



## Jubilee Jamboree

The Herbarium hits the half-century mark this year, and we're commemorating in style! Throughout 2009 we've had a series of special events to mark this Jubilee Year. In addition to our regular schedule of wildflower walks and botanical activities, we produced a series of "Wednesday Walks at Noon," short strolls to botanically interesting places on campus that could be visited over the lunch hour. We also initiated a series of "quests" in conjunction with the Sewanee Natural History Society. Last but not least, we put on a "mega-mountathon" in which volunteers spent a morning helping us mount our backlog of specimens.

It's been a great year, and it will all culminate on Sunday, October 11, with a gala 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, which we've dubbed our Jubilee Jamboree. The day begins with a trek into Fiery Gizzard, led by Dr. Ross Clark and co-sponsored by the Herbarium and the Friends of South Cumberland State Park. It will commemorate the many trips to the Gizzard that Sewanee botany students have taken over the years, as well as the recent purchase and protection of a large portion of the Gizzard by the State of Tennessee.

The 2- to 3-mile hike, over moderate terrain, will leave from the Grundy Forest trailhead at 10 AM. We will walk the beautiful 2-mile Grundy Forest Day Loop and possibly hike to the Sycamore Falls area, where there are a couple

of particularly interesting plants. Wear comfortable shoes, and bring your camera and drinking water.

Dr. George Ramseur, founder of the Sewanee Herbarium and its Director *emeritus*, often took his classes to Fiery Gizzard to botanize. It was natural, then, for his former student Ross Clark to choose the Gizzard as the subject of a plant inventory and analysis when he was in graduate school in North Carolina. "Ross found the Gizzard to be a place of great botanical diversity, including several rare and interesting plants, which we hope to rediscover with him," explains Herbarium Director Dr. Jon Evans. "Plus it's just a great place for an October hike."



We will gather in the new Spencer Hall at 4 PM that afternoon for a birthday party—make that a birthday *bash*—hosted by the Sewanee Natural History Society, a student-led organization dedicated to celebrating the Domain's biodiversity. Help cut the cake and toast the Herbarium's accomplishments and expectations. See the Herbarium's new home, and tour this wonderful facility. For more about the Natural History Society, see <http://snhscurator.blogspot.com/>.

That evening, we expect a visit from "John Muir." Actually, the famous naturalist was last in Tennessee in the late 19th century. This appearance will be made by actor Lee Stetson who portrays Muir on stage, as he has done for the past 27 years in Yosemite National Park and throughout the world. His performance will take place in Gailor Auditorium at 7 PM.

We've scheduled our Jubilee Jamboree to coincide with Homecoming Weekend, with the intention of getting returning alums, as well as and current students, townspeople, and Friends of the Herbarium to join us. We hope to see you on October 11, as we observe this significant milestone in botanical research, education, and conservation on the Sewanee Domain and beyond.

— Mary Priestley

## Bells and Bellflowers



The Sewanee Herbarium has been celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and so has the Leonidas Polk Memorial Carillon. The carillon, bells hung high in the Shapard Tower of All Saints' Chapel, was completed under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Edward McCrady and the direction of Arthur Bigelow, and was dedicated with great ceremony in April, 1959. That same spring, the students in Professor George Ramseur's plant taxonomy class were collecting the first herbarium specimens, which were eventually housed in metal cabinets in a room under the observatory in the Carnegie science building. The coincidence in timing leads to this article on bells and bellflowers.

The Latin word *campanula* means little bell, and the word "campanulate" refers to a bell-shaped flower in plant identification terminology. The Bellflower family is called the Campanulaceae, and in the Sewanee area the tall bellflower, *Campanulastrum americanum* (L.) Small, grows in the limestone soils on the slopes of the plateau, including in Shakerag Hollow, but is perhaps not seen as often as the spring flora there since it begins to flower in mid-summer. The flowers are blue with a flat face, not having the characteristic bell shape of the family. The southern harebell, *Campanula divaricata* Michx., does have hanging, light-blue bell-shaped flowers and can be found on trailsides and slopes

and in rocky woods, as at Fall Creek Falls State Park.

