

Working in the field, Charles and Elizabeth Schwartz shoot footage for new nature movie.



The Schwartzes

Live with the World

By JIM KEEFE

Charlie and Libby Schwartz are difficult people to sum up in a few words. Their lives and achievements (which are often the same things) tend to defy categorizing. I've struggled with the adjective before and come up with such things as dedicated, determined, and scholarly. There have been times when I felt that proud and stubborn fit well, too. They are all those things, and I mean proud and stubborn in the best sense: too proud to do less and stubbornly determined to succeed. And their success has been due to all those attributes, of which scholarlyness is not the least.

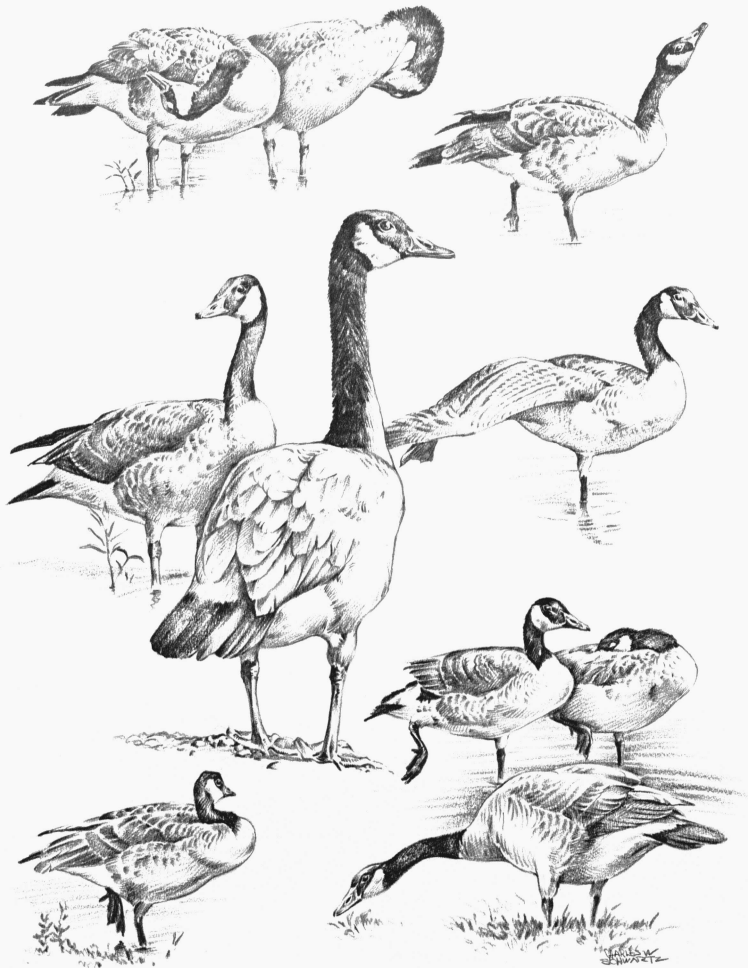
Another adjective that the Schwartzes wear is that of conservationist. The term has become fashionable today, but was not always so, and too many people are called conservationists who have not served the apprenticeship to earn such a distinction. The Schwartzes certainly have. In the long struggle to help man live within his environment and to perpetuate that environment, the Schwartzes have played a leading role. It's an important job, too, for this is the only world we have. We either learn to live with it, or we won't live at all.

I've often pondered what sort of compact the Schwartzes made, back in their younger days at Mizzou, sometime in the 1930's when they met and fell in love. She was an instructor in zoology, finishing up her doctorate, and he was working on his Master's in zoo. Did they then solemnly make some vow to team up as scientists and open the unknown to the rest of mankind? I suppose not. I have a hunch that they

were then what they are today — fun-loving folk, who enjoy a good laugh and with an inexhaustible fund of energy for work. They both loved the outdoor world and shared a desire to create in others their own love and understanding of its miracles. Two people in love and loving the world of nature, it was a natural team — for marriage and a joint career.

