VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Volume 27, Issue 5 February 2009

We Still Need Your Help With Our Annual Appeal!

As this is being written in mid January, PVAS's annual fundraising appeal—which was launched on December 1—has raised over $18,000.

That's a great result! At a comparable date last year, we'd raised about $1,000 less.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed so far.

But we've still got a long way to go.

If you haven't contributed yet, please consider doing so now. A return envelope is included with this newsletter for your convenience (be sure to add your own postage).

PVAS Benefits From Shepherdstown Rotary Event

PVAS received a total of $2,650 from the Shepherdstown Rotary Club's annual Christmas Charity Ball, which was held December 5 at the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department Hall.

This was the second-highest total of any organization participating in the event—only the Animal Welfare Society received more.

In all, the event netted a total of $25,300 for 18 different local nonprofit organizations.

This year's Shepherdstown Rotary event was entitled "Our Ball, Your Charity," and it was organized in a new way. Individual Rotarians helped underwrite the Ball by sponsoring tables and contributing funds to cover all of the Ball's food costs. The proceeds from the sale of tickets to each table were then donated to a charity selected by that table's host. There was no fixed price for tickets; instead, attendees were asked to make appropriate contributions.

Each table was also given the opportunity to participate in a silent and live auction, and all the auction proceeds went to the designated charities as well.

PVAS's table was sponsored by PVAS president Peter Smith. Board members Rob Hoxton and Mina Goodrich generously donated items for PVAS to auction.

See *Rotary Event*, Page 3

On the Wings of Dreams Store Makes Donation

Shepherdstown's On the Wings of Dreams store presented a check for $200 to PVAS on January 12.

This is the second year in a row the store has made such a donation. In 2007, owner Laura Rau decided to contribute 3 cents to the Society for every crystal and mineral it sells, and the latest check represents the proceeds from all the crystals and minerals sold in calendar year 2008.



The money will be used to further PVAS's educational programs for children.

Shown above, from left to right, are Laura; the store dog, Sedona; and PVAS executive director Kristin Alexander.

On the Wings of Dreams first opened in 1999, and Laura has owned and operated it since January 2003.

"We decided it was time to give something back to the community and to the environment that have so graciously supported us," said Laura. "It makes sense to support a local organization that does such great work to promote environmental awareness. The society's children's programs are a great way to get kids away from the television or computer and back into nature."

The store is located at 139 West German Street. In addition to crystals; it offers a wide variety of sterling silver and natural stone jewelry; books and music; incense; sages, shells and prayer feathers; magical and ceremonial herbs; Buddhist, Hindu, Wiccan and Pagan altar pieces; essential oils; and Tibetan and crystal singing bowls. Its website can be found at www.WingsOfDreamsShop.com.

PVAS greatly appreciates the generosity of Laura and the store's employees, Herb Clark, of Martinsburg, Holly Johnson, of Hedgesville, and Sarah Cosgrove and Levonne Pettway, of Shepherdstown.

President's Perch



Hello everyone:

Thanks to all of you who've helped make our annual fundraising appeal such a success so far.

We know this is a tough time to be asking for contributions. But as this is being written, in spite of the grim state of the economy, this year's annual appeal contributions are running significantly ahead of last year's and we've raised over $18,000!

The number of our contributors is up substantially, too—more than 100 people have given at this point.

In the end, last year's annual appeal raised nearly $27,000. We'd like at least to match last year's total this year and based on the response we've had so far we're hopeful that we can—but we've only got until the end of March to accomplish that goal.

So if you've been planning to give but just haven't gotten around to it, we hope you'll do so soon.

Or if you haven't really thought about giving, we hope you'll consider doing so.

Your support really does matter. As you read this newsletter, look at all the different services PVAS is providing to the community. Here are just a few examples:

- Our programs for area school children are continuing to grow. Our fourth grade program—which teaches youngsters about the importance of protecting our streams and rivers—is now in its sixth year!
- We're continuing to strengthen our popular Audubon Discovery summer day camp at our Yankauer Nature Preserve. New offerings this summer will include a Junior Counselor-in-training program.
- Our new "Wee Naturalist" program for preschoolers aged 3-5 is now up and running at the Yankauer Preserve.
- Our new "Nature Explorer Teacher Kits" are now available for use by youth organizations, teachers and library instructors.

