



Standing before an American beech is like greeting an old friend. PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

FLORA  
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a titmouse and chickadee fussing at one another. Both were perched about 12 feet above me near a cavity on the side of a sourwood tree. That cavity had become a kind of permanent water reservoir. Those two birds were obviously contesting which was first in line for a drink. It turned out that the titmouse exerted authority over the smaller chickadee. A sighting perhaps not of note to a life-lister, but for me it remains unforgettable. Birders who are also botanizers are fortunate.

When there's a lull in bird activity, there are always plants to spot. Botanizers have an advantage in that plants can't quickly relocate. Plant discoveries can be exciting and are more frequent than bird discoveries. Finding common plants along the way is like happening upon old friends. Most you never, ever find boring. Smooth-barked beech trees, holding their copper-colored leaves in the winter, are always greeted with pleasure. One beech tree hot spot is Battle Park, particularly that extensive grove of big trees adjacent to the Forest Theatre. Another

beech tree hot spot is the upland elfin forest on the upper heights of Triangle Land Conservancy's Johnston Mill Nature Preserve between Mt. Sinai and Turkey Farm roads. A new beech tree hot spot for me is that same short Winmore bird encounter trail where the giant trees create a Tolkien-like forest. Wherever you go birding or botanizing, when armed with an appreciation for greeting old friends, you will always be rewarded with finding your own "hot spots."

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Chapel Hill Elementary School, 1965

On a brilliant sunny morning 45 years ago, I clambered up to the rooftop of old Chapel Hill High School to capture this view of Franklin Street, Chapel Hill Elementary School and the town under a blanket of white. You can orient yourself by (right to left) the steeples of the University Methodist and University Presbyterian churches and the cupola of the IFC building (then the police station and "firehouse.") With desegregation and the merger of CHHS and Lincoln, the school buildings were razed in the mid-'60s, making room for University Square, which itself is now scheduled for a teardown. Irony, irony – that the wrecking ball will again have its way. I, for one, wish we'd kept those perfectly good buildings right there in the heart of town and turned 'em into community centers.



A THOUSAND WORDS  
BY JOCK LAUTERER

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