SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SPRING 2003

Shortia galacifolia

Oconee Bells
FROM THE PRESIDENT................................................................................. Jeanne Smith

Today's February temperature of 60 degrees here in Brevard is defrosting my lethargic winter mind-set. Even though I know Old Man Winter has more freezing temperatures up his sleeve, my thoughts are anticipating spring. And the Club's newly released February - June schedule gives all of us spring events to look forward to.

First and foremost, 2003 is the Western Carolina Botany Club's 30th year of operation. What an achievement that is! Especially with only one official business meeting and two scheduling sessions held each year. How low-key can you get? Shows what bonding can be achieved by botanizing in the woods. Maybe we should invite the United Nations along on some of our walks.

To celebrate our longevity, a special program has been scheduled for March 14. Charlotte Lackey will present "The Fragmented Habitat of Michaux's Beautiful Discovery: Shortia galacifolia". Charlotte spent two years compiling an inventory of Shortia from a canoe along the shores of Lake Jocassee. Club members of long-standing will remember walks led by Nan Morrow and Peg Camenzind to see this special flower in its native habitat at Lake Jocassee. We hope our "vintage" members will make a special effort to come mingle on this singular occasion with our "fledgling" members to enjoy each other and the punch and cookies.

In April we can look forward to a Monday/Tuesday overnight in the Smokies as described elsewhere in this issue. For reasons unknown, we have not been taking advantage of the proximity of this wonderful wildflower resource. Here's your chance! Sign up early -- space is limited.

I am looking forward to spring and the earliest local wildflower we can expect to find -- Epigaea repens (trailing arbutus) which Dick Smith noted in his field notes as blooming on the Andy Cove Nature Trail in Pisgah Forest on March 1, 1993.

And time remembered is grief forgotten
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.
-A.G. Swinburne 1865

Cover: The flower on the cover is Shortia galacifolia, Oconee Bells. Our newsletter is named for this southern endemic which is now rare in the wild.
New Members

George Beatty, Lemont, Pa. Suzanne Huie, Brevard, N.C.
Persis Coleman, Etowah, N.C. Kim Rogers, Hendersonville, N.C.

Member News

Peggy and Craig Ellis leave May 1st for a two year stay in India. Their base will be in north India, in the Himalayan Mountains at an elevation of about 7000 feet. Peggy has served as club secretary and was a member of the team which inventoried plants at the Cradle of Forestry a few years ago. She has shared her extensive knowledge of herbs with us at indoor programs and welcomed members to her herb garden on a mountain top in Fletcher.

Elisabeth Feil is preparing interpretive panels for the education program at the Botanical Gardens at Asheville. The panels consist of photographs of native plants arranged by plant family. Elisabeth serves on the board at the Gardens.

Dean Crawford has published a small book entitled HIKES field guide for 55 easy to moderate hikes in and near the south section of Pisgah National Forest. In the mid-1980’s Dean was one of a group who formed “The Easy Striders”, a hiking group for those who were looking for moderate hikes not requiring a driving distance of more than 50 miles. “The Easy Striders” are still active, meeting each Monday at the Laurel Park Shopping Center in Hendersonville.

In his book Dean gives driving directions to each site, trail directions, miles to be walked, a brief description of the terrain and even a suggested lunch stop. The described hikes begin with FENCE in the Tryon area, to Pearson Falls in Saluda, the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site in Flat Rock, Jackson Park and Patton Park and Wetlands in Hendersonville and then north to a few hikes in the Mills River Area. The remaining hikes are mostly in Pisgah National Forest. Botany club members will recognize some familiar trails such as Horse Cove, Pilot Mountain, Bear Pen Gap, the Shut-In Trail, and the Buck Springs Nature Trail. Farther afield Dean describes Whiteside Mountain southwest of Brevard on Highway 64 and Laurel River Gorge north of Weaverville. When opened, the pages lie flat because of the spiral binding. A blank page opposite each page of text gives ample room for field notes. The book is lightweight and of a size to fit into a pocket or back pack.

Take special notice of the book cover. It was designed by Botany club member, Pat Arnett and her son John.

