

A Fond Farewell... and a Warm Welcome



Good times at the Stengl “Lost Pines” Biology Station, the unofficial groundbreaking for the research greenhouse in May 2002. From left, Lorraine Wyer (station benefactor), me, Larry Gilbert (Director of the two UT Field Stations), John Crutchfield (manager of Brackenridge Field Lab in Austin), Pat and Dr. Lorraine “Casey” Stengl (station benefactor).

As much as it saddens me to write, by the time you read this, Pat and I, and the “kids” (Scout and Angel Marie, our two Australian Shepherds), will be well on our way back to Canada. After

more than 10 years—and more good memories of people, critters and flowers than I can possibly relate—in the Smithville area, home has called us home with a siren song too strong to be ignored. As I’ve said many a time, “you can take the boy out of Canada, but you can’t take Canada out of the boy.”

Pat is taking a wonderful new position at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia and we would be forever regretful if we didn’t take advantage of this opportunity to see and experience yet another new place, habitat, city, people and lifestyle. She willingly followed me to Texas ten years ago so I will willingly follow where she leads now. Those of you who know of our love of celtic music will understand why the call was so attractive—moving to the celtic capitol of Canada was a “no-brainer,” an easy decision to make.

Nevertheless, we leave central Texas and the Lost Pines of Bastrop County, with heavy hearts and more than a little sadness to be leaving the people and places we’ve come to know so well.

To all of you who have touched our lives with your own, we offer our thanks, our good wishes and our gratitude. To those who we never had a chance to meet or know, we’re sorry that we’ll not get that chance.

Still, leavings are not just sad times—they can also be times of great joy, anticipation and happiness. As I’m also known to say, “a change can be as good as a vacation!” So, I’m happy to be able to say that this little nature column will survive our leave-taking.

Local Smithvillian (Smithvillite? never could get that straight...), and President of the Lost Pines Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, Alvin Cearley, has graciously offered to continue “Lost Pines Nature Notes” in the Smithville Times. Alvin will bring a different perspective, a new voice, and, I think, a broader field of vision to LPNN (at the least you may not have to read nearly as many butterfly columns as I’ve subjected you to over the last three years).

I hope you’ll welcome him as much as I do. Nature has many, many never-ending stories to tell and I think that you’ll enjoy Alvin’s take on his observations and interests! We wish you all a fond farewell, luck in all future endeavors, and a final warm welcome to Alvin, and the next iteration of Lost Pines Nature Notes.

Remember how lucky you are to live in the unique island paradise that is the Lost Pines. We will always treasure our time, our photos and our memories of this little slice of heaven.