



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

THIS YEAR'S butterfly count will be held at 200 locations sometime between mid-June and mid-July.

Counting The Butterflies

BY BILL FAVER

Following the successes of the twice-yearly Audubon Bird Counts, it seems those who study butterflies are beginning to have very successful Fourth of July butterfly counts.



FAVER

The bird counts have for many years given scientists information on distribution patterns and the changes in bird populations. The bird counts have been around Christmas and then in late spring when much of the migration is taking place.

Volunteers have been helping with butterfly research since 1975, and this year they will cover about 200 sites north of Mexico for the annual butterfly count. The count this year runs from mid-June to mid-July and is organized by the North American Butterfly Association.

Like the volunteers for the bird counts, amateur but-

terfly lovers add to the storehouse of knowledge of these amazing creatures who taste with their feet and smell with their antennae.

Butterflies belong to the Order Lepidoptera and are the insects from which most of us learned about metamorphosis, or the change of form of an insect. Remember how the egg hatched into a larvae (or caterpillar), the caterpillar spun a cocoon and turned into a pupa or chrysalis, only to emerge as a full-grown butterfly? The adults then laid eggs and the process repeated itself.

We are fortunate to see many butterflies in our area and by late summer, just prior to fall migration, we experience the monarchs as they begin their journey to the tropics. Late summer flowers attract swallowtails and sulfurs and others to add beauty and motion to the blossoms.

Those interested in the butterfly count in later years should send a stamped self-addressed envelope for information to Ann Swengel, NABA Vice President, 909 Birch St, Baraboo, WI 53913.

Could 'On Hold' Be Part Of A Conspiracy?

"Company X, could you hold please?"

"Yes, but..." Click. The music began and the voice had already gone away, perhaps to soothe another caller or perhaps to sip a nice cup of coffee.

I never had a chance to explain that (1) I was calling long distance; and (2) I just needed to know if an expected shipment had arrived, so I could arrange to pick up an order.

Instead, processing news releases all the while so the time wouldn't be entirely wasted, I "held" for what seemed like ages. Then I heard a promising click, followed by a more threatening click, then a busy signal.

It figured. When the receptionist finally got to my call three to five minutes later, she disconnected us.

Feeling a growing sense of desperation, I dialed back, trying once again to get the tidbit of information needed. The scenario repeated itself, except this time some guy in the wrong department picked up the telephone. We had a nice chat before I was returned to "hold," but I still didn't know if the order was in. The right department never answered the call.

You've been there, listening to the Muzak or some other equally grating noise, convinced that the party on the other end of the line is polishing nails, reading a magazine or chatting with a friend of the opposite sex.

Like the day last week when a friend and I were trying to reach a particular federal office. After 10 minutes on "hold," she assumed they had forgotten her and hung up to call again. I argued in favor of a letter, but then she reminded me of my own experiences with the postal service. We put through another call.

It doesn't matter if you're dealing with a taxpayer-supported agency or

Susan Usher



answered in the order they are received."

Who's got enough nerve to hang up and risk losing a place in line after 10 minutes of waiting?

So I wait, almost patiently but with little "might have been" scenarios running through my head.

No doubt there are times when putting a caller on hold is necessary in its own gruesome way. But I'm not convinced that some of those holds aren't meant to satisfy a sadistic urge, a power game of some sort.

A friend counseled the other day that it was time for a vacation, that she could tell my zeal for getting the news was lagging.

I should have told her the truth: the "hold" button is starting to wear me down. I need a vacation from the telephone.

There was a time when I would have revolted, but instead I've become resigned to the situation. These days I allow more time for calls, and patiently ring again and explain what happened when calls get cut off or dropped during transfers.

Maybe the H button is part of the great conspiracy we keep hearing so much about. Maybe the goal is to paralyze America, leaving us all waiting, waiting, waiting. On hold, indefinitely.

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