

A SELBYANA RETROSPECTIVE

BARRY W. WALSH, MANAGING EDITOR

In its first 25 years, *Selbyana* has prospered under the leadership of six editors. A look back at their tenures also traces the history of the journal and its part in the research and conservation of epiphytes and their forest canopy habitat, especially the endangered tropical rain forest.

Carlyle A. Luer, M.D., 1975–1982

In the tradition of combining professional interests in medicine and botany, Carl Luer is both physician and orchid specialist. He studied medicine at Washington University in St. Louis, and his interest in orchids began when he moved to Sarasota, Florida, in 1953. He was Marie Selby's surgeon during her final illness and served on the board that established the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. For those who wonder, he explains that Mrs. Selby's will designated the name as Gardens (plural). Luer and his wife Jane traveled with board member Bill Coleman and his wife Kit and daughter Louise to Ecuador to persuade Calaway Dodson to become Director of the new Gardens. In 1975 (the same year that the Gardens opened to the public), Luer announced a new journal that "shall be called *Selbyana*." It was to be "devoted to articles of investigation in any of the fields concerning epiphytic plants, from any part of the world." Each issue would contain "about 80 pages" published at "irregular intervals, depending upon the material available." He estimated that four or "perhaps five issues should appear annually," with 500 pages constituting a volume that "should be completed about every 1 1/2 years." (That ex-

plains why after 25 years, the journal is in its 21st volume.) Subscriptions, he said, "will be sold annually at a price which will equal its cost." (A fiscal philosophy that continues to this day.) Vol. 1 No. 1 had eight articles by Selby Gardens scientific staff: Calaway H. Dodson, Ph.D.; Carlyle A. Luer, M.D.; Kiat W. Tan, Ph.D.; and doctoral candidate Hans Wiehler. The first issue declared the journal's mission to be "A publication devoted to biological research primarily concerned with epiphytic botany."

Selbyana completed its first volume in 1976 with four issues and 436 pages. The subscription rate for the inaugural volume (four separate issues) was \$22, with individual issues at \$8 to \$10. The journal was exchanged for scientific journals of 40 botanical institutions. (Today, although printing and postage costs have raised subscription rates, a number of separate back issues remain available at \$10 each for vols. 1–15.)

From the start, Selby Gardens had a strong rain forest research program. "The evidence of its success," commented Calaway Dodson in 1978, "is in our journal, *Selbyana*, which is well received world wide and has brought us recognition as a serious research institution." Vol.

Reviews of *Selbyana* 1(1) 1975

"*Selbyana* is a real contribution to concrete and useful taxonomy and will be of great importance to horticulture," John J. Wurdack, Curator, Department of Botany, The Smithsonian Institute.

"We have received with great pleasure the first number of your valuable new series *Selbyana*." W. Peyton Fawcett, Librarian, Field Museum of Natural History.

"I was delighted to see Volume 1, No. 1 of *Selbyana*, which we all agree is well designed, well edited, and well directed, especially as epiphyte botany is so little understood as to extent or biology." Howard S. Irwin, President, The New York Botanical Garden.

"Congratulations. The discussions, descriptions, format and literary skills are superlative, and the il-

lustrations and photographs are of the highest quality." T.R. Dudley, Research Botanist, U.S. National Arboretum.

"The quality is excellent in paper, format, and content of the articles. I fail to find a flaw, and I did look for the date of mailing and found it too. Congratulations on the initial issue. We welcome *Selbyana* to the botanical libraries." Richard A. Howard, Director, The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

"Many thanks indeed for the handsome first number of *Selbyana* which I looked through with great interest. . . . this appears to be an impressive addition to the literature on epiphytes." Peter H. Raven, Director, Missouri Botanical Garden.

4(1–6) of *Selbyana* was devoted to Flora of the Rio Palenque Science Center in Ecuador. Written by Dodson and S.H. Gentry, curator of the Missouri Botanical Garden, the 658-page book was the first comprehensive listing of flowering plants of that country. In 1970, Dodson and four other faculty members at the University of Miami had purchased undisturbed rain forest acreage in coastal Ecuador that was threatened by banana and palm plantations. The University of Miami funded a science building with laboratories and housing for several dozen scientists and signed an agreement of cooperative use with the Universidad Catolica de Quito. Dodson and his wife, Piedad Marmol, an Ecuadorian, purchased adjoining acreage with a closed canopy of mature wet forest, where they built a home. This area, known as Dodson Forest, and the original purchase make up the 400 acres of the Science Center.

By 1979, botanical institutions in 30 countries were subscribing to *Selbyana*, as were “hundreds” of universities, scientific groups, and individuals. Hans Wiehler, a graduate student who worked with Dodson at the University of Miami, was associate editor. After joining the Selby Gardens staff, Wiehler completed his Ph.D. and specialized in gesneriads. In an interview that year, Luer explained the mechanics of putting together an issue of the journal: “Before an article is accepted for publication, it is sent out for review by other qualified botanists. Of course, we have to edit each paper for clarity, grammatical errors, etc. There is also the fun in trying to make the pages come out right so that the pictures fit the text. Our staff members contribute much to the context of *Selbyana*. We try not to use only our own members’ work, for we aren’t just a ‘house organ.’ At first, I filled up some of the issues of the journal with description and illustration so that it would come out to about a hundred pages. Now we have a big backlog of articles that could run for a couple of years.”

