

Nectar News



Official Newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Butterfly Association

June 2015

Mission Statement:

It is our mission to share our knowledge to educate people about Lepidoptera and their habitats, to instill and foster a passion for nature in others, and to establish and preserve the environment for butterflies, skippers and moths.

A FETISH FOR BUTTERFLIES

By Doris Applebaum, SEMBA member

One of my favorite magazines is *Natural History*, which is published by the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The cover of the April 2015 issue shows a strange creature that looks like a caricature of a human skeleton. In one of its hands it holds something that looks like a bumblebee, and in the other hand it holds something that definitely looks like a butterfly.

That's the introduction to an article titled "Air Dancers in Stone," which tells of the butter-

fly fetishes carved by people of the Zuni Indian Reservation in New Mexico.

A fetish in this sense is a very small carving that the owner believes provides spiritual protection. The owner will typically wear it or carry it in a separate pouch. The Zuni people often use a butterfly as the subject of a fetish, and the article shows a number of examples, some of which are truly exquisite.

A personal fetish is one that is blessed by a spiritual leader of the tribe. There are also commercial ones that are not spiritual but can be sold to people outside the tribe. These have become quite popular as collectibles.

The author of this article is Gary Noel Ross, a lepidopterist known as a real butterfly enthusiast. He has written articles for many other publications, including those of the North American Butterfly Association. I've read several of his articles and have always enjoyed them.

Many libraries have a subscription to *Natural History* magazine. If you find the April issue in your local library, take a look

at this article. It shows the love of butterflies in an unusual way, but one which we butterfly aficionados can understand and appreciate.

Below is an excerpt from "Air Dancers in Stone" by Gary Noel Ross

My interest in the carvers began in 2003, when Robert Sherman, a friend who had recently returned from an environmental work project in northern New Mexico, showed me photographs he had taken of several medium size paintings featuring "butterfly maidens"-humans with butterfly wings.

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All were from the brushes of a Zuni artist, Edward Lewis. Robert had also collected several small stone carvings of stylized butterflies that he called "fetishes." All were created in the ancient Pueblo of Zuni, in the heart of the reservation.

As a lepidopterist (butterfly scientist) and an ethnobiologist (a student of the interaction between indigenous people and their native flora and fauna), I already knew that diverse societies throughout the world share an interest in butterflies, whose metamorphic life cycle is a source of wonder. But Robert's samples of contemporary Zuni "butterfly worship" were new to me. In July 2006 I finally was able to arrange a first foray into the world of the Zuni, or A:shiwí (The Flesh), as they identify themselves.

After settling in, I sought out Edward Lewis, the artist who had painted the butterfly maidens. An affable, unassuming thirty-three-year-old, he was very receptive. Turns out no one in the Pueblo had ever met a person who actually studied butterflies (bu:lak'kya). Lewis immediately christened me Nana Bu:lak'kya, or "Grandpa Butterfly." In return I presented him with several field guides to butterflies that could assist him in identifying species in his region.

Lewis said, "We Zunis believe that butterflies are earthly representations of Butterfly Maiden. It is Butterfly Maiden who brings the rain-the lifeblood-to our village. The butterfly's metamorphosis is relevant to our beliefs in how we came into this world."

I learned that the butterfly is a "power animal," that is, a spiritual helper, companion, and guide that possesses qualities humans need in this world. Butterflies, for example, embody beauty, balance, change, transformation (including healing), movement, and air. Butterflies are endearingly referred to as "dancing flowers" and "air dancers." According to Zuni beliefs, anyone who embraces the butterfly as a personal spirit usually exhibits a heightened sensitivity (including the wisdom to recognize when others are in a process of transformation). "Butterfly People" are noted to be charming, successful in business and love, and sensitive to air quality.

For the Zuni, butterflies interact with humans at their moment of need. The interactions are personal, positive. Put simply, butterflies make us feel better and make us better people.

Ross, Gary Noel. "Air Dancers in Stone." *Natural History* 04 2015: 12-7. *ProQuest*. Web. 29 June 2015 .



Story by Lily

THE ADVENTURES OF TEN MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

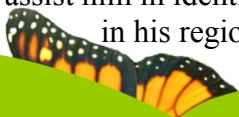
By Lily Anna Reynoso, Age 7, Granddaughter of Angela Stead.

Once there were ten Monarch butterflies. They had black dotted spots and orange stripes. They liked to fly in the meadow to drink nectar. The meadow had many flowers like daisies, dandelions, and violets. Their favorite was milkweed and one gigantic white butterfly bush.

