



# Atala Chapter News

*This issue of Atala Chapter News is dedicated to Cecil Kilmer, a charter member of the Atala Chapter. We will miss you, Cecil!*

SUMMER/FALL 2004

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**Do you know this butterfly??  
Answer on Page 2**

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## Deep in the Heart of Texas!

 by Kathy Malone

Picture in your mind's eye hiking through a canyon or wildflower meadow where a colorful kaleidoscope of butterflies hovers like a "magic mobile" all around you. It's almost too good to be true, but it is true, and that's the good part!

That's only one of many reasons to come to the NABA conference in Mission, TX, Oct. 21-24. These conferences are always just plain fun and relaxing for both beginners and experienced butterflyers! They always prove to be "butterfly heaven."

You'll also come away with funny and memorable stories to tell your friends and family. Like the time daring NABA board member Brian Cassie picked up the rattlesnake (despite the warning on the sign)!



Or the time Emily Smith came face

to face with a mountain lion in Colorado and lived to tell about it. Or when the swallowtails dive-bombed my ketchup and mustard packets at the top of a mountain in Oregon, all the while flitting through cadres of hummingbirds and ignoring the scampering of chipmunks.

Yes, we go to unique places where many exciting butterflies can be seen in the wild, in settings that are unlike anything you have ever seen. But always be on the lookout for prized species in the parking lot after your long day of field trips. This happened in Arizona when we all held onto Alana Edwards' belt as she leaned over a canyon, risking life and limb, to take a photo of the great purple hairstreak...only to find a grinning rascal of the same type in a flowering tree in the hotel parking lot.

If you go, hold onto your hats when you crowd around a butterfly that everyone is observing with binoculars, for, as soon as they spot it, you'll witness a collective gasp. There'll be a big sucking sound that creates a change in air pressure and could very well bring you to your knees and take both your hat and your breath away. This is what the NABA conference is made of!

*(continued on page 5)*

## Who Am I?? Butterfly Quiz

### Longtail Skipper vs. Dorantes Skipper

by Linda and Buck Cooper

When is a skipper with long tails not a Long-tailed Skipper? When it is a Dorantes Longtail, of course. Dorantes has been established in Florida only since the 1960s and is expanding its range steadily northward. As these two large skippers fly past us with their rapid, bounding flight they attract our attention. Many times you can hear the whirring of their wings. We are lucky in Florida we have only two skippers with long tails, unlike south Texas where many long tailed skippers test our identification skills.

As soon as one of our long tailed skippers come to rest the long tails protruding from the hindwings are obvious. These long tails immediately pin them down to either Long-tailed or Dorantes. Look to see if the skipper has a green back (dorsal surface) or a brown back.



Long-tailed Skipper (*Urbanus proteus*), even when worn, has a green or greenish blue body and wing bases and usually sits with its wings held open or flat. Many times the head is also green.

Dorantes Longtail (*Urbanus dorantes*) has a brown back and wings and usually sits with its wings held partially open or in a 'V' shape. To our eyes Dorantes also appears rougher or hairier overall. Many times these skippers have their tails missing which makes them appear to be duskywings or cloudywings. To eliminate these look to see if the dorsal forewing translucent spots/squares are very bold. This takes you back to the longtails.



**This photo was created in Photoshop. This is a Dorantes in flight, not a normal resting posture.**

What do you do if you cannot see the dorsal surface, only the ventral surface? Long-tailed Skipper ventral hindwing has a continuous postmedian dark band that continues into the forewing. Use your imagination a little bit to see this as the band does stop at the hindwing margin before continuing the length of the forewing.



Dorantes Longtail ventral hindwing appears very blotchy with brown patches on the lavender gray ground color. Also on Dorantes ventral forewing there is a finger of ground color that protrudes towards the wing margin into the postmedian brown band.



Both of these skippers are common in urban yards as well as natural areas. Long-tailed Skipper uses many species of legumes including garden beans where they are considered a pest and the caterpillars are called 'leaf rollers.'

Don't squash or spray them - plant more beans! Dorantes Longtail prefers beggarweeds (*Desmodium* sp.) but will also use other legumes.

Identifying these two common skippers is made easier by using close-focusing binoculars. These are good skippers to practice your binocular skills on as they are large, approachable and usually stay around long enough to be identified. Digital photography is another fun way to add to your butterfly identification skills.

*Photos taken by Linda Cooper (Dorsal LT, Ventral Dorantes) and Alana Edwards (Dorsal Dorantes, Ventral LT).*

# Upcoming Field Trips



**DON'T FORGET YOUR FIELD GUIDE AND BINOCULARS!!**



**Butterfly Count – Mark your Calendars! We need your help!**

Central Circle will be conducted on **June 26**.

North Circle will be conducted on **June 27**.

South Circle will be conducted on **July 11**.

**Sunday, July 18- Highlands Hammock Butterfly Count** – A chance to see numerous species of swallowtail and always the Little Metalmark.

Make sure you bring bug repellent and shoes you don't mind getting wet! Also, bring picnic lunch.