Dean’s book fills a gap with this listing of hikes available to the average walker. Those who have visiting family and/or guests, will find many suggestions for a day of outdoor activity in our beautiful mountains. You can find the book at Mountain Lore Bookstore in Hendersonville, The Compleat Naturalist, Malaprops and Accent on Books in Asheville, Black Mountain Books in Black Mountain and Highland Books in Brevard, as well as at the N.C. Arboretum. Call ahead to make sure a copy is available. The books have been selling out at some of these locations. The price is $13.95.
The Smokies Trip
April 21-23, 2003

After a six year hiatus, we will return to the botanically rich north side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There will be "stop and go" trips as well as easy trails from one-half to three miles round trip in the Cosby, Little River, Cades Cove and Newfound Gap Road (U.S. 441) areas.

Reservations are required. Call Jeanne Smith before March 15 at 885-2530 to reserve a space for this trip which is limited to 24 participants. The overnight will be at the Tally-ho Inn in Townsend, TN, (1-800-448-2465). Participants are responsible for their own reservations, which we suggest be made as soon as possible. The rooms have two beds and a refrigerator. You will need to bring lunches for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Our discounted rate for two nights is $99.88 including tax. When making your reservation, be sure to mention you are from the Western Carolina Botanical Club. There is a restaurant on the premises which is available for breakfast and the evening meal.

The meeting places for the trip will be Southgate Mall, Hendersonville on Monday, April 21 at 8:30 a.m., Mills River Restaurant at 8:45 or at the first Tennessee rest stop and information area on I-40 at 9:45 a.m. Please let Jeanne know where you will be meeting the group. The driving distance for three days is 400 miles and if you are a passenger, plan to reimburse your driver $10. Car pooling is encouraged especially from the Inn on Tuesday since parking is limited at some of the stops that day.

Come see the glory of spring flowers in the Smokies!

Leader: Erika Parmi 883-8021 Co-leader: Jeanne Smith 885-2530

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Western Carolina Botanical Club
Treasurer's Report -2002
(Consolidated)

Income
Dues $1293
Donations 174
Total Income $1467

Expenses
Printing $580
Postage 283
Annual Meeting & Supplies 168
Contributions & Honorarium 75
Total Expenses $1106

\text{Income Over Expenses} \quad \$361
Recorder Ramblings.......................... The Year 2002 ........................................Betty Jones

Once again, it is that time when we look back and reflect on the year just ended. As Recorder, I focus on the trip reports and analyze the data that are submitted for each walk. As a walk participant, I receive non-measurable feedback – questions, comments and attitude.

Both the measurable and non-measurable data are telling me that interest in the club remains high. I sense a revitalization that is reflected in a number of factors. First, though we had a dip in attendance in 2001, the numbers were trending upward in 2002. Attendance at the indoor meetings and picnics remained high throughout.

Second, we have gained new members who are bringing new life to the club with their expertise, experience and enthusiasm. Best of all, they bring a desire to learn and to teach and this enriches us all. Nothing brings greater pleasure to our longer-term members than sharing knowledge with someone eager to learn.

Third, we continue to broaden our botanizing experience by adding new sites to our schedule. This year there were five such sites:

- **Wilder Forest**, a part of Warrior Mountain recently acquired by the Pacolet Land Conservancy. This rich cove forest has well-marked trails and sturdy bridges crossing the creek. This late-March walk featured "millions of trilliums" – *Trillium cuneatum*.
- **Fern Haven**, the home of Larason and Juanita Lambert. What fun we had meandering the many paths to identify the 37 marked ferns – guided by the resident expert.
- **Ashmore Preserve**. A woody walk took us down to a pond where we found a number of wetland species: Grass Pink, Round-leaved Sundew, Flatrock Pimpernel, Sweet Pitcher Plant and Horned Bladderwort.
- **Crow Dog Native Plants**, the fern-growing operation of Tom Goforth. Here we observed fern production from spore collection to ready-for-sale potted plants. And who can forget the delightful romp through a nearby sunny meadow and the profusion of Meadow Beauties?
- **Cataloochee**. Hopes were high that we would see elk on this late-October walk. No such luck, however.

We revisited sites that have not been on our schedule for several years: **Bat Cave** which elicited rave reviews; **Wayah Bald** where the scent of the Sweet White Azalea perfumed the air at the summit; **Travis Tract** where rain sent us scurrying for cover in the Glass Feather Studio and **Whiteside Mountain** where readings from Dr. Bob Zahner’s book *The Mountain at the End of the Trail* directed the walk.