The funds we raise through our annual appeals are critical to sustaining this kind of programming.

Please do help if you possibly can. *–Peter Smith*

Calendar

Feb. 2-14: ... PVAS member-only registration for Audubon Discovery Camp
Feb. 5:..... Conservation & Community Lecture at NCTC
Feb. 11:..... PVAS program at NCTC
Feb. 13-14: . Field Trip: Chincoteague
Feb. 13:..... Master Naturalist App's due
Feb. 27:..... Potomac Valley Nature Photographers meeting
Feb. 28:..... Field Trip: Freshwater Institute
March 14: ... Field Trip: Banshee Reeks

Insect and Bird Classroom Kits Now Available

You may remember that in 2007, with a $2,000 grant from the Nora Roberts Foundation, we developed a series of "Nature Explorer Backpacks" designed to help children explore the natural world on their own. The backpacks contain a variety of books, field guides, supplies and activity ideas. They've been distributed to area libraries, and children can check them out and use them in company with an adult.



Suzi Taylor and Michelle Baluch, the Shepherdstown Library's Children's Librarian with Kit on display

In 2008, with another $2,000 grant from the Foundation, we developed new "Nature Explorer Teacher Kits" that are similar in concept but designed to be used by youth organizations, teachers and library instructors. We've now completed and delivered two kinds of kits to the Shepherdstown Library: one that focuses on birds and another on insects.

In addition to resource books, children's literature, instructional DVD's, and field guides, the kits contain enough materials and supplies for an entire classroom of children. For example, the bird kit includes twelve pairs of small binoculars and several field guides. The insect kit includes twelve small insect nets, bug viewers, "bug eyes" and other resources. The resources are geared primarily for elementary aged children, but some of the resources would be useful for older youth as well.

Like the backpacks, the kits were designed and put together by Suzi Taylor, of Sharpsburg, who's a veteran PVAS camp director and who has a degree in environmental education. The kits will be housed at Shepherdstown Public Library and are not only available locally, but throughout West Virginia through interlibrary loan.

For information about the kits' availability, contact Shepherdstown Library's Children's Librarian Michelle Baluch at 876-2783.

COMING SOON: SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

PVAS is already thinking ahead to summer camp time! Proceeds from our fall bird seed sale support our scholarship program, through which we offer scholarships to several camps. In the past the list of camps has included the following: Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies, Oglebay Institute Junior Nature Camp, West Virginia State Conservation Camp, and our own Yankauer summer day camp. Start thinking now about eligible youngsters, and be sure to encourage them to apply. For further details on specific camps, dates, ages, and application forms, watch future issues of *Valley Views*, or check at our web site, www.potomacaudubon.org. Kathryn Henry will be our scholarship coordinator. You may contact her at 304-876-6681, or at dhenry@myexcel.com.

PVAS Cosponsoring February NCTC Program about Audubon

The National Conservation Training Center will present another of its Conservation and Community Public Lectures the evening of February 5.

The speaker will be William Souder, who will discuss the life and work of John James Audubon.

Souder has authored a book on the subject, *Under a Wild Sky: John James Audubon and the Making of The Birds of America* (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2004).

The program will be held at 7 p.m. in the Byrd Auditorium. There is no charge for admission.

PVAS is cosponsoring the program.

Souder has written on a variety of subjects for some of the nation's largest newspapers and has received several national and local awards for feature writing. He is also the author of a book entitled *A Plague of Frogs* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), an account of environmental degradation he first covered for the Washington Post.

Chincoteague Birding Trip with Matt Orsie, February 13-14

Please join Matt Orsie for a birding trip to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge on the eastern shore of Virginia on February 13-14.

The Refuge is renowned for its abundant, diverse bird habitat. It includes more than 14,000 acres of beach, dunes, marsh, and maritime forest, and its location along the Atlantic Flyway makes it a vital resting and feeding spot for a large number and diversity of birds.

More than 320 species are known to use the Refuge regularly for nesting and brood rearing, feeding, resting and staging during migration, or wintering. Most conspicuous are the seabirds, shorebirds, wading birds, raptors, and waterfowl.