*Take I-95 to Blue Heron. Go West to the Beeline (710). The Beeline through Indiantown to SR70. Go West on SR70 through Okeechobee to SR98. Go North on SR98 to SR27. Go North on SR27 into Sebring. Take a left onto Highlands Hammock Rd. (also called 634. Landmarks: traffic signal and Bar-B-Que restaurant). We will meet at the Ranger Station at **9:00am**. ~2 ½ hours from WPB.*

**August 29, 2004—Sue Arnold's Wildlife Rehabilitation Center—This is an incredible facility! Besides the interesting wildlife that she rehabilitates, she also has a beautiful butterfly garden, a new 100 foot boardwalk and a mile long nature trail dripping with Malachites!**

*Take I-95 to Blue Heron. Go west to SR 710 (Bee Line Highway). Take SR 710 to Okeechobee which is approximately 70 miles. At Highway 70, turn left (west) and continue through the city of Okeechobee. Turn right onto 441 (Parrot Ave.) and continue north about 10 minutes. Take a left onto Highway 68 and go about one mile. Take a left on NW 30th Terrace. Continue about 1/4 mile. NW 30th Terr will jog right*

*then immediately left. You will see a sign here for Arnold's. Continue to the end of the road. We will meet at 9:30 by the butterfly garden.*

**Sunday, September 26, 2004—Juno Dunes Natural Area (west tract) and Sweet Bay Natural Area**—These are two areas recently opened to the public, both with boardwalks and observation platforms. By visiting these distinct ecosystems, we should see a good number of species. Bring a picnic lunch.

*Take I-95 to Donald Ross Road. Go East to US Highway 1. Take a left (north) and the entrance to this natural area will be on the left. We will meet at 9:00am at the entrance.*

**October 21-24—NABA Conference in Texas—If you've never been to the conference before, now is your chance. This promises to be the biggest and best yet! DON'T MISS OUT!**

**October or November: Date still to be determined - Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve** - Field trip to Fakahatchee Strand guided by park biologist Mike Owens. Bring food and water for the day. This is a butterfly count for the Preserve. Please call the butterfly hotline if you are interested in this field trip and we will let you know as soon as it is put on the calendar! 561/706-6732.

*Take I-95 to Atlantic Blvd. (Exit 37) West. This turns into the Sawgrass Expressway. Take the Sawgrass south to I-75. Go West on I-75 to State Road 29 (mile marker 80). Go South on SR29 about 15 miles to County Road 837 (a/k/a Jane's' Scenic Drive). Turn right onto CR 837 and go about 1/2-3/4 mile (road curves sharply to the right). We will meet at the office (brown) 100m North of the fire tower at **8:15am**. Allow 3 hours driving time from WPB. If you plan to attend, call the hotline so that we can arrange for carpooling and know who to expect: 561/706-6732.*

## Upcoming Meetings

All meetings are in the B-1 auditorium at the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Take I-95 to Southern Blvd. Follow the signs on the flyover that point to south on Congress. Go south on Congress then take your first right onto Gun Club Road. Use the first entrance into SFWMD on your right (just past the Guard Armory). This is the security entrance. Tell them you are there for the meeting. Go to B-1 at the rear of the property. Park on the east side and use the east entrance at security (the front entrance is now locked in the evening). The meetings are in the auditorium on the first floor of the building in the back (B-1). **Meetings are at 7 p.m.**

**Monday, June 21, 2004**—At this meeting we will prepare for the 4th of July Butterfly Count. We encourage you to attend this meeting even if you don't plan to count at one of the public sites as there will be an ID presentation.



**Monday, August 30, 2004** - David Fine, a lepidopterist who works at Butterfly World, will teach us about moths in a slide presentation and then outside for some moth watching!

**Monday, November 22, 2004** - Members who attended the NABA conference in Texas will present their photos from the trip.

**Sunday, September 12th SPECIAL MEETING 2-4PM at Mounts Botanical Garden** There will be two presentations: Ted Fleming will talk about the research he's done on the roosting habits of Zebra Heliconians, and Alana Edwards will show slides of Unusual Keys butterflies and their larval plants. There will also be a raffle with a lot of great prizes! A \$3.00 donation requested. **If you have any small butterflies items that you would donate to the raffle, please bring them along!**

## Special Events

**Mounts Botanical Garden has a variety of activities offered this fall so mark your calendars!**

**Special Atala Chapter Meeting**— September 12th 2-4pm—See above.

**Mounts Fall Family Festival**—Sunday, October 17, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Crafts, activities, rides, and exhibits for the whole family. We will need volunteers to work the Atala table! Call Jan Everett if you'd like to volunteer: 561/793-6131.

**Mounts Plant Sale** — Sat. and Sun., Nov 6 & 7, 9a.m.-4p.m. Over 80 different plant vendors!

**To get to Mounts:** Take I-95 and exit at Belvedere Road. Go west about 2.5 miles to Military Trail. Turn left (south) on Military Trail and stay in the right hand lane. Go about 0.2 miles. Turn right onto Golf Road (at the Division for Driver's License) and park at the Hutcheson Agriculture Center. Call 561/233-1757 for more information.