For those of you who, like me, find numbers and trends interesting, I have calculated two averages: number of plants identified and number of plants in bloom per walk. For the past three years, these numbers have remained remarkably constant ranging from 64.5 to 68.0 for average number of plants identified and from 35.5 to 37.9 for plants in bloom. These averages were only 48.8 and 30.3, respectively, in 1999, reflecting the fact that we are now including ferns and more non-blooming plants in our lists.

As we approach the 30th anniversary of the club, we tip our hats to the founding members who built an organization that continues, to this day, to bring pleasure and enlightenment.
News from The Botanical Gardens at Asheville.

- Last year 925 new plants were introduced into the Gardens.

- Using funds made available from the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the stream stabilization project along Reed Creek was completed.

- This year work will continue on the granite outcrop. Already mosses, lichens and some grasses have appeared on and around the rocks. More rock outcrop plants will be added as the weather warms.

- The bog garden has been completed and the seep is being planted.

- Jay Kranyik is working on the identification of all the grass species in the Gardens.

- Work on the Wilson Bird and Butterfly Garden will be completed this year.

- The grass will be removed from an area which has always been mowed and the site will become in Jay Kranyik’s words, “a chaotic meadow”. Native meadow species will be planted and the site burned every few years to discourage growth of woody plants.

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I know a place where sweet yellow violets grow.
In the last days of winter, through traces of snow.
Drops of pure sunshine on translucent stem--
A paean to spring
A whispery hymn.

No!
Someone has come and gouged out the rich earth
That had nurtured and given such innocence birth.

This spring I shall not return to the glen,
There’s a road where only beauty had been.
Some call it progress:
I call it sin.

I knew a place where sweet yellow violets grew.
Some may still grow there,
But only
A few.

- Odessa P. Galda
2001

(Thanks to Club member, Odessa, for sending this poem)
In 1955 Tom and Bruce* Shinn bought 55 acres of land northwest of Asheville on the north side of Spivey Mountain. The land was a cow pasture when it was purchased but in time became a haven for native plants and a garden enjoyed by many. In 1973 Shinn Gardens was one of the principal attractions of the first Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage sponsored by the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

In a search for information for this article about these two amateur naturalists who did so much for native plants in North Carolina, Tommy Shinn, Jr. sent some family papers which included the following:

"Thomas Sadler Shinn (1904-1989) was born at Norwood, North Carolina. He earned BS degrees in Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering from Duke University. He worked for more than forty years as a power system protection engineer for Carolina Power & Light Company.

Mary Bruce Speight (1908-1983) was born on a large farm near Wilson, North Carolina. She earned an AB degree in education and French literature at Peace Institute, and did postgraduate work at what is now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and at the University of Paris.

Both Tom and Bruce had encountered the bitterness of widowhood before they were married in Asheville in 1947. Early the next year they moved into a house in the Montford Hills section of Asheville. It was a nice house on a nice lot, but with the exception of a few mature oak trees, the lot was devoid of vegetation."

While living in Montford Hills, life took a change for the Shinns. In 1947 Bruce attended a lecture on wildflowers at the Asheville Garden Club. Tommy Shinn remembers that Bruce Shinn’s life was never the same again. "Mama found her real mission in life and became a changed woman. On that very day Daddy brought home his first clump of plants that a bulldozer had torn away making a road to a power plant. He too became a changed person. All of a sudden from what had been an interest in wildflowers came close to being an obsession."

Tom and Bruce Shinn found out where and when new roads were to be cut, new power lines built and dams constructed. Soon the Montford Hills lot and two adjacent purchased lots were filled with plants rescued from these sites. The Shinns began to look for more land and this is when they acquired land on Spivey Mountain --the future home of the Shinn Gardens. They moved to the new property in 1964.

Although Tom never studied botany formally, he became expert in the propagation of native plants from seeds, cuttings and by grafting. Fearing that the rare Gray’s lily (*Lilium grayi) might become extinct, he grew 36 of these beautiful nodding plants by taking scales from two bulbs. Successfully propagated, they grew to a height of over six feet.

*Mary Bruce Shinn was called Bruce by her family and friends.