The Refuge is also home to the "Chincoteague Ponies"-- descendants of colonial horses brought to Assateague Island in the l7th century by Eastern Shore planters when crop damage caused by free roaming animals led colonial legislatures to enact laws requiring fencing and taxes on livestock. The ponies are wild and have adapted to their environment. This will be a great time to visit the area as waterfowl begin staging for the migration north.

The plan will be to drive to Chincoteague the afternoon of Friday, February 13, and bird the refuge all day Saturday the 14th with a possible day-ending run to Ocean City, Maryland.

For those wanting to carpool to Chincoteague, Matt can accommodate three people in his vehicle for the trip (first-come basis). We will meet in the parking lot of the Martin's supermarket by the Route 340 / Route 9 intersection just east of Charles Town, and plan to leave from there at 3:00 p.m.

Those who prefer to travel to Chincoteague on their own should plan on meeting Matt and the other trip participants at 6:30 a.m. Saturday morning in the lobby of the Chincoteague Island Best Western, which is located at 7105 Maddox Blvd, in Chincoteague, near the entrance to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

The trip party will either have breakfast at the hotel or at a nearby McDonald's and then consolidate cars to save on entry fees to the Refuge.

There are a number of lodging opportunities in and around Chincoteague for those who want to shop around. Matt will be staying at the Best Western. Room rates there are as low as $59.49. Rooms there can be booked online at www.bestwestern.com, or by calling 800-553-6117 toll-free.

As the trip comes together, if there is sufficient interest, Matt and some participants may opt to stay overnight Saturday somewhere north of Chincoteague and bird some Maryland and Delaware areas up to perhaps the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge before heading home Sunday afternoon.

For more information about the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, visit its web site at www.fws.gov/northeaset/chinco/introduction.htm. To carpool with Matt or get more trip details please email him at wvbirder@comcast.net.

Area Christmas Bird Counts Very Successful

This year's two Eastern Panhandle Christmas Bird Counts, sponsored by PVAS, were very successful. The 22 participants in the December 14 Jefferson County count found a total of 80 species.

The highlights were as follows: one Loggerhead Shrike, one Eastern Phoebe, one House Wren, and high count numbers for American Black Duck (228), Sharp-shinned Hawk (7), and Barred Owl (5).

Twenty-six people turned out to participate in the January 3 Berkeley/Morgan counties Christmas Bird Count, and together they logged a total of 74 species. Relative rarities included two Short-eared Owls, one Common Yellowthroat, and one Savannah Sparrow. High count numbers were noted for Black Vulture (53), Cooper's Hawk (8), Red-tailed Hawk (43), Wilson's Snipe (7), Eastern Screech Owl (10), Horned Lark (56), European Starling (7234), Yellow-rumped Warbler (34), Pine Siskin (50), and American Goldfinch (206).

Bob Dean, the compiler for the counts, thanks all of those who participated.

"You are contributing to the largest database on winter bird populations in the country," he said "Your effort enables many researchers to better understand what is happening to winter bird populations, and to document changes within the composition of our avifauna. The longer the continuity of our participation, the more meaningful the data becomes."

For more details of the results of current and historical bird counts, go to http://www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/

Rotary Event (Continued from page 1)

Thanks are due to Shepherdstown Rotary for making this event possible.

Thanks are also due to Jane Vanderhook, Wayne and Donna Goodrich, and Board members Wayne Braunstein and Susan Brookreson and their spouses for supporting PVAS's participation.



Grasslands and Their Birds in Peril – *by Wil Hershberger*

We always hear about the colorful neotropical migratory birds, the warblers, and how much their populations are declining. The scary part is that grassland birds, the little brown jobs, are declining significantly more rapidly than the warblers. A few of these species are neotropical migrants themselves spending our winter in warmer insect filled environs to our south. Breeding Bird Surveys conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service show all too plainly the precipitous drops in populations of these species. Eastern meadowlark, Red-winged blackbird, Grasshopper sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, Song sparrow, and others have declined by more than 2 percent per year since 1966. That translates to populations of these species being much less than 50 percent of what they were in 1966.

