

NOTES AND QUERIES

DRAGONFLIES, ANYONE?

Anyone interested in or knowing of any special folklore articles or literary references dealing with dragonflies and damselflies is please requested to contact: DR. B. ELWOOD MONTGOMERY, 906 NORTH CHAUNCEY AVENUE, WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA 47906. Dr. Montgomery is Professor Emeritus of Entomology at Purdue University and is the compiler of Selysia, A Newsletter of Odonatology (the study of dragonflies), and has published a number of scholarly articles dealing with the many folk names of the dragonfly.

A NOTE ON INTER-OFFICE MEMO PARODIES

The virtually ubiquitous office copier (Xerox, Thermofax, etc.) has spawned a new development in the subliterature of the general broadside tradition. Falling somewhere between the chain letter and the broadside parody, these anonymous and spurious office "memos," surreptitiously duplicated and passed from hand to hand, assume the format--in both appearance and literary style--of the formal inter-office directive and deal with topics of immediate national and social interest. They are often mildly obscene in tone. One whole category of such "memos" in the 1960's dealt with nuclear fall out shelters and evacuation procedures. Because of their topical and off-color nature, these documents are in circulation for only a brief period but occasionally they do find their way into company employee publications. The general phenomenon seems to be nationwide and dates to the introduction of photo-copiers into general office and business use. By definition, such items never become part of oral tradition, but are transmitted literally from hand to hand and are conventional in form and content.

The most recent example of this photo-copy subliterature deals with the current national collegiate fad of "streaking." This particular example is from Pampa, Texas. Readers possessing or knowing of other examples of such memo parodies on this and other topics are encouraged to deposit them in their local archive.

April 15, 1974

TO: ALL OFFICE MANAGERS
FROM: MANAGEMENT
SUBJECT: STREAKING