

THE ZEPHYR

Monthly Bulletin of the Outdoor Nature Club of Houston, Texas.

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There is no rhyme that is half so sweet
As the song of the wind in the rippling wheat;
There is no meter that's half so fine
As the lilt of the brook under rock and vine;
And the loveliest lyric I ever heard
Was the wildwood strain of a forest bird.

-- Madison Cawein.

A Call to Poets and Poetry Lovers.

As a means of gathering together some of the beautiful and impressive thoughts inspired by nearness to the earth and its fruits, and for the purpose of stimulating interest in the study of nature, the conservation of our valuable native flora and fauna, and the preservation of important scenic areas:

The Outdoor Nature Club of Houston, Texas, offers prizes of \$15.00 and \$10.00, respectively, for the best and second best nature poems submitted under the rules given below. The theme of the poem may be sunset among the hills, the mockingbird's moonlight serenade, wild flowers of woodland and prairie, the mystery and charm of spring, Nature's motherly provision for her wild children, the sublime solitude of the forest, or any subject that would place it under the classification of nature poetry.

All poems must have been hitherto unpublished.

No poem shall exceed twenty-four lines in length.

The author must be a resident of Texas or one of the adjoining states: Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

Members of the Outdoor Nature Club are not eligible to compete in this contest.

All poems received shall remain the property of the club, to be used as the club shall later decide, but authors will be given credit for all poems published.

The contest will close on May 1st, and prize winners will be announced on or before June 1st, 1926.

All manuscripts should be addressed to Mrs. A. J. James, 3003 Travis Street, Houston, Texas. Names of judges for the contest will be announced at a later date.

This is the first contest of this kind to be sponsored by the Outdoor Nature Club, and because of various factors that had to be taken into consideration, it was decided to limit the territory from which verses would be received to Texas and the bordering states. If results justify, a similar contest, on a larger scale, in which nature lovers of the whole nation will be invited to participate, will probably be a part of the next year's program.

At the gates of the forest, the surprised man of the world is forced to leave his city estimates of great and small, wise and foolish. Cities give not the human senses room enough.

-- Emerson.

Here are some paragraphs quoted from thought-inspiring articles in recent numbers of "American Forests & Forest Life" and "Parks & Recreation". We only wish the articles, in their entirety, could be published in every newspaper and broadcast from every radio station in the land:

"Conservation, both in the National Parks and in the State Park movement, means primarily the acquiring and preserving for the public of scenic regions of importance before their exploitation by activities which destroy their scenic value or make their acquisition by the public undesirable."

"We should not confuse the motor road and motor camp movement with the state park movement. They are related but not identical. Frank recognition of this will aid to sound progress. Speaking broadly, that we make the point distinct, motor camps, which at best are not inspiring and at worst are simply horrid, should not be placed where they detract from charm of scenery."

"Since the pilgrims landed, the supply of wilderness has always been unlimited. Now, of a sudden, the end is in sight. The really wild places within reach of the centers of population are going or gone. As a nation, however, we are so accustomed to a plentiful supply that we are unconscious of what the disappearance of wild places would mean, just as we are unconscious of what the disappearance of winds or sunsets would mean."

"To urge that wilderness playgrounds are unnecessary because ample forest playgrounds of other kinds are already being established is just as idle as to urge that there is no need for public tennis courts because there are already public golf links. The two things represent differing needs of different people, each entitled to recognition in due proportion to their numbers and importance. The people in need of wilderness areas are numerous, and the preservation of their particular kind of contact with Mother Earth is a national problem of the first magnitude."

"The State Park proper is an area whose primary purpose is the preservation of a portion of the soil of the commonwealth, of natural beauty and significance in unspoiled primitiveness. Whatever else it may offer the citizen in the physical pleasures of outings, camping, hiking, fishing, nature study and recreation, its primary mission is this: The keeping intact and "unimproved" for all generations to come of a part of nature's original domain."

"Right here I had better explain that motor roads, cottages, and launches do not necessarily destroy hunting and fishing, but they destroy the wilderness, which to certain tastes is quite as important. ... Neither do I imply that motors, cottages, summer resorts, and dude ranches are not in themselves highly valuable recreational assets. Obviously they are. Only they are a different kind of recreation. We need to preserve as many different kinds as we possibly can. The civilized kinds tend to preserve themselves through the automatic operation of economic laws. But wilderness travel is a kind that tends to disappear under the automatic operation of economic laws, just as the site for a city park tends to disappear with the growth of a city. Unlike the city park, however, the wilderness can not be re-created when the need for it is determined by hind-sight. The need for it must be determined by fore-sight, and the necessary areas segregated and preserved."

Notes and News.