Luer served as editor of *Selbyana* for eight years, the longest term to date, and wrote and illustrated 35 articles for the journal on orchid taxonomy. He stepped down as editor of *Selbyana* in 1983, shortly after Calaway Dodson stepped down as Director of Selby Gardens. Dodson then created the position of Director of Research, which he filled for two years. Vol. 7(2–4) of *Selbyana* appeared in 1984 without a designated editor.

Luer and Dodson: Pioneers Look Back and Ahead

Carlyle Luer, founding member of the Selby Gardens Board and founding editor of *Selbyana*,

set out in 1975 to establish a “first-class botanical journal.” The inside back cover of *Selbyana* 1(1) carried a notice that “Prior to acceptance, all articles will be reviewed by at least two specialists in the particular subject matter,” a policy upheld today. In that inaugural issue of the journal, Luer contributed an article on pleurothallids, which remain his specialty today. Since stepping down as editor of *Selbyana* in 1983, he has been affiliated with the Missouri Botanical Garden as a Research Associate, until last year, when he was named Senior Curator. “Even though plant taxonomy has been around for 250 years,” he notes, “we still have a long way to go. Species are becoming extinct without ever having been known.”

Calaway Dodson, first Director of Selby Gardens and author of 15 *Selbyana* articles, also is affiliated with the Missouri Botanical Garden and serves as a Senior Scientist at Selby Gardens. Currently he is at work on a multi-volume *Flora of Ecuador*, being published in Sweden. Volume 1 has appeared, and he is working on Volume 2, with 8–10 more to go. A black-and-white line drawing will illustrate each species. He is working, as well, on a series of color-illustrated books on Ecuadorian Native Orchids. Dodson notes the changes in *Selbyana* from the journal on plant taxonomy with “a certain amount of ecology” that he envisioned in his early days at the Gardens. Today, he says, *Selbyana* has expanded to incorporate the research of “the tree climbers,” the forest canopy ecologists.

W. John Kress 1985–1987

As part of the 10th Anniversary Celebration of Selby Gardens and *Selbyana*, the Research Department, headed by W. John Kress, organized a symposium on the Biology of Tropical Epiphytes. Held at Selby Gardens on September 19–21, 1985, it drew 90 participants from around the country to hear seven invited speakers and 20 contributed papers. Peter H. Raven, director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, was keynote speaker. In *Selbyana* 8(1–4), the first issue edited by Kress, the wording of the mission changed slightly as “A publication devoted to original biological research on tropical plants, especially epiphytes.” Vol. 8 featured the 512-page *Flora of Jauneche, Los Rios, Ecuador*, by C.H. Dodson, A.H. Gentry, and F.M. Valverde. He then devoted Vol. 9 to Proceedings of the Biology of Tropical Epiphytes Symposium. Kress led a Research Department project to compile a bibliography on epiphytes which appeared in *Selbyana* Vol. 10 as “A bibliography of biological literature on vascular epiphytes”

by James Watson, John Kress, and Cheryl Roessel. Kress served on the Editorial Board of *Selbyana* from 1993–1995 and wrote five articles on tropical epiphytes and the family Heliconiaceae for the journal.

Eric A. Christenson 1988–1989

Beginning as an intern at Selby Gardens, Eric A. Christenson rose through the ranks to become Director of the Eric Young Micropropagation Centre and editor of the journal. His research included orchid fragrances and his tenure as editor is noted for the Vol. 10 Supplement (1988) and Vol. 11 Supplement (1990). The 2-part work, written by Fritz Hamer and edited by Christenson, is entitled, “Orchids of Central America: An Illustrated Field Guide” Part 1 appeared in 1988 with orchids listed alphabetically A–L, and Part 2 in 1990 covering M–Z. Hamer, author of *Orchids of El Salvador*, was a German businessman living in San Salvador, who described himself as “a self-educated orchid hobbyist.” Hamer, a self-taught scholar, worked at Selby Gardens in 1977 preparing the Alphonse H. Heller orchid material for use in the Research Library. Christenson contributed four articles on orchid research to the journal.

Nalini Nadkarni 1989–1992

When Nalini Nadkarni became Director of Research and editor of *Selbyana*, the journal was being published annually. Nadkarni came to Selby Gardens from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she was an associate professor. She also served as a Research Associate at the Missouri Botanical Garden and had taught and conducted research in New Guinea and Alaska. At Selby Gardens, she held the Jessie B. Cox Chair in Tropical Botany. One of her first projects was to revitalize the Visiting Scientists Program, bringing an international group of botanists and conservationists to work in residence at the Gardens for periods of two weeks to three months. Each visiting scientist conducted research on epiphytes and other tropical plants, delivered a public lecture, and often contributed an article to *Selbyana*.