The familiar Virginia bluebells, *Mertensia virginica* (L.) Pers. ex Link, are not in the Bellflower family but in the Forget-Me-Not family, the Boraginaceae, which has often led to confusion and consternation among plant taxonomy students when keying out this species. These are part of the spring flora of the area, of course, and the herbarium staff was excited to be able to add them to the flora of the Domain when they were found in the bottomlands of Lost Cove on a field trip this past March.

Also blue but not quite bell-like is the soapwort gentian, *Gentiana saponaria* L., though it does have the common names bluebells and harvest bells. It will be blooming this fall in wet meadows, often around ponds on the plateau, and will be one of the plants to be looking for on the Lake Eva walk on the herbarium fall calendar.

A genus in the Lily family, *Uvularia*, has the common name of bellwort, although the Latin name refers to the uvula that hangs at the back of the throat. The spring-blooming yellow bellwort flowers hang below the leaves, like dangling bells, and there are several species in the area. Two are perfoliate, with stems that look like they are growing through the leaf: *Uvularia grandiflora* Sm., the large-flowered bellwort, is bright yellow and abundant in Shakerag Hollow and other areas with rich calcareous soils; and *Uvularia perfoliata* L., the perfoliate bellwort, is smaller and paler and found in less fertile, acidic soils. *Uvularia sessilifolia* L., wild oats or sessileleaf bellwort, is even smaller and not perfoliate, and is found near ponds and streams in the Sewanee area. Another spring-blooming member of the Lily family with dangling yellow flowers, found in Shakerag Hollow and other rich woods sites, is *Prosartes lanuginosa* (Michx.) D. Don, called fairybells or yellow mandarin.

The tall narrow panicle of small white flowers of featherbells, again in the Lily

family, is often missed in open woods and meadows, in part because it blooms from mid-summer to fall when ticks and chiggers are out but also because the plants seem to be a favorite food of deer. The leaves are grass-like, as reflected in the name *Stenanthium gramineum* (Ker-Gawl.) Morong, so when not in bloom, it is not conspicuous.

All the "bell" flowers discussed so far have been herbaceous plants, wildflowers, but there are a couple of woody plants, members of the Storax family, Styracaceae, that are named for bells. American snowbell, *Styrax americanus* Lam., is a shrub or small tree found in bottomlands and collected by the herbarium during a study of Sinking Pond at the Arnold Engineering and Development Center in nearby Coffee County. It has small, fragrant white flowers hanging below the leaves in the spring. Carolina silverbell, *Halesia tetraptera* Ellis, is common in the southern Appalachians, where it can be a large tree. It has also been found apparently established as a population in Abbo's Alley! Its largish white flowers often cover the ground below large trees at the time of the Smokies Wildflower Pilgrimage, leading one to look up and see the tree in bloom. This also leads to the local name, Heavens Above.

And that name brings this reflection on bells and bellflowers full circle, for surely the carillon could also be called Heavens Above.

—Yolande Gottfried

### References:

- Duncan, Wilbur H. and Marion B. Duncan, 1988. *Trees of the Southeastern United States*. The University of Georgia Press.
- Horn, Dennis, and Tavia Cathcart, eds., 2005. *Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley, and the Southern Appalachians*. Lone Pine Publishing.
- White, Peter. 1996. *Wildflowers of the Smokies*. Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association.

# Autumn Calendar of Events

**A Guided Walk Through Abbo's Alley**  
**Sat., September 26, 7:45 AM, Mary Priestley**  
A Family Weekend tradition! Meet at the Quadrangle for this one-hour easy walk in the Abbott Cotten Martin Ravine Garden.

**Lake Eva-Fall Wildflowers**  
**Sat., October 3, 10:00 AM,**  
**Jean and Harry Yeatman**

Sewanee's premier naturalists, the Yeatmans, will lead a stroll around Lake Eva near their home on Eva Road. We will hope to see netted chain fern, blue bottle gentian, turtlehead, and other late fall wildflowers. In any case, the scenery is beautiful and the company congenial. Meet at the Sewanee Market at 9:45 AM to carpool or caravan to the Yeatmans' property.

