



Rock Chalk Review

STEVE PUPPE



■ Chip Taylor, director of Monarch Watch, is recruiting the butterfly group's volunteers and other nature lovers to help document seasonal firsts for a national global warming study.

climate, including long-term climate change due to global warming.

Writer and philosopher Henry David Thoreau was a good phenologist, says Taylor. Thoreau's observations of the natural world in *Walden* provided data that has allowed modern scientists to trace changes in the plant community at the Massachusetts pond. Over time, Monarch Watch's Milkweed and Nectar Plant Phenology Project, part of a larger study of seasonal firsts by the National Phenology Network, is expected to provide similar baseline information that will help scientists understand how plants react to climate change.

For that to happen, scientists need a wide range of data from as many sources as possible. And that's where the citizen scientists come in, Taylor says.

"Phenology makes a good project for citizen science, because everybody knows what a dandelion is, everybody knows a plum tree, a cherry tree, a lilac. The average person can do this, and all they have to do is keep a notebook."

Furthermore, says Taylor, the project is too big for one scientist. "We need a lot of hands and feet and eyes to record what is going on out there."

Toward that end, Monarch Watch is urging gardeners who tend the 2,800 Monarch Waystations across the country to join the project. Interested parties—even those without waystations—can visit the blog at monarchwatch.org this spring for a list of five milkweeds and nine nectar plants to observe.

Participants will be asked to note such phenophases as the first shoot, the first open flower and the first seed pod, then record the dates of these events on NPN's Web site, at usanpn.org.

Taylor pursued a phenology study after a series of weather catastrophes in 2007. Unusually warm weather caused campus blooms to pop nearly two weeks early that April, then a hard

First bloom

Butterfly network enlists citizen scientists to record rites of spring



Monarch Watch, the renowned education outreach program at KU that enlists thousands of volunteers to help tag and track monarch butterflies' annual fall migration and encourages gardeners to plant milkweed and other butterfly plants in Monarch Waystations, has come up with yet another way amateur naturalists can contribute to the study and preservation of monarchs.

The new project seeks volunteers to record the phenology of milkweeds and nectar plants used by the butterflies, and it's open to "anyone who can tell a leaf from a flower," says Orley "Chip" Taylor, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology and director of Monarch Watch.

Phenology is the study of seasonal firsts such as the first bud or the first flower. Phenologists study the periodic events in the seasonal cycles of plants and animals to understand how these cycles are influenced by variations and changes in

freeze and spring snows killed the early emerging foliage. Fruit and nut crops crashed, which devastated many wildlife populations, including bees and squirrels.

If wild swings in temperature become more frequent, as many global warming scientists predict, gardeners, farmers and the people who manage our wildlands will need to adjust tactics.

One thing is certain, Taylor says: The planet is changing, and we need to pay attention.

“We ought to get on board and be part of the team that is recording the changes, to help understand what is happening to the world,” he says, adding that an important goal of the project is to address the disconnect so many feel with the natural world.

“Let’s be engaged in what’s going on in the world around us, to be better informed citizens, so we can help our decision makers make better policies for managing the land,” Taylor says. “Let’s face it, the land sustains us.”

—Steven Hill



Bold and blue

Kelley Hunt’s new CD showcases an impressive performer at the height of her powers

From the first shimmering, reverberant notes of “You Got To Be The Vessel,” to the final resounding piano chords of “Mountain To Move,” Kelley Hunt’s latest CD pulses with the soulful, genuine intensity that’s missing from about 90 percent of FM radio fare these days. Righteous, rough and ready from start to finish, “Mercy” brings together Hunt’s most up-to-date sound yet, a mix of gospel-influenced vocals and boogie-woogie blues piano that’s overlaid with stellar guitar work in striking, clean arrangements that allow her singing and playing to shine.

Hunt’s voice, ranging from guttural vocal runs to fluid trills and soaring high notes, seems to get better with age. Here it conveys brash confidence and true toughness, transforming up-tempo tunes like “Lone Star Road” (an out-and-back road song with apocalyptic overtones) and “That Ain’t Love” (a rollicking, rockabilly tinged affirmation) into powerful declarations of independence, while also imparting a diamond edge to the social commentary of “Emerald City.” Spare ballads “Love,” “Mercy,” and “Drowning Man” put Hunt’s singing and playing center stage. Departures such as “Give Me A Sign,” with its bouncy Latin beat, and the funky, funny “Wig Chalet” highlight the playfulness that’s long been a hallmark of her vibrant stage show.

“The yellow brick road is paved with choices,” Hunt, ’79, sings on “Emerald City.” “The right ones keep your soul intact. After collaborating on her fine 2004 CD, “New Shade of Blue,” with Grammy winning producers Garth Fundis and Gary Nicholson, she opted to produce “Mercy” herself (along with her husband and manager, Al Berman, j’78), using some of the finest backing musicians (such as Motown Funk Brothers bassist Bob Babbitt) she could find. Good call. She made a feisty, bold recording on her own terms that delivers monumental soulfulness. It’s her best work yet.

—Steven Hill



“Mercy” (88 Records, \$15.50) is available in record stores and at kelleyhunt.com.

Red Door

KU art department debuts in Crossroads District

A tricycle/lawn mower hybrid, toy guns with clothespin triggers and one-of-a-kind Pez dispensers were a few of the funky novelties on display in December at the Red Door Gallery. “Toy Show” was the fourth official opening at the Kansas City, Mo., gallery created for and managed by KU art students and faculty.

“It is supposed to be for students, to prepare them for future shows while they are still in school,” says Kristi Arnold, ’01, gallery director and lecturer in art at KU. “It teaches them how to write a press release, how to install work and most importantly to network.”

Nearly two years ago, the art department’s plan for a Kansas City gallery began through collaborations among the Kansas City Arts Incubator, associate professor of art John Hachmeister, ’72, and art department chair Dawn Guernsey.

The Red Door Gallery shares space with the Arts Incubator and in September held its first official show, “Tools of the Trade,” headlined by members from the KU sculpture club, The Ministry of Sculpture. The gallery holds monthly openings in conjunction

with the traditional First Friday gallery exhibitions in Kansas City’s Crossroads District. The Red Door has showcased a variety of media, including printmaking, textiles and metalsmithing.

“The students have a real say, and they have a real investment in what’s going on,” Hachmeister says. “They have consistently identified needs and voted for money for the gallery, and students really see that as a very important thing.”

