Welcome to a New Year of Butterflies!

A very happy new year to all our Tennessee Valley NABA members. It is now 2017 and as I write this in mid-February we are on the verge of another great year that will hopefully be filled with beautiful butterflies. (It’s hard to believe we are already a month-and-a-half into the year!) David Spicer and Tommie Rogers have already reported seeing butterflies during one of our February warm snaps.

So far, we’ve had a relatively mild winter, but Mother Nature loves to surprise, so I suspect she still has some cold, ice and bad weather in store before we turn the corner into spring.

Our first NABA butterfly count of 2017, the Tennessee River Gorge spring seasonal, is scheduled for the last day of March. Spring counts are always fraught with uncertainty, as you never know what kind of weather to expect. I guess we’ll find out this year if March goes out like a lion or a lamb! We’ll keep fingers crossed for sunshine and warm temperatures that day. Going on experiences from last year, note that our start time will be later than usual to give butterflies a chance to warm up.

I welcome photographs, stories and other submissions to include in this newsletter. If you take a trip and see great scenery and butterflies, (or other creatures) why not send me a short story and photos of your adventures so everyone can enjoy them?

Bill Haley, President, TN Valley NABA
The North American Butterfly Association, NABA, was started in 1994 to popularize the study of butterflies through observation and identification through use of field marks rather than collecting.

The Tennessee Valley NABA chapter was formed in 2008. The chapter’s territory is centered around southeastern Tennessee, but also encompasses areas of northwestern Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Anyone who joins the national organization within a zip code area beginning with 374, 373, 307, 357 or 359 will automatically become a member of the chapter.

It is also possible for people living outside our zip code areas to become members of the Tennessee Valley chapter. When you join or renew your NABA membership, specify that you’d like to be affiliated with the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.

Joining online is easy. Go to their website at http://www.naba.org and click on Membership. Individual $35, Family $45, Institution/Library $60. There also other sponsorship levels if interested.

Members receive quarterly publications from NABA, “American Butterflies” and “Butterfly Gardener”, as well as monthly “On the Wing” newsletters (March-Nov.) from the local Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.

**2017 BUTTERFLY COUNT SCHEDULE:**

- **Fri., March 31**: Tennessee River Gorge, TN (spring)
- **Sat., April 15**: Soddy-Daisy, TN (spring)
- **Thurs., April 27**: Lookout Mtn., GA (spring)
- **Fri., June 2**: Tennessee River Gorge, TN (summer)
- **Sat., June 10**: Soddy-Daisy, TN (summer)
- **Sat., July 1**: Lookout Mtn., GA (summer)
- **Thurs., July 13**: Stevenson, AL (summer)
- **Sun., July 16**: Williamsburg, KY (summer)
- **Sat., Aug. 12**: Tennessee River Gorge, TN (fall)
- **Sat., Aug. 26**: Soddy-Daisy, TN (fall)
- **Thurs., Sept. 7**: Lookout Mtn., GA (fall)

**Wild Ones Plant Natives 2017**

workshop and symposium, March 17 & 18, 2017

UTC University Center

**Friday, March 17**: Designing Plant Communities, a special workshop with Claudia West, 9:00—4:00, University Center, Chattanooga Room. Cost $125/person, includes lunch. Enrollment limited to 25 individuals.

This workshop will be great for experienced wildflower gardeners, landscape designers and installers and government and corporate landscape planners. You will dig deeper into the art and science of landscape planting design. Biologically functional planting design and low impact maintenance will be stressed. You will learn how to create beautiful and lasting landscape plant communities.

**Saturday, March 18**: Designing For Nature, 8:30-4:30, featuring four speakers and native plants marketplace. Cost $50 in advance for Wild Ones members, $60 in advance for non-members, $70 at the door for everyone, $20 for students with valid ID. All prices include a lunch.

The 6th annual Native Plant Symposium was created with both casual and experienced landscape gardeners in mind. You’ll get practical tips on natural landscaping and plant selection. It will be held in the UTC University Center, 642 E. 5th St., Chattanooga, TN, a spacious, uncrowded, accessible
Venue with free and ample close-by parking. Claudia West’s *Planting in a Post-Wild World* will be available for purchase and signing by the author. Nurseries will have native plants and artists will have artworks for sale. (Note: Some vendors only take cash or checks). Many organizations, including the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter, will have informative booths set up. Ample time is provided at midday and at the end of the day to visit exhibits and vendors. You may even get to take home a free door prize!

**Symposium Schedule, Saturday, March 18:**

8:00-8:45: Opening remarks

8:45-9:45: *Planting in a Post-Wild World* with Claudia West

9:45-10:00: Break and exhibits

10:00-11:00: Challenges to Using Native Plants in Commercial and Residential Design, a Landscape Architect’s Perspective with Steve Sanchez.

11:00-11:30: Landscape awards.