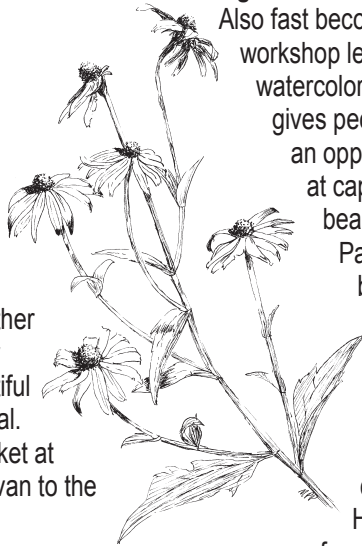
**Herbarium Jubilee Jamboree**  
**Homecoming Weekend, Sun., October 11**

The Sewanee Herbarium is marking 50 years of botanical excursions and excellence during this Jubilee Year. The highlight of the year is a special schedule of activities on the Sunday of Homecoming Weekend, including a tour of the lovely new facilities in Spencer Hall, the new wing of the science building.

Come join in the celebration! Please see the article in this newsletter for more details.

**Botanical Watercolor Workshop**  
**Sat., October 31, 9:30 AM to Noon.**  
**Margaret Patten Smith**

Also fast becoming a tradition, this workshop led by Chattanooga watercolorist Margaret Patten Smith gives people of all ability levels an opportunity to try their hand at capturing some of autumn's beauty in watercolors. Participants are invited to bring in botanical or other natural objects to paint, or try their hand at painting the still life provided. Bring your own painting materials and meet in the herbarium on the first floor of Spencer Hall. The workshop is free, but space is limited, so reservations are necessary.



All times are CST or CDT. Wear appropriate shoes on all of these walks. Risks involved in hiking include physical exertion, rough terrain, forces of nature, and other hazards not present in everyday life. Picking flowers and digging plants are prohibited in all of the above-mentioned natural areas.

## THE SEWANEE PLANT PRESS

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*Drawings, by Mary Priestley, are of smooth sumac, bellflower, black-eyed Susans, and a likeable lycopod.*

For more information on these events or to reserve a spot in the watercolor workshop, call the Herbarium at 931-598-3346. Directions are available on the Herbarium website, <http://lal.sewanee.edu/herbarium>.

## Membership Application/Renewal

The Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium support the work of the Herbarium: education, research, and conservation. A \$10.00 annual contribution would be very much appreciated. The date of your most recent contribution is printed on your address label.

Name and Address (if different from that on the mailing label on the back):

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Amount Enclosed:  \$10.00  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to The University of the South. Gifts are fully tax deductible.

Send to: Sewanee Herbarium  
c/o Mary Priestley  
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**You are invited to the  
Sewanee Herbarium Jubilee Jamboree  
Sunday, October 11, 2009**

**Fiery Gizzard Hike – Birthday Bash – John Muir Visit**

*If you are planning to come from out of town, please let us know.*



## The Herbarium's First Curator?

"This whole mountain is covered with beautiful, neat stuff," comments Pat Nesbit, Class of 1961, and one of George Ramseur's early botany students. In those days, botany classes were taught in Carnegie Hall, and the herbarium—such as it was—was tucked under the eaves. As Dr. Ramseur's lab assistant, Pat was charged with organizing the herbarium specimens in the one and only herbarium cabinet that housed Sewanee's nascent plant collection.

For a short time, Dr. Ramseur lent Pat, who was a quick study at plant identification,

to one of the forestry professors to help identify the wildflowers in his research plots. This may have been Henry Smith, who studied yellow-poplar recruitment on the slopes below the War Memorial Cross.

Pat has a warning to those with a botanical bent: "An interest in wildflowers is a dangerous thing. I find myself—particularly in the springtime—looking for them off the side of the road when I'm driving!"

These days, Pat has plenty of opportunities for roadside botanizing on the plateau. He and his wife Myrna have settled

in Tracy City, where they own and operate the Tea on the Mountain restaurant. We hope that they—and you—will be on hand for our Jubilee Jamboree in October.

—Mary Priestley

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