How many pastures do you remember from your youth that are now housing developments, shopping centers or parking lots. How many agricultural fields have been similarly lost to "progress." Habitat loss on the breeding ground is a big part of the problem. Even more insidious are the changes in agricultural practices that have occurred over the last few decades. Earlier cutting of hay fields along with repeated cutting of the same fields during the growing season create a no-win situation for grassland nesting species. Many of the sparrows and blackbirds that rely on grasslands for breeding require 2 weeks to construct a nest, another 2-3 weeks for the eggs to hatch and again 2-3 weeks for the young to fledge and be mobile and independent enough to move out of the area. Cutting hayfields in late June, again in July and again in August doesn't allow nearly enough time for these breeders to be successful.

This practice of repeated cutting of fields also depletes the soil of precious nitrogen. Increased costs from having to fertilize these fields every year can hardly be an incentive to tax the land this hard. In years past fields were allowed to lay fallow for a season or two in order to recharge the nutrients in the soil. This also greatly benefited wildlife and our grassland nesting birds.

Many feel that these birds can nest in the fence rows and rock breaks of these fields. Studies have shown that these restricted areas, many oriented in long continuous lines, are more effectively patrolled and hunted by predators such as the red fox. This increased pressure from predation is just as deadly to breeding birds as the cutting of the field. There has also been a recent trend in clear cutting fence rows leaving pristine barren fences with no life.

In an effort to visualize these effects, a large grassy area within Steamboat Run near Shepherdstown has been under new management. Instead of cutting the entire area every year the plot has been divided into sections that are cut on a rotating schedule. These areas are cut late in the season and only once during a year. Some areas remain un-mowed for a couple of seasons. The results are nothing short of a miracle. Numbers of birds have increased to levels that were never seen with the previous cutting scheme. Other wildlife has also benefited as the sightings of deer, turtles, snakes, dragonflies and more are also increasing. This small study has made it dramatically clear that with a little planning and effort we can heal the land and bring back the wildlife that we all appreciate.

Perhaps the most sound solution would be to cut hay and alfalfa fields once a year or less and late in the season. Not only will this allow the land to replenish itself but it will greatly benefit our grassland nesting birds and other wildlife. It will save our water ways from fertilizer runoff and eutrophication and create wonderful areas for wildlife and exploration.

PV Master Naturalists 2009 CLASSES SCHEDULED

As we begin 2009, we start the third year for the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program. Classes will begin in March 2009 and continue monthly until October. The deadline for submitting applications is February 13 and only 20 spots in the class are available. The program is open to anyone, 16 or older, who would like to be certified as a Master Naturalist by the state of West Virginia.

The tentative schedule for this year is:

March 21-22	Cacapon State Park
April 25	National Conservation Training Center
May 16	Cacapon State Park
June 6	National Conservation Training Center
July 11	Cacapon State Park
August 8	National Conservation Training Center
August 29	Cacapon State Park
September 12	National Conservation Training Center

The Master Naturalist Program is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and is designed to help individuals increase their understanding and appreciation of the natural world while helping to serve their communities and the environment.

A total of 64 hours of classroom time and 30 hours of volunteer work are required to complete certification. Volunteer activities often include leading interpretive walks at Yankauer or Eidolon Nature Preserves, assisting state biologists with research, giving presentations to school children and other groups or helping with contact booths at fairs and festivals. Participants have two years to complete their certification.

The program fee is $300 per person for the full course of instruction and includes all classes, materials, supplies, and a Master Naturalist binder. There is no homework or testing in the program other than encouraging students to learn more on their own through individual projects.

Workshops Offered to Master Naturalists and Public

New elective classes for currently certified Master Naturalists and the general public have been scheduled. Master Naturalists

must complete 8 hours of continuing education to remain certified. Because of this, Master Naturalists are given the first opportunities to participate, but the public may attend as space allows. This year's workshops include:

March 7	Wildfires and Forest Restoration (Antietam National Battlefield)
March 14	Project Learning Tree (NCTC)
May 23	Save Our Streams Training (Cacapon State Park)
June 6	Dragonflies (Cacapon State Park)
July 25	Pollinators of Interest to Ecosystems at Risk (NCTC)
August 22	Heteroptera (or "True Bugs") (NCTC)
November 13-14	Leave No Trace Trainer Course (Camp White Rock, Capon Bridge)

Other elective classes may be scheduled. Elective classes are $10 each for enrolled Master Naturalists and $15 each for the general public. Additional information and registration materials are available at www.potomacaudubon.org. Pre-registration is required, as space is limited.

