

NATURE NOW

# Flowering of Birch Trees Goes Unnoticed by Many

As you read these lines you may have noticed that the birch and larch will already have bloomed. For the most part this year's flowering goes unobserved since the flowers take the shape of inconspicuous catkins which appear before the tree comes into full leaf.

The flowers are cone-like reproductive organs lacking the conspicuous parts known as sepals and petals. Since they are wind-pollinated they are not colorful and do not attract insect pollinators, most of which appear after these trees have bloomed.

The flowers are closely packed in a short axis surrounded by small woody scales. They are seldom woody, although they resemble the cones of our more primitive plants. THE ARRANGEMENT of many male or female flowers into long panicles results in the production of large amounts of pollen so necessary in the usual process of wind-pollination. The catkins in bearing birches are considered by many to be our most beautiful forest trees. Their earliest fossils were laid down in the Devonian sandstone and in the Upper Cretaceous rocks of Greenland as much as 100 million years ago. Birches were abundant and widespread throughout the northern hemisphere during the Eocene period some 40 million years later.

SO ADAPTIVE is this tree family that a dwarf species (*Betula nana*) grows well north of today's Arctic zone where it is

pears as a minute woody plant no higher than its companions the mosses. Authorities differ in their classification of the birches. Orits, in his "Trees of Michigan," notes that there are ten species which are tree-size occurring in North America, three of which are native to Michigan; the black, yellow and paper.

Those of us who have spent long summers in the north woods are partial to the paper or white birch (*Betula alba papyrifera*). Although this tree is widely planted as an ornamental, its native range is northward from the central Michigan line well into Canada.

WHEN YOUR scribe examined the catkins of the paper birch on May 1, she found them well developed while the leaf buds were just beginning to open. The male cones produced early last season hung long and pendulous like tassels. The female flowers appeared below the male in small slender catkins. As you read these lines the toothed and heart-shaped leaves will be full grown, the male cat-

By Lydia King Prehse  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

kins will have dropped while those of the female flowers will be developing into a cone. At summer's end the latter will be filled with a great number of small winged seeds.

WHILE THE PAPER birch accommodates itself to a variety of habitats, it likes to grow on the banks of a rushing stream or near the shores of a clear blue lake where its long white limbs are reflected in the water. In its youth it is tolerant of light and comes up readily in cut-over land.

The Indian taught our pioneers how to strip bark from the paper birch and how to use it with long threads of tannic roots and to stretch it over a frame of cedar to make a light and beautiful canoe. It also provided the red man with snow shoes and baskets and with a covering for his wigwam. With it he kindled his fire and of it he made a mouse-calling horn.

TODAY THE WOOD has a high fuel value and is used for furniture and interior finishing. In winter

# BRIDGE in BIRMINGHAM

By BUD MAYBAUM  
Southern Michigan Bridge Association

When we watch a tournament director at work, we often wonder how well he actually plays the game himself? Today, I wish to report a hand played by Kay Clinton, who directs the tournament each Monday evening at the Birmingham Community House.

We will see that she not only directs a tournament with authority, but she plays the game with the same authority and therefore obtains top boards. The fact that much of her time is taken by direction, does not diminish her ability. Both sides vulnerable. Dealer is south.

WEST: ♠ 7 4 4 3, ♥ A 10 6 2, ♦ Q 8 5 3, ♣ 8 6 5

EAST: ♠ A K Q 10 8 7, ♥ K 7 4, ♦ 10 3, ♣ A 8

SOUTH: ♠ J 9 6, ♥ A 10 6 2, ♦ Q 8 5 3, ♣ 8 6 5

Opening lead: K ♠

1 NT 2 ♣ 3 ♣ 4 ♣ pass 5 ♣ all pass

South West North East  
pass pass 1 NT 2 ♣  
3 ♣ 4 ♣ pass 5 ♣ all pass

During the Memorial Day week end there will be a sectional tournament at the Detroit-Seland Hotel. There will be the usual championships as well as tournaments for beginners.

For those of you whose usual partner may be out of town or otherwise unavailable, they will gladly arrange a partner for you. I will report all Birmingham winners in this tournament.

the top of diamonds. This of course was won in the closed hand. When Kay took out the remaining trump, winding up on the board, she cashed her remaining clubs for a top board.

Had Kay or her partner doubled the three spade contract, they would have been lucky to defeat the contract one trick. Most north and south pairs did arrive at a three or four club contract, but could make no better than 11 tricks as any defense.

RECENT WINNERS in Birmingham tournaments include: Charles Young and Len Kresynak; Lois and Bert Man; Shirley Campbell and Helen Boothman; Morris Bernat and partner; Hilda Murphy and Gloria Ravitz; Ann and Paul Phillip; T. Mann and J. Fanger; Dr. Patrick and E. L. Guy; Lynn Westhoven and Sue Bodary; Dr. Harold Barrow and George Clarke; Robert Riley and Ralph Frederick; Dick Mag and John Grant; Dr. and Mrs. G. Walker; Terry O'Hearn and Jim White; Jacques Sayed and Richard Becker.

Next week I hope to report many winners from the Birmingham area at the Lansing Regional Tournament.

KAY RUFFED the opening lead with a small trump, led a small club and played the king from her closed hand. East permitted this trick to hold but was forced to win the continuation of the suit.

East reasoned that West held three trumps—one of them either the ace, king or queen, that he stop Kay from drawing trump and set up the club suit, to be retracted

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## Author Meets Women from OU Panel

Betty Friedan, author of the recently published book, "Feminine Mystique," came to Birmingham Sunday and spent the afternoon at a coffee with some of the panelists participating in Oakland University's conference on "Women's Place in This Perplexing Century" to be held Wednesday. Hostess of the coffee was author Mrs. William H. Schen (Mary Augusta) daughter of 1240 Burdette.

"The phenomena in America today," Mrs. Friedan said, "is that educated women now are putting themselves in the position of women in primitive or simpler societies—marrying young, having many children and not allowing themselves to feel commitment or dedication to a profession be it science, art, or music, because of what I call the feminine mystique."

MRS. FRIEDAN defined feminine mystique as the idea of a woman who had the choice of higher education expecting to find fulfillment by putting all her energy, talent and intelligence into making a career out of home, children and homemaking.

"Home and children are not enough work for many," she went on.

"Children grow up and the homemaking skills our pioneer grandmothers had to practice aren't needed today. If one lives according to the feminine mystique, the real vital part of life is over at 40," she said.

Most women, Mrs. Friedan maintained, need a creative life of their own in addition to their role as wife and mother.

THIS NEED for a creative life will be one of many subjects of concern at the 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. conference Wednesday in which many Birmingham women are participating.

Creator of the conference is Mrs. Walter Jackson of 127 Madison, Birmingham. Mrs. Jackson is assistant director of continuing education for conferences, Oakland University.

Working with her has been Mrs. Philip Marriner of 1510 Buckingham, assistant to the Oakland County chairman of Michigan Day Week. The county Michigan Week committee has designated the woman's place conference as one of the focal events of the week.

APPEARING AS panelists in afternoon discussions will be novelist Mrs. John A. Cooper, 385 Fairview; Mrs. George Hilfinger, 15140 Dunblaine, former president of Birmingham League of Women Voters; and Mrs. John H. Bryman, 423 Berwyn, who handles public relations for the division of continuing education, Oakland University. Mrs. Dean Coffin, 1150 Peyton, is working on a dramatic presentation of the varying images of woman.

Reservations for the Conference, which is open to any woman, may be made by calling the Division of Continuing Education, Oakland University.

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