**Florida Birding Festival and Nature Expo**—October 7-10, Thursday-Sunday — This year's conference will be held at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg and will include even more butterfly lectures and field trips than last year. The registration kit for this event is still being developed but you can see the entire agenda at: [http://www.pcef.org/events-fbf\\_regkit.html](http://www.pcef.org/events-fbf_regkit.html). For more information call 727-827-3326.

**MEMBER HIGHLIGHT**

*Spotlight on Barbara Liberman*



I became a charter member of the Atala Chapter of NABA after becoming interested in butterflies, mostly due to the influence of Ann Kilmer's gardening column in the Palm Beach Post, written in the early nineties. Ann used her column to advocate for butterfly gardening, especially in schools. Eventually she recruited people to help her in her work at the zoo; which was to restore the long-neglected butterfly garden and I immediately joined the effort. This proved to be both enjoyable and a good learning experience: identifying butterflies; finding eggs, chrysalids and larvae; also identifying both host and nectar plants. As the garden had been neglected for many years, the job was enormous, so after our chapter was formed, it was decided to organize a zoo committee to create a butterfly garden which would serve as both an educational tool for the public and attract many species of butterflies to it. A working commit-

tee, which I joined, was formed in partnership with zoo personnel. Within a year, plants, signs, and paths were constructed, and of course, the butterflies did come.

My enthusiasm for butterflies was preceded by more than a thirty year love affair with birding (a more intense form of bird watching), which I shared with my husband Al until his passing a year ago. These two hobbies can be compared. They have different subjects, but everything else is very similar. To begin with, there are always new discoveries to be made: finding a mockingbird's nest or a rare bird, or a Gulf Fritillary and its eggs on a passion vine; both species have wings and can fly away before one gets a good view; both are beautiful creatures of nature, whether dazzling, bright colors or subdued shades, and don't forget the intricate patterning; the awe and marvel of their mysterious behavior-migration or finding the right host plant; tools: binoculars enhance the enjoyment of both hobbies and a library of reference books becomes a necessity; travel-to find specimens outside one's home base, one travels to other states or countries to find them; and people-one meets delightful, interesting people who share your enthusiasm. There is always so much to learn.

I have spent over half my life living in West Palm Beach, but came from NJ in 1957 with my family when my three sons were all preschoolers. They remained here and now have their own families, making me not only a grandmother, but a great-grandmother as well. I try to pass on my love of nature to the younger generation. When not birding or butterflying, I volunteer with the Library's Adult Literacy Project

*(Texas Conference—continued from page 1)*

In addition to scads of butterflies, you'll make new friends on your field trips, at the buffet dinners and in particular at the receptions where humans "puddle" at cash bars. You'll have fun taking in the plethora of interesting butterfly clothing in which we butterflyers adorn ourselves, too, especially after you've puddled!

You can be a part of the excitement! Come and be on hand for the grand opening of the butterfly park, too. You'll have a great time and return home with memories that will last a lifetime!

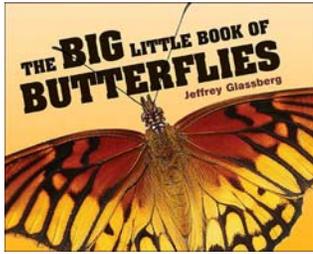
***Everyone at NABA conferences has a good time.....including the butterflies!***



*Mating American Coppers in Oregon*

# Books of Interest.....

with commentary from  
Barnes & Noble



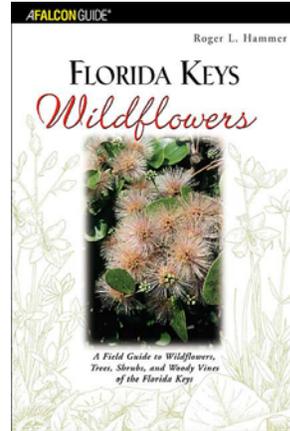
**The Big Little Book of Butterflies** by Jeffrey Glassberg—250 Photographs taken in diverse locations, including the United States, Mexico, and Europe, all the images feature unrestrained butterflies, free in the wild. Glassberg also provides a valuable index indicating each butterfly's English and Latin name, and where it originates.

**Scheduled for release August 2004**

**Field Guide to Caterpillars** by Thomas J. Allen, Jeffrey Glassberg, James P. Brock



**AVAILABLE JULY 2004!!!**



**Florida Keys Wildflowers: A Guide to the Common Wildflowers of the Florida Keys** by Roger Hammer - This guide to the common wildflowers found in the lush Florida Keys features 250 beautiful color photographs. Detailed plant descriptions and line art aid in plant identification for botanists and novice enthusiasts

alike. Each species description is accompanied by a "Comments" section giving lore about the plant, its uses, or its name.



**ATALA CHAPTER OF THE  
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*Send your email address to  
atala@prodigy.net for updates on  
butterfly related topics and events  
throughout the year!*

**We're on the WEB!**

<http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabaac/index.html>