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program is sponsored by the Potomac Valley Audubon Society. For additional information, contact Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739.

SUMMER CAMP PREVIEW

It's almost time to register for Audubon Discovery Camp and some exciting sessions have been planned for this coming summer! For campers ages 6-11, Camp Survivor is returning (of course!) along with two new sessions, "Bugs2Bunny," which will explore all types of insects and mammals, and "Wing It!" which will emphasize all animals that fly. Each of these sessions will be offered twice.

Older campers (ages 10-13) will have the opportunity to attend camp sessions, led by our staff, at the National Conservation Training Center. These sessions include "Camp Survivor, Part Deux," "Something's Fishy," and "Skins, Skulls, and Throwing Sticks" which will emphasize prehistoric cultures and archeology.

For the first time, PVAS will offer a Junior Counselor-in-Training session for campers entering grades 6-8. The Junior CIT's who successfully complete a week of training, including leading nature games and activities to children, will be able to return to Yankauer for an additional 2 weeks (at no cost) during this camping season and work as Junior Counselors.

Preschool units will be offered in late May and early June. "Out of the Nest" and "Just for Fledglings" are half-day programs for 3 and 4 year olds and an adult. "First Explorers" will allow 5 year olds, who are entering kindergarten, to try a week of camp without an adult accompanying them.

The Family Camp overnight will once again be offered July 24- 25 at Yankauer.

Suzie Taylor will be directing the preschool camps and Ellen Murphy will be directing the other sessions. Camp fees this year are $125 per camper per week. Preschool camps (1/2 days) will be $50. T-shirts (youth and adult sizes) will be available for order for $10 each.

This year PVAS members will be able to register online before the camp sessions are made available to the general public. Notification of the early registration dates will be made by email and posted on our website. (So make sure your PVAS membership is up to date!)

WATERSHED PROGRAM CONTINUES

Over 540 fourth grade students are participating in the extended (year long) Watershed Program funded by a WV FLOW (Future Leaders of Watersheds) grant. The extended program is being piloted in Tomahawk, Potomack, and Mill Creek Intermediate Schools in Berkeley County and TA Lowery Elementary School in Jefferson County. Since school began last fall, students have learned the basics of what watersheds are and how native plants can create buffer zones that protect rivers and streams and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay

A new component of the program, introduced this year, is a watershed journal which each student uses to record their thoughts after each classroom session. Among the assigned topics, students have written about "Life on the Planet Zork, Where Water Floats," "My Life As A Tree," "My Favorite Weather," and attempts at poetry. Some examples of their work can be viewed at www.volunteerwvblog.net

In February, an additional four schools, Ranson, Shepherdstown, and North Jefferson Elementary and St. Joseph's Academy (about 180 students), will begin the half-year program. While this program is more compact, it offers students an excellent overview of watersheds and water quality issues. It also includes a field experience to the Izaak Walton League of Berkeley County and a sewage treatment plant. These students will be growing native grass in their classroom which they will then plant on their school property as an erosion control measure.

Wee Naturalist Program Launches

A new program, designed for pre-school aged children ages 3-5 and an adult, is being launched at the Yankauer Preserve. The program, called "Wee Naturalists," is being partially funded by the Two Rivers Giving Circle.

Suzi Taylor, a past camp director for PVAS, is leading this program. The Wee Naturalist program is being offered as an expansion of the summer program due to its popularity.

The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for children to have positive experiences in nature and for loving adults to share their own love of nature with the child. These programs will provide a nurturing environment for both child and adult to explore nature together safely and with a knowledgeable guide.

The program will take place monthly on the third Wednesday of each month, January to April and August to December. Children explore nature with guided activities in partnership with a loving adult. Adult/child teams are invited to the preserve to explore and get comfortable with their surroundings from 9:30-10, and one hour of guided group activities begin at 10.

