

THE MIGHTY MONARCH  
(Continued from July 20)

I live in a small trailer a good part of the year in the backwoods near Venosta, Quebec. I like to live in a home with wheels, so that I can move fast when the landowner gets nasty, and orders me off the property.

I'm going to call this incident a phenomena. Not only because I have never lost my fascination with the word, but at last I know what one looks like.

I, and a friend, Lucille Erikson, of Wakefield Quebec, were sitting in the shade of the trailer enjoying an amber-bottled tonic, when our eyes fell on a phenomena that left us in momentary disbelief.

About fifty feet away a huge Monarch butterfly dipped into the tall grass, and instantly a bird of uncertain species flew out of the reeds with the Monarch close behind. The Monarch followed within inches of the bird's tail for perhaps a hundred and fifty feet. Then the bird flew into the dense bushes, and the Monarch gave up the chase.

The question of what the Monarch intended to do with the intruder had she caught it, never entered my mind.

I use the word 'she' now in reference to the



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Monarch, because we then noticed tiny orange butterflies in the area of the encounter. The incident was obviously a mother protecting her nest. That's one mother whose way I intend to stay clear of.

Lucille and I looked at each other with the classic and silent look "did you see that!" What do you do for an encore, eh!

A few days later I was again treated to another of my mighty Monarch's exploits. I was sitting at my kitchen table doing some writing, when I looked out and spied Madam butterfly again giving chase.

This time it was a large dragonfly. At least she had scaled down her ambitions. The Monarch had no trouble keeping up with her fast moving quarry, in a straight line. The chase lasted for about fifty feet, then the dragonfly dipped and my mighty ruler

flew on. Unfortunately, I had no witness to this event. I hope she returns again this year. Maybe I can have the area declared off limits to all but the Monarch and her nestlings. And me. At last I had found my phenomenon.

Whoa! Hold it! Wait a minute. I see another phenomena developing. As I write this, two deer have just dashed out of the forest into the clearing, traveling so fast that I thought something was after them. Their speed has them stretched so that their bellies are almost touching the ground. The lead deer has suddenly stopped, and turned. It's standing almost upright on its hind legs, and shaking its head, as if to challenge its persuer. The persuer puts on the same act, and then turning, takes off in the opposite direction, reversing the roles. They are giving credibility to the term "greased lightening".

The animals are putting on a beautiful show, giving the very impression that they are going try to attack each other. But their movements are too playful to allow me to entertain that thought for long.

Now the players are heading into the woods again, leaving me and the porcupine, who is breakfasting on his diggings outside my window, watching expectantly.