Libby got her PhD in 1938; Charlie, his Master's in the following year. He joined the staff of the then infant Missouri Conservation Commission as a biologist and Libby began a side career as a housewife and mother. Though I hadn't met them at that time, I'm sure that Charlie's work was daily shared by Libby, for in 1946 the Territory of Hawaii summoned them both to undertake a study of wildlife conditions there. Charlie got a leave of absence from the Conservation Department and the two — with their then two youngsters in tow — worked the Islands' back country for 18 months, publishing their findings and establishing themselves for the first time as a professional biological team.

While at Mizzou, Charlie had been developing as quite a good artist and photographer, two skills he continued to develop in the ensuing years. It wasn't long before he was illustrating articles and books, and in 1949 he made his first motion picture, *The Prairie Chicken in Missouri*. The subject was an old love — in 1944 he had written and illustrated a book of the same name, published by the Department of Conservation. Since that time he has completed 14 other motion pictures — including one for his



JAMES W. SCHWETZ

Alma Mater and one for the National Institutes of Health. The others have been in the wildlife and conservation field, many of them award winners, including the CONI Grand Medal for the epic "Bobwhite Through the Year," released in 1952. And when I say he produced or wrote or filmed, I really mean they, for the Schwartzes are a team, each contributing knowledge and skills to the final, wonderfully finished product.

Their contributions to the cause of conservation have included a host of published works, possibly the most important of which is the monumental book, *The Wild Mammals of Missouri*. This was published jointly by the University of Missouri Press and the Department of Conservation and continues to be a "best seller" ever since its issuance in 1959. Students of wildlife use it as a text, and conservationists use it as a standard reference work—the definitive study—on wild mammals.

Possibly their finest productions, however, have been three wonderful kids—Barbara Schwartz Miller, (AB 1963, AM 1964 and with a PhD expected in 1969), Carl Bruce Schwartz, (AB 1965 and an MD hoped for in 1969) and John Curtis Schwartz, who expects to enroll in MU next year. As you can see, this is an MU family, whose lives and fortunes seem inextricably bound up with the ivied Columns.

I had known the Schwartzes by reputation when I was on the Columbia campus myself, and met them after I joined the Conservation Department in 1951. I worked with them occasionally when I edited publications that needed illustrating or checking for factual accuracy, and grew to admire and respect their unyielding standards. They can be tough to work with, when you feel inclined to push a job through, for they never allow themselves the luxury of

a let-down in standards. Whatever they tackle, they do full-bore, all-out and first-rate. They don't accept anything less than their best.

Where you really get to know them is working with them on a motion picture. Writing a movie script is a particularly maddening kind of work. You have a maximum of four words per foot of film, which must be cut to permit sound effects, pregnant silences, and musical score. What you write must agree and augment what's on the screen, but not echo it. It has to be technically correct and honest. Lastly, if you've even a crumb of ego, it ought to contain a little something of yourself. Try that in four words per foot!

It could be a frustrating experience trying to write words for Schwartz films, but this is where the professional quality in them comes out. It isn't frustrating, it is a downright pleasure to work with a couple of pros who expect your best, too.

This is not to say that there isn't blood-letting and cries of anguish. No writer could let that pass. But they draw on the pride and craftsmanship in you and it compensates for the agonizing hours of cutting and rewriting.

I mentioned energy back at the beginning of this article. How about all that zip? The Schwartzes are fiftyish and still approach life on the dead run. Besides being the mother of an active brood of youngsters and biologist-consultant-motion picture producer and staff specialist—Libby is working on a little study of box turtles on the 40-acres of woodland where they live, west of Jefferson City. Charlie is almost half-way on a series of eight murals depicting the history of wildlife in Missouri in the Conservation Department's reception building, while wrapping up a 15th movie on wild rivers and doing special liaison work. Drive by their place any hour of the night and you'll find the midnight oil burning. They hunt, fish and canoe with a zest that would shame a teenager. They are active.

Maybe that will have to serve as the final adjective. They are about as active a pair of alumni as Old Mizzou ever produced. And their activities have not only put laurels into their own crowns, but added a special luster to the diadems of the University and the cause of conservation they serve so well. □

James F. Keefe, information officer for the Missouri Conservation Department, is well-known as editor of the Missouri Conservationist magazine, which for three consecutive years was voted the outstanding conservation magazine in the United States and Canada. He has scripted three of the Schwartz films and is the author of The World of the Opossum, published last year by Lippincott.