Additional information and registration forms are available at www.potomacaudubon.org. Families may register for one, several, or all of the programs, but pre-registration is required because space is limited. Each program is $5 per child/adult team. For more information, contact Suzi Taylor at 301-432-1908 or tomandsuzi506@cs.com.

February Meeting Will Focus on "Lady Audubon" Book

Our February meeting will feature a presentation about a fascinating but little-known 19th century American volume of ornithological illustrations.

The presenter will be Joy Kiser, former librarian for the National Endowment for the Arts, who has been researching the book for many years.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m., February 11, at the National Conservation Training Center. It will be held in the small auditorium (Room 151) of the Center's Instructional West Building. It will be free and anyone is welcome to attend.



The book Kiser will discuss, "Illustrations of the Nests and Eggs of Birds of Ohio," was published in the small town of Circleville, Ohio, between 1879 and 1886. It was initiated and carried out at first by a talented young amateur artist, Genevieve Jones, who has been referred to as "America's Lady Audubon."

Jones intended the book as a companion volume to John James Audubon's monumental "Birds of America," which only occasionally and incidentally depicted nests and eggs.

At first, she envisioned illustrating the nests and eggs of all American birds. But her father Nelson, a physician and amateur naturalist who was underwriting the venture, persuaded her to focus on the 130 species of birds that nest in Ohio.

Like Audubon's book, Jones's was sold by subscription and issued in segments.

The first segment was mailed to subscribers in July 1879 and received rave reviews from the editors of leading ornithological journals. This led to new subscriptions, including ones from President Rutherford B. Hayes and then-young Theodore Roosevelt, and the book's future seemed assured.

But the same month, Genevieve was stricken with typhoid fever and died at the age of 32.

After her death, her family decided to complete the book as a memorial to her. Her mother, Virginia, herself an accomplished watercolorist, completed the drawing of the book's illustrations. Her brother Howard wrote the accompanying texts.

The book was finally completed in 1886. Howard entered a copy in the Columbian Exposition of 1893, where it was awarded a special certificate and bronze medal.

In all, about 100 copies of the work were published. Of these, fewer than half have been located in libraries and private hands. The Smithsonian Institution Libraries has two of them and has devoted a web site to them.

For more information about the book and the Jones family see the Smithsonian website at www.sil.si.edu/ondisplay/nestsandeggs/index.htm.

Potomac Valley Nature Photographers

Have you ever wondered where some of those incredible photos in wildlife calendars were taken, or how the photographers got so close to a snow leopard, lynx, or wolf? Come to PVNP's February meeting where Wil Hershberger will share his very interesting photographic experience at Triple-D Game Farm in Kalispell, Montana, where many of those photos are taken.

Wild animal reserves, or game farms, nurture and train captive bred individuals of a number of species that are found in the wild. Several PVNP members visited the ranch last March to try their hand at this kind of wildlife photography. From mountain lions and arctic fox to snow leopards and fishers, these photographers came away with hundreds (maybe thousands) of images of these beautiful creatures.

The program is free and open to the public.

Join PVAS for a Visit to the Freshwater Institute

PVAS will sponsor its first-ever field trip to the Freshwater Institute near Shepherdstown from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Saturday, February 28.



Although the Institute has a relatively low profile among the general public, it is well-known in research circles nationally and around the world.

Founded by the Arlington, Virginia-based Conservation Fund in 1987, it is one of the nation's premier research and development facilities dedicated to the sustainable use of water. It employs an internationally recognized research team of top scientists, engineers, and technology experts who work with government, industry, nonprofits and individuals to shape sustainable, environmentally responsible solutions to water resource management.

The Institute has also been active in helping with local land and water conservation issues. It has provided the Jefferson County government with a comprehensive analysis of the county's natural resources infrastructure, played a major role in helping to protect and improve Rockymarsh Run, and assisted in the development of PVAS's own Watershed Education Initiative program for local fourth graders.

The Institute occupies a 100-acre campus just north of Shepherdstown. Field trip participants will tour the campus's wet lab facilities and aquaculture systems (Atlantic salmon, Arctic char and Rainbow trout are raised there), water chemistry and fish health diagnostic laboratories, and other facilities. Institute staff will explain these facilities and talk about the future of aquaculture and the Institute's local work on Rockymarsh Run.

