed), and was otherwise trying to torpedo his efforts.

None of this was true, and we eventually bought his collection. It had many good records, but some known "goodies" were missing, as he sold specimens abroad, and also used many in picture frames he made up with butterflies, moths and dried plants. His collecting was the most intensive ever carried out for moths in Kentucky.

There are many more stories, but my space allotment is about gone. Maybe you would like to hear more. Like the time we confronted a big Diamondback Water Snake at Willingham Bottoms in Little Bayou de Chien; or the great July 1977 field day with Early Hairstreaks on flowers atop Big Black Mountain. Or the night in 1976 one of my grad students stepped on the head of a Timber Rattlesnake in Bernheim Forest.

Some of you have great stories too. Why not share them in this newsletter?

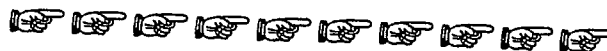
Have a fine summer of 2000; go "get among 'em."



KENTUCKY LEPIDOPTERA BOOK

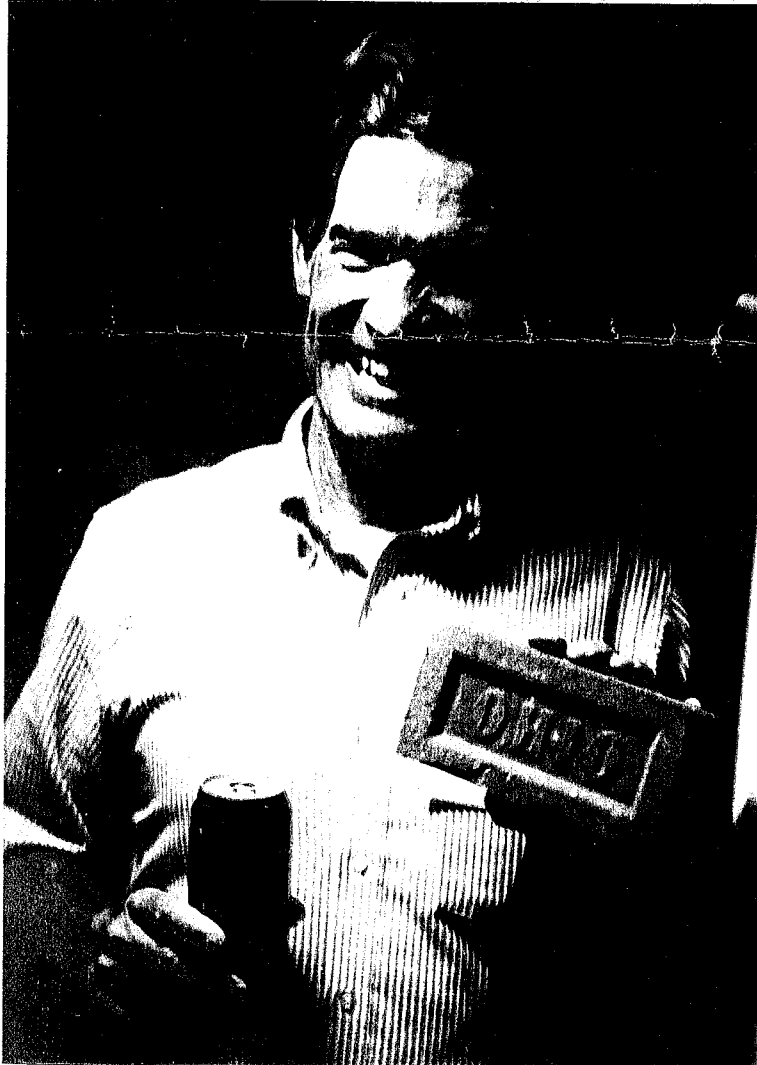
Have you ordered a copy of Charlie Covell's "The Butterflies and Moths of Kentucky (Lepidoptera): An Annotated Checklist"?

Copies are available at \$17.00 postpaid from: Lepbook, Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601-1403. Make checks payable to "Lepbook."



DUES ARE PAYABLE

Please check your mailing label as to expiration date. If dues are payable please send your check for \$10 and any extra you might spare to our treasurer:
Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard St., Milwaukee, WI 53562



From top left, clockwise: Part of the crowd at the Annual Meeting, Nov. 20, Louisville; Eric Quinter, visiting speaker from New York's American Museum of Natural History; Bill Black with a new brick at annual party at the Covells'; Stephanie and Stephen Kelley of Independence, MO with annual meeting grand door prize - one of Yin Rei Hicks' fine butterfly prints. By CVC.

The Kentucky Lepidopterist Society Newsletter is published quarterly-January, June, August, and October.
Membership dues are \$10.00 annually, payable November.
The organization is open to all interested in Lepidoptera.

If the date after you name is highlighted, dues are still payable. The list was last updated April 30.
If you have paid since that date, please ignore the notation.

Please send dues to the Treasurer Les Ferge.



DATES:

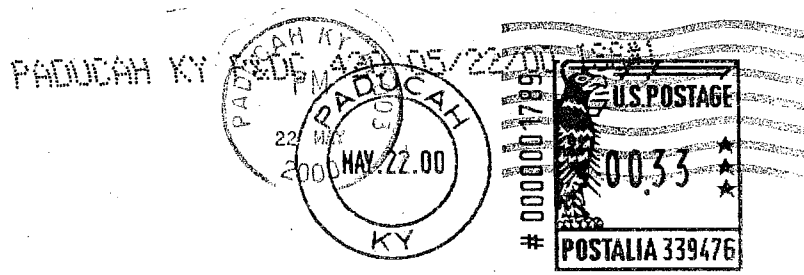
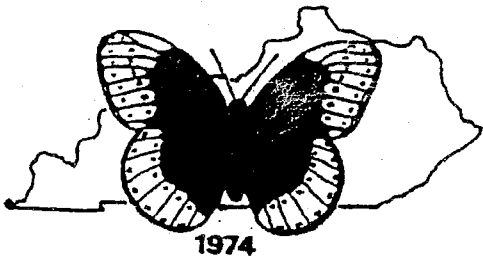
JULY 1 - July 4th Count

NOVEMBER 11 - Annual Meeting

Contact Charlie Covell for more information on both of these (see front page for address and numbers)

SEPTEMBER - Jackson Purchase area field trip

Contact Bill Black for more information (see front page for address and numbers)



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