

Heard it through the Pipevine

Jan /
Feb
2005

Newsletter of the Austin Butterfly Forum • www.austinbutterflies.org

It's 2005 already. 2004 was a fantastic year for butterflies in Austin. Dan Hardy and Doris Hill have provided articles that tell you why. We also have a new board with Mike Quinn at the helm. Thank you John Kelly for your years of service.

Club Meeting

Monday February 28, 7:00 pm
Zilker Botanical Garden Center

Jack L. Neff, Ph.D., will talk to us about, "**The Bees of Texas: A Hidden Treasure.**" Dr. Neff has 25 years of experience studying Texas' native bees. This will be a wonderful presentation, so please make plans to attend.



White-Striped Longtail (D. Hardy)

Zilker Garden Festival Volunteers Needed

Saturday & Sunday April 2nd & 3rd

We are looking for volunteers to run shifts at the Austin Butterfly Forum booth at this year's Zilker Garden Festival. In addition to watching over the booth, volunteers may answer questions about butterflies and butterfly gardening. We are providing volunteers with free admission to the festival. Please sign up at the club meeting.

Renewal Notice

If we've **highlighted** the expiration date on your mailing label, your membership is up for renewal. Dues are still only \$20 per household. Remit to the Austin Butterfly Forum and send to ABF c/o Doris Hill, 1605 Broadmoor, Austin, TX 78723.

Highlights of 2004

by Dan Hardy

Last year was amazing! There were many firsts and many "firsts in a long time". Rare butterflies are exciting, but what is more significant is the establishment of breeding colonies for several of these species. I will undoubtedly overlook many sightings, but here were the highlights that I can remember.

There were FIVE new records for Travis County: Gemmed Satyr, Zabulon Skipper, Silver-banded Hairstreak, Red-crescent Scrub-Hairstreak, and Lantana Scrub-Hairstreak! This is a county whose butterflies had been thoroughly studied.

Gemmed Satyrs were found along upper Barton Creek in September, although this is species was long-expected. For instance, it is regular at Landa Park in New Braunfels.

John Ingram found a Zabulon Skipper in the Zilker Butterfly garden just before the September Forum meeting. His pictures at the meeting made us believers and several people found it the next day. This is another long-awaited species which occurs in eastern Texas and has been sighted in New Braunfels

and Blanco State Park. Plus, there is a disjunct population of Zabulons in the mountains around Monterrey, Mexico.

Dan Hardy and Joe Lapp searched the Balloon vine on Platt Lane and found a Silver banded Hairstreak in September. It was laying eggs! John Ingram subsequently took some pictures of this brilliant hairstreak and Sally Breed searched among the damaged fruit and found a caterpillar. This species was also a NCR at Stengl-Lost Pines Biological Station last fall. Everyone should check Balloon Vine again this year.

Chris Durden found a Red-crescent Scrub-Hairstreak (*Strymon rufofusca*) on the Lower Barton Creek Greenbelt in October, and elsewhere Dan Hardy found a Lantana Scrub-Hairstreak a few days later.

Although not new to Travis County, The following turned up after long absences: Harvesters at Hornsby Bend along the Platt Lane trail; a Summer Azure at Zilker Butterfly Garden in July; a White M Hairstreak at Hamilton Pool in September.

A most amazing finding (reported in the November newsletter) was Polydamas Swallowtails that successfully bred in Coby Dingus' yard and subsequently in Sally Breed's yard. Many caterpillars were raised and we look forward to their success in surviving the winter.

Also notable were many sightings of Laviana White-Skippers (including breeding) and White-striped Longtails, which made Austin feel like even more like South Texas.

Chris Durden found the first California Sister in the spring in the Barton Creek Greenbelt, and they turned up sporadically at Balcones Canyonlands Refuge, Hamilton Pool, and Westcave Preserve. Yucca Giant-Skippers made appearances at the Barton Creek Greenbelt and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in April, which is the only month when the adults fly in Central Texas.

Having all those spicebushes ready at the Zilker Botanical Garden paid off, because Spicebush Swallowtails bred in good numbers.

Lost in all these rarities were the large numbers of Tropical Leafwings, Bordered Patches, and Eastern Tailed-Blues. A Ruby-spotted Swallowtail and Zilpa Longtails were hilltopping at Mt. Bonnell in the fall.

One of my favorite memories was the Orange-barred Sulphurs that hung out around the parking lot at the Zilker Botanical Garden all fall. Their strong, high flight made them easy to spot. I spent a lot of time trying to catch sight of the orange patches on their yellow wings.

This year should be entertaining if lots of pupae survived.



Texas Crescent (M. Kowalski)

Raising Texas Crescents

by Doris Hill

On April 27, 2004, I found Texas Crescent caterpillars on my shrimp plants. They feed at night so I was using my flashlight to locate them. Their defense is to drop off the plant when you disturb them. Chris Durden had said they were hard to observe, so I collected some and put them with some cuttings in a cage.