For more information about the Institute's projects and programs,

see its website at www.freshwaterinstitute.org.

The Institute is located at 1098 Turner Road just north of Shepherdstown, not far from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center. Directions can be found on the Institute's website: click on "Who we are" and "Find us."

Once on the property, field trip participants will gather in the research facility parking lot. To get to the parking lot, follow the lane past an old white farmhouse; after you pass a barn you will see two large modern buildings and the parking area.

SPRING EGG HUNT RETURNS

Our second Spring Egg Hunt at the Yankauer Nature Preserve has been scheduled for Sunday afternoon, April 5, from 2-4 p.m. Unlike traditional egg hunt events, this hunt will use eggs colored to resemble real wild bird eggs and include an opportunity for children to paint their own "real" egg to take home as they learn more about birds and their nests. Like last year's successful hunt, children will be challenged to find the naturally camouflaged eggs on the trail and discover, in the process, how birds keep their eggs safe from predators.

This year's event will be for children ages 3-6. Eggs will be hidden along two of the preserve's trails. Collected eggs will be "traded in" for a sweet Easter treat. This will be a family-oriented event and parents should plan to go with their children as they walk on the trail.

Pre-registration for the event is required and the cost will be $5 per child—which can be paid that day. Registration is limited. To register, call PVAS Children's Program Director Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739.

NATURE WRITERS GROUP BEING FORMED

Are you interested in nature journaling and reading books about natural history? Those of like minds are invited to gather for an organizational meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, February 22, at Trinity Center, 4599 Shepherdstown Road. The basic goal of this group will be to read nature writers for inspiration, discuss responses to the writings, and share member's own efforts at nature journaling for mutual support. No experience in journaling is necessary! Meetings will be monthly at a time convenient to the members of the group. For more information, contact Sandra Bloom at sbloom@myactv.net

PVAS License Plates Available Again

All you folks who've noted with envy the sharp PVAS light-blue license plates may now purchase same for your vehicle. The snazzy plate goes on the front bumper (WV only, sorry!) and proclaims your support for the work we do.

Members only. The cost is $18 each.

To order, call or email Jean Neely: jeaneely@comcast.net; or 304.876.2410.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

We now offer two kinds of memberships:

1. PVAS Local Membership

Here's what you get:

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children.
- Discounts for selected chapter activities, like children's summer camps.
- A subscription to PVAS's newsletter and e-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest.
- ALL your dues stay here to support local PVAS efforts!

To become a local member: Enclose a check for $20 ($15 for seniors and students). Please make check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

2. Dual Membership with National Audubon

You get all the benefits of PVAS membership plus membership in the National Audubon Society, which includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. If you select this option, almost all of your dues will go to National Audubon. To obtain a dual membership, enclose a check for $20 if you are joining NAS for the first time or $35 to renew an existing NAS membership ($15 in either case for seniors and students). Make check out to "National Audubon Society."

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: (optional): _____

Membership Type (check one):

PVAS Local Membership ____
(For PVAS local membership, check the box following if you do NOT want PVAS to share your contact information with National Audubon: ___)

Dual Membership with National Audubon ____

I'd like to get *Valley Views* by e-mail___ US mail ___ (check one)

.....(Audubon chapter code Y54; source code 79N7)

Clip and mail this form to:
Membership Chair, PVAS
PO Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Thank you for your support!

RED DOT ALERT

If a red dot appears on your mailing label, your membership may have expired and this could be your last issue of Valley Views. Take action to renew your Dual membership or Local membership.

Potomac Valley Audubon Society
P O Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
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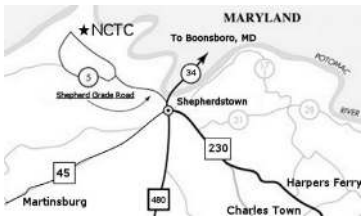
http://www.potomacaudubon.org

DATED MATERIALS

A proud partner of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign.

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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the US Fish and Widlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV, in the Instructional West Building. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please call any of the board members listed her or see http://www.potomacaudubon.org. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD

The PVAS Board meets every other month on the first Wednesday of the month (Sept.-June). Meeting location will be announced prior to meetings. These meetings are open to all PVAS members.

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