Outdoor enthusiasts of three cities, Rock Island and Moline, Ill., and Davenport, Ia., are banded together under the banner of the Black Hawk Hiking Club. An attractive bulletin just received gives details of 23 expeditions on the present schedule of this active tri-city organization. There's other interesting material in it, too, such as the names of officers and directors, and some notes, of which the following are samples:

"For giving the face a good color, get one pot of rouge and one rabbit's foot. Bury them two miles from home, and walk out and back once a day to see if they are still there."

"Our hikes are not endurance contests, but rather a sociability with Dame Nature - health-giving and life-enriching."

"The year's events take us to No. 164 of Outings, etc. To those of us most familiar with the subject, it seems we have but scratched the surface of discovery of worth-while places and interesting wild life of our community."

Long life and more power to the Black Hawk Hiking Club!

Our library has just been increased by two good books, through the courtesy of Mr. LeRoy Jeffers, of the Associated Mountaineering Clubs of North America.

"Marble's Round the World Travel Guide" comes from Harper & Bros., to stir up an epidemic of wanderlust among club members. Anyone who is able to resist the lure offered in this dandy little book will certainly succumb to the next one: "A Tropical Tramp with the Tourists", by Harry L. Foster, published by Dodd, Mead & Company. The author gives a personally conducted trip through Latin America and the tropical seas in return for a few idle hours and a bunch of hearty chuckles.

The Houston chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America has now started upon its official career, having selected as its first staff of officers a group of representative, keen-visioned sportsmen, eager to push forward the conservation program of the league. In this, they should have the support of all thoughtful citizens. While the nature lover and the sportsman differ in their methods of enjoying outdoor life, there should be the fullest cooperation between them in the important work of "restoring the outdoor America of our ancestors".

Now is the time to plant trees, while they are still in the midst of their winter sleep, and transplanting disturbs them least. Cooperate heartily in the movement to beautify the city by planting crape myrtles, but let us not overlook our native ornamental trees, such as the holly, magnolia, dogwood and redbud. These beauties of our southern scenery are doomed to disappear all too soon, unless real efforts are made to transplant and preserve them in protected areas. The pecan is an ideal tree to plant, especially if there is space for two or more trees, but nearly everyone has room enough for a crape myrtle or a holly. Don't be satisfied with good intentions, but get busy now with spade and trowel. If you want to give your trees a good start in the environment they are to grace for so many years, read up on the right way to plant trees before you set them out. Get back to the soil for a moment or two, and enjoy the rich odor of freshly-turned earth. Plant trees!

A State Bird For Texas.

The St. Petersburg Audubon Society, which occupies a position in the community activities of that lively Florida city very similar to the place filled by the Outdoor Nature Club here, has started a movement to make the mockingbird the state bird of Florida, and is asking each state in the union to select a state bird.

We are in hearty accord with this movement, but, in all sincerity, we feel sure that Texas has more mockingbirds than Florida, and that our Texas mockers are the sweetest singers of all the Southland's wonderful chorus of graceful, gray-coated minstrels.

For more than two years, the Outdoor Nature Club has advocated the selection of the mockingbird as the state bird of Texas as a deserved honor to our best known bird citizen, an incentive towards greater interest in our native flora and fauna, and a lasting, world-wide advertisement for our state.

Texas has a worthy state tree, the pecan, and a beautiful state flower, the bluebonnet. Eventually we shall have a state bird, and so will every other state. There is no reason why we should lag behind until other commonwealths, more alert and appreciative, have chosen the most attractive birds as their avian standard bearers. Were we to do so, we would prove ourselves deserving of some species such as the cow-bird, the English sparrow or the buzzard, rather than so industrious, courageous and gloriously gifted a bird as Sir Mimus Polyglottus, our world-famed Dixie troubadour, the mockingbird.

Come on, you school-teachers, students, senators, stenographers, editors, club women and clerks - everybody! Vote for the people's candidate. He stands upon a platform of happier homes, more music and less grasshoppers.

"Aye - pause and hark - be still, and mark
 What countless grades of voice and tone
 From bosk and tree, from strand and sea,
 These small, winged genii make their own:
 Fine lyric memories live again,
 From tuneful burial disinterred,
 To magnify the fiery strain
 Which quivering trills and smites the hills
 With rapture of the mockingbird."

----- Hayne.

When Audubon was alive there were birds in such variety and immensity of numbers that we of today cannot picture them. Just as there was a plentitude of birds then, there was also a plentitude of wild flora. Increasing population and expanding civilization have made tremendous inroads in the bird, the animal, and the wild flower worlds. These factors of normal development, coupled with carelessness, ignorance and lack of vision have brought us to the point where we are literally with our backs to the wall. Our position is perhaps best summed up by the title of the national organization dedicated to save the wild flower - Wild Flower Preservation Society. Preservation! It suggests the last ditch, the empty machine gun belt. -- Bulletin of the Associated Mountaineering Clubs of North America.