I gave the livestock to Debbie Russell for her class to rear. By the 29th there were three caterpillars and one pupa (on the bottom of the cage). She found another caterpillar on the extra food plants she took. By May 1 there was one caterpillar in the "J" position and three chrysalids. The next day the 4th chrysalid had formed. They lost track of the small caterpillar.

On May 7 a female butterfly in perfect condition emerged from the pupa on the cage bottom and was released. Both the caterpillar and pupae are pretty small -- just over 1/2" long.

On May 10 two males and a butterfly of unknown gender emerged. Another female emerged the next day and was released.

On Friday May 14 Debbie was wondering if the small stray caterpillar was alive. There had been no frass since she cleaned the cage the day before. Much to her relief she found a shed skin on May 15. He must have been resting.

On May 22 I found another caterpillar in the "J" position on the bamboo next to the shrimp plants. I brought it to the meeting for people to see. The next day it pupated. It was shaped like a tiny swallowtail pupa instead of smooth like the previous pupae.

Debbie had returned to the cage and her last caterpillar pupated on May 28. Nine days later a

butterfly emerged and was released in the morning.

Meanwhile the older pupa had turned black and was assumed to be dead. You can't win them all.

Debbie's class enjoys raising, releasing and studying butterflies. None of use had raised this variety before and it was interesting to see what their timing was.

Announcements

John Kelly to play on Jeopardy! Our own John Kelly will be playing on the TV show Jeopardy on March 7th. John was on Jeopardy years ago in its 8th season and won all 5 shows – the maximum number

Thank you John Kelly!

The Austin Butterfly Forum would like to thank John Kelly for his outstanding commitment to the club over the past three years of his presidency. John has fielded countless calls from the public, feeling responsible to speak about butterflies to any group that asked and giving the speeches himself since few others would offer (but his wit and knowledge made him the best speaker for the job anyway). His ability to keep records of everything that mattered to the club and its members is unmatched, and he was always careful to be sure that the newsletter thanked everyone who needed to be thanked, even requiring revisions if someone was left out.

Welcome Board of 2005!

Thank you Mike Quinn for being brave enough to take on the responsibility of presidency. May you learn to juggle as well as John Kelly did. Thank you Debbie, Jeff, and Myrna for joining the board to help out, and thank you Dan, Doris and Marvin for hanging around to continue doing great work.

Mike Quinn, President
Doris Hill, Treasurer
Debbie Russell, Membership
Jeff Taylor, Secretary
Myrna Kepford, Publicity
Dan Hardy, Programs

of shows you were allowed to win at the time. Now who ever knew this fact? I bet John did! Go John!

Upcoming Events

We keep a calendar of upcoming events on the austinbutterflies.org web site. Please visit the web site to learn of changes and new additions – we're always finding great new events to add.

Mon Feb 28 – General Club Meeting. See details in box at front of newsletter.

Mon Mar 28 – Club Meeting. John Abbott, Ph.D., of the University of Texas: "Common Dragonflies of the Austin Area." Just the common dragonflies!

Sat, Sun Apr 2-3 - Zilker Garden Festival. We need volunteers to run the Austin Butterfly Forum booth. The [Zilker Garden Festival](#) is a plant sale, a craft festival, and a flower show with over 100 vendors. There will be children's activities, live music, and refreshments. Held at the [Zilker Botanical Gardens](#).

*Please submit newsletter events, corrections, and suggestions to the editor, Joe Lapp:
joe.lapp@pobox.com*

Jim Brock is Coming!

Monday May 23

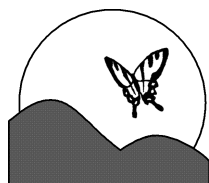
The Wonder of Caterpillars

Austin Butterfly Forum Meeting

6 pm book signing, sponsored by Naturally Curious booksellers, followed by club meeting and presentation at 7 pm.

Jim Brock, an active lepidopterist for more than thirty years, has studied butterflies and led butterfly-watching tours throughout North America, as well as in Mexico, the Caribbean, and Brazil. He is the co-author, with Kenn Kaufman, of the acclaimed field guide [Butterflies of North America](#). His newest book, [A Field Guide to Caterpillars](#), part of the *Butterflies Through Binoculars* series, co-authored with Thomas J. Allen and Jeffrey Glassberg, is due out in the Spring of 2005 and will be available at the meeting. This Oxford

Austin Butterfly Forum, Inc.
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Austin Butterfly Forum Membership Form

Become a member or renew your membership.

Your membership helps support our club activities, but members also receive bimonthly **newsletters** with upcoming events and informative articles, **butterfly plants** that we often give away, and **discounts** on books, T-shirts and more.

Name:	Daytime phone:
Address:	Evening phone:
City: State: Zip:	Email:

Membership is \$20 annually per household, payable to the Austin Butterfly Forum and sent to:
ABF c/o Doris Hill, 1605 Broadmoor Drive, Austin, TX 78723