(continued next page)
Bruce Shinn often accompanied her husband as he traveled around western Carolina in his work as engineer with Carolina Power and Light. While he worked, she would hike through neighboring woods and fields looking for new plants. Women she met during these trips would share their knowledge of plants and herbs and where they could be found. It was on a trip to Haywood County that Bruce discovered a large meadow of Creeping Phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*), every plant pure white. Several of the plants were moved to the Spivey Mountain garden and successfully propagated. Gifts of this white variety were sent to Dr. Wherry, a leading botanist, to the Arnold Arboretum and to Dr. Skinner at the National Arboretum. This plant is now marketed in the horticultural trade as “Bruce’s White”.

*Phlox stolonifera*

Peter Loewer in his article “The Botanical Gardens of Asheville” (Carolina Gardener, August 1996) traces the beginning of the Botanical Gardens at Asheville to the year 1955 when Bruce Shinn became the chairman of a new wildflower study group sponsored by the Asheville Garden Club. She and Tom had often dreamed of a botanical garden in Asheville and began to share their dream with others interested in finding a refuge for native plants of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

In 1959 Bruce learned that the Asheville-Biltmore College would be acquiring land for the development of a new college that would eventually become the University of North Carolina at Asheville. She arranged a meeting of civic leaders and nature lovers and the Asheville-Biltmore-Botanical Association was formed. They were successful in winning the approval of the college to put aside ten acres for a botanical garden. The property had a long stretch along Reed Creek which bordered a flat meadow and a hillside which climbed to over 2000 feet. The mission of the Garden was to educate the public about North Carolina’s native flora, give a home to endangered plants and provide a place where visitors could see native plants in an environment like that in nature.

In the early days of the project, the renowned landscape architect and naturalist, Doan Ogden, accepted a modest fee to develop an overall plan for the Gardens.* Planting was begun in the spring of 1964 and the Shinn’s dream of a refuge for native plants continues to this day as new habitats are developed and more native plants introduced for the education and delight of the public.

The Shinn’s continued their interest in native plants throughout the rest of their lives. Tom became a president of the North Carolina Wildlife Preservation Society. Bruce played an important role in the establishment of the Botanical Gardens at Chapel Hill as well as serving as a director.
During this time the members of the Western Carolina Botanical Club had the privilege of knowing both Tom and Bruce. The Club volunteered as guides at the Shinn Gardens during the Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage. In later years club members weeded the beds and cleared the trails as the Shinn's asked for assistance in preparing for the Pilgrimage visitors.

Bruce Shinn died in 1983 and Tom in 1989. Now retired, son Tommy and his wife, Nancy, live in the house at Spivey Mountain and continue to maintain the Gardens.

* See the article on Doan Ogden in Shortia, Autumn 2001

Material for this article was drawn from a number of sources supplied by Tommy Shinn, Jr. This includes the Peter Loewer article, an article from the Greensboro News & Record, February 16, 1989, entitled “Tom Shinn Remembered by Wildflower Society” and an article by Kenneth Israel in The Enterprise, of April 29, 1992, entitled “Festival to Feature Rare Haywood Flower”.

The Botanical Club has scheduled a visit to the Shinn Gardens on Monday, April 28 with Elisabeth Feil and Wilma Dupro as leaders.

Somewhere in the wild

Trout Lilies

Hiding beneath the forest floor,
trout lilies wait
for March and sunshine sprinkles.
Speckled leaves rise
from that rich decay
along with yellow flowers, bell-like, thin stalks.
Soon over, bloom and leaf disappear
taking this wonder with them
to secret caves beneath our feet.
It takes time to store the strength
For such shy magic.

-Beverly Bryan Russell

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(Beverly Russell was our speaker at the Botanical Club Annual meeting, January 2003)
SHORTIA

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A quarterly publication of the Western Carolina Botanical Club

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Please submit contributions for the next issue by June 15, 2003 to: Anne Ulinski
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The purpose of the Club is to study the plants of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and the Southeast through field trips and indoor meetings. Membership is open to all. Individual/family memberships are $15. New members joining from the period July 1-December 31, pay $8. All memberships are renewable on January first of each year. Please send dues to: Bonnie Arbuckle, P.O. Box 1049, Flat Rock, N.C. 28731