Next to the meadow lived a little girl named Martha. Every afternoon, Martha liked to run with the butterflies. She liked to watch them drink the nectar from the flowers. She liked when the butterflies would land on her too.

On the other side of the meadow, lived an old, grouchy man named Sam, who did not like butterflies. Sam wanted to get rid of all the butterflies. One day, Sam decided to cut down all the plants in the meadow even the grass. The next day, the butterflies came to the meadow and found no food. They had to fly somewhere else to look for food.

Martha was running to the meadow, excited, but when she got there she saw nothing.



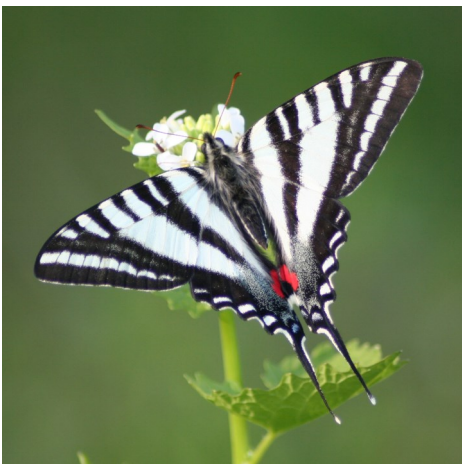


Zebra Swallowtail

She felt sad and walked all the way home. On the way home, she was thinking of a plan to help the butterflies.

When her dad came home from work, they decided to use their backyard. They went to the store to buy new plants. They bought milkweed, dandelions, violets, daisies, and a pink butterfly bush. They planted everything in their backyard. The plants grew and grew and grew. The ten Monarch butterflies saw the plants and flew to the backyard. The butterflies, Martha, and her dad were happy once again.

The old grouchy man, Sam, could only look over his fence to see what was happening. He could no longer destroy the butterfly habitat.



Above: Zebra Swallowtail

Zebra Swallowtail

Eurytides Marcellus

Identification: Upper surface of wings with black stripes on pale whitish-green background; hindwings have very long tails and red spots. Early-spring form is smaller and lighter colored.

Wing span: 2 1/2—4 inches

Life History: Adult males fly in the understory near host plants to find females. Females lay single green eggs on lower leaves of host plant. Caterpillars live and feed on the underside of these leaves, then pupate and hibernate there.

Caterpillar Host: shrubs of the genus *Asimina* (pawpaw) in the Annonaceae family.

Habitat: Breeds in moist low woodlands near swamps and rivers. Adults fly to nectar plants in open fields and brushy areas.



Above: Pawpaw leaves

Updates

John Blair's Open Garden

Sunday, July 26
1pm

Brenda's Open Garden

Sunday, August 16
2-5pm

Brenda is doing research on the O.E. parasite and the Tussock Moth Caterpillar. Please contact her if you have any to give away.

Grant Award Winners!

- Diane Pruden, Kensington Metro Park
- Lisa Denys, Holiday Nature Preserve
- Marianne Lupinacci, John Paul II Catholic School
- Kathy Bey and Karen Jewell, Nankin Mills Butterfly Garden

The Detroit News

Residents need to step in to reverse dwindling butterfly habitats, experts say

Features SEMBA Co-founder Brenda Dziedzic

<http://www.detroitnews.com/story/life/home-garden/2015/06/11/building-butterfly-habitat/71090380/>



SEMBA Membership is \$15 per person and \$7.50 additional family members.

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

July 2015

15th, at Brenda's Butterfly Habitat, 7:00 p.m.
“Outdoor Photography” Brendon Weil, SEMBA Vice President, will build upon last year’s presentation about butterfly and nature photography. This will be a workshop forum. This will take place at Brenda’s Butterfly Habitat, 6414 Merriman Rd, Westland, MI 48185—bring your camera!

August 2015

19th, at Nankin Mills Nature Center, 7:00 p.m.
“Themed Butterfly Containers,” Carolyn Sohoza, SEMBA President, will show how to put together planters designed to attract specific butterfly species, such as Monarchs, Black Swallowtail, and American Lady. Containers will be auctioned off!

September 2015

16th, at Nankin Mills Nature Center, 7:00 p.m.
Movie Night!
Join us for an educational movie about butterflies. We’ll provide the popcorn and drinks!

October 2015

21st, at Nankin Mills Nature Center, 7:00 p.m.
Year End Wrap Up
Come celebrate another successful year of butterfly-ing with a meal and conversation with fellow butterfly enthusiasts. We will also host the “tea cup raffle” again to raise money for the Grant Fund.