11:30-12:45: Book signing, Exhibits and Lunch

12:45-1:15: “Plants of Promise” and Door Prizes

1:15-2:15: Practical Considerations in Native Plant Landscapes with Mike Berkley

2:30-3:30: Native Plants and Sustainable Landscapes with Rick Huffman

3:30-4:30: Exhibits, Plant Sales and Student Poster Sessions

**How to Register:** If you wish to register for the Wild Ones, Tennessee Valley Chapter workshop on Friday, March 17 or seminars on March 18 you can go to their website, or mail a check to: Wild Ones—Tennessee Valley Chapter, c/o 4918 Marlowe Drive, Red Bank, TN 37415.

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**6th Annual Plant Give-Away**

**Daisy United Methodist Church**

9508 Dayton Blvd., Soddy-Daisy, TN

**Saturday, April 8, 10:00-2:00**

Bill Haley’s church, Daisy United Methodist, in Soddy-Daisy, will host the 6th annual Plant Give-Away on Saturday, April 8 from 10:00-2:00. Annuals, perennials, herbs and flower seeds will be available. All plants are donated for this event. If you wish to donate plants and need flower pots, please contact Bill at (423) 326-9248 or wgh@tnaqua.org.

**Plant Give-Away Rules:**

**Plant Give-Away Hours:** 10:00-2:00

**Early Admission Donation:** If you wish to get in early, a $10 donation is required. In years past we’ve allowed people to start early and this is not fair when folks show up during the stated hours and we are low on plants because early people get the best picks. Without the $10 donation nobody will be admitted before 10:00.

**Limit of 3 plants per person (the person must be present)**

**All Plants are Free!** If you wish to leave a donation to fund future community outreach events such as this, it will be gladly accepted, but a donation is not required.

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**First Butterfly of 2017!** Dave Spicer photographed this Clouded Sulphur at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in Alabama on February 4. Temperature was between 37-40 degrees!
Butterflies in February? Yes Indeed!

Feb. 4: David Spicer got a photo of a Clouded Sulphur during a visit to Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in north Alabama. (See Dave’s photo on page 3).

Feb. 12: Tommie Rogers and Libby Wolfe went over to Montague Park to look for birds. They saw a sulphur butterfly and a white, possibly Falcate Orangetip, but neither butterfly stopped long enough for an identification.

Feb. 19: Mike O’Brien reported seeing a Spring Azure and a Question Mark on his property in Valley Head, Alabama.

Feb. 19: Bill Haley was working in his front yard when a small white butterfly, probably a Cabbage White, flew past, but never landed.

Feb. 24: David and Jon Spicer visited the Enterprise South park, seeing an Orange Sulphur and several Falcate Orangetips.

Feb. 25: Tommie Rogers sent an e-mail listing species she’d seen in the previous week. Several Falcate Orangetips, an American Snout and a Question Mark, as well as an unidentified Sulphur, seen at Reflection Riding.

Feb. 26: Marion O’Brien spotted this newly emerged Orange Sulphur. Mike sent the photo of her discovery.

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Around the Puddle

By Bill Haley

2017: A Blank Canvas

I’ve recently been doing some artwork, having finished 3-4 paintings in the last month. It is kind of exciting to look at a brand new, blank canvas and try to envision what will go on it. Very often, the finished product was not really what I originally imagined.

It strikes me that the butterfly season is much the same. As Forrest Gump’s mother might say, “Butterfly season is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’ll get”.

Right now, this year’s butterfly canvas has a few tentative brush strokes. Butterflies have already been seen in very limited numbers. With each passing week, the color palette will grow and the painting will become more rich and varied.

When I think of our first butterfly count a month from now, I’m hoping for a sunny spring day with mild temperatures in the 60’s or 70’s. In my minds-eye West Virginia Whites, Falcate Orangetips, Juvenal’s Duskywings, Pepper and Salt Skippers, Spring Azures, Tiger Swallowtails and many other species will dance between blooming spring wildflowers.

Will our first count unfold like my vision? Only time will tell. In my last 24 years of butterfly counting I’ve witnessed many such wonderful days. I’ve also seen cold, windy, cloudy spring days that no butterfly in its right mind would hazard.

I have only to think back on the experience of folks in Nashville, Tennessee last spring, when those exact conditions prevailed on count day—a date that had already been postponed once. I must say those folks were more resilient than I would be. Several parties of butterfly enthusiasts put in over 8 hours of effort. Their total for the day? ONE butterfly. A single, very small and very cool Eastern Tailed-blue was found sheltering under a leaf. Now that was dedication!

On last year’s Tennessee River Gorge spring seasonal count, we didn’t have a promising start. It was cloudy, it was cool, yet we set out looking for butterflies. Not a single butterfly was seen by anyone until after 12:00. However, warming temperatures and partial sunshine saved us in the afternoon. We ended up with the largest number of individual butterflies of any spring count in Tennessee. You just never know.