Nadkarni organized the Second International Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Epiphytes, sponsored by the Research Department on May 5–8, 1991, as a follow-up to the first symposium held six years earlier. A total of 160 scientists from 20 countries gathered at the Gardens to hear 68 papers, view poster displays, attend two slide lectures for the public, and take part in roundtable seminars on conservation. Papers from the symposium appeared in *Selbyana*

Vol. 13 along with an update on the 1987 epiphyte bibliography. 1,300 citations appeared in “A bibliography of biological literature on epiphytes,” edited by Nadkarni and Karen Ferrell-Ingram, a Selby Gardens Research Associate. To date, Nadkarni has contributed 11 articles on epiphyte and canopy ecology to the journal.

Margaret D. Lowman 1992–1999

Now Executive Director of Selby Gardens, Meg Lowman first joined the staff in July 1992 as Director of the Research Department and editor of *Selbyana*. In 1993, Vol. 14 carried a new mission as “A publication devoted to original scientific research on canopy biology and tropical plants, especially epiphytes.” Canopy had made the masthead. Lowman co-chaired with Professor Francis Hallé of France the First International Forest Canopy Conference. Entitled, “Forest Canopies: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Conservation,” the Conference was held at Selby Gardens on November 9–13, 1994, with 200+ scientists from 25+ countries attending. The Conference Proceedings were published in four issues of *Selbyana*: 15(2), 16(1), 16(2), and 17(1).

In 1994, the Research Department became the Research and Conservation Department. The name change was reflected in a broader range of articles in *Selbyana*. In 1997, John Atwood, Director of Selby Gardens’ Orchid Identification Center, organized the First International Orchid Conservation Conference. Entitled, “Orchid Conservation 97” and cosponsored by Selby Gardens and The Orchid Conservation Committee, Inc., the Conference was held at the Gardens on June 5–8, 1997. Conference Proceedings appeared in *Selbyana* 18(1) and 18(2). The following year, Lowman and Hallé co-chaired the Second International Canopy Conference, “Forest Canopies 1998: Global Perspectives.” Nearly 250 scientists from 35 countries attended, and Conference Proceedings appeared in *Selbyana*: Part I in 19(2) and Part II in 20(1). Lowman serves on the Editorial Board of *Selbyana* and, to date, has contributed a dozen articles on canopy ecology to the journal.

Bruce K. Holst 1999–present

Research botanist Bruce Holst came to Selby Gardens in 1994 to head the herbarium, having worked at the Missouri Botanical Garden for a decade on the *Flora of the Venezuelan Guayana*. Holst became an Editorial Board member of *Selbyana* in 1998 and was named editor of the journal the following year. His first issue as editor, Volume 20(1), carried yet another mission state-

ment, this time on the front cover, in addition to having a new cover design. *Selbyana* was to be "A publication devoted to tropical plants, with emphasis on epiphytes and their forest canopy habitat," with epiphytes preceding canopy. Holst, along with Managing Editor Barry Walsh, also initiated the first ever direct marketing campaign for the journal. Upon Meg Lowman's appointment as Executive Director of Selby Gardens, Holst became Acting Director of the Research and Conservation Department. *Selbyana* continued to publish the Second Canopy Conference Proceedings: Part III in 20(2) and Part IV in 21(1,2), along with other articles. The year 2000 saw a reorganization of the Research and Conservation Department. Holst is now Director of Plant Collections and Scientific Publications, in addition to his research on Bromeliaceae and neotropical Myrtaceae. He continues as editor of *Selbyana*, the flagship publication of the new SBG Press, which publishes technical botanical books and periodicals as well as plant field guides for general readers.

***Selbyana* Editorial Board**

Meg Lowman introduced the journal's first Editorial Board in 1993, announcing the original

members in *Selbyana* Vol. 14. They were David H. Benzing, Gregory K. Brown, Thomas B. Croat, Stig Dalström, Calaway H. Dodson, Robert L. Dressler, Barry E. Hammel, Fritz Hamer, Dale W. Jenkins, Helen Kennedy, W. John Kress, Robert Read, William L. Stern, Norris H. Williams, and Richard P. Wunderlin.

Between 1996 and 1999, the following taxonomists and canopy ecologists joined the board: John T. Atwood, Robin B. Foster, Francis Hallé, Bruce K. Holst, Harry E. Luther, Nalini M. Nadkarni, H. Bruce Rinker, Kathryn Satereson, Guadalupe Williams-Linera, and Phillip K. Wittman. Current board members, in addition to Atwood, Benzing, Brown, Dressler, Foster, Kennedy, Luther, Nadkarni, Rinker, Williams-Linera, and Wunderlin are Peter Hietz, Wesley Higgins, and Meg Lowman.

Peer Review

Selbyana Editorial Board members, past and present, and several hundred reviewers have volunteered time, effort, and expertise to provide the journal thoughtful input and manuscript reviews. The journal's authors and its peer review process have established *Selbyana* as a leader in the publication of epiphyte and canopy research.