VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Volume 31, Issue 8 May 2013

Congratulations, Peter Smith!



PVAS Past-President Peter Smith received the "Spirit of the Panhandle Award" on April 12, 2013. The award is presented biannually by the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation to three outstanding volunteers who serve the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

Peter was recognized for his outstanding service to PVAS as President, Past-President, and PVAS Reorganization Committee, and Public Relations Chair. Under Peter's presidency, PVAS acquired three of its four properties, and he spearheaded the administrative and legal responsibilities of each. From helping to reorganize PVAS' organizational structure (necessary after expanding our partnership with The Nature Conservancy to include Eidolon) to developing the content of the new PVAS website, to tirelessly tracking PVAS donations, members, program numbers and other details, his attention to detail and hard work is impressive.

Even though his term on the Board has expired, Peter continues to do press releases, solicit sponsors for events, oversee construction projects at the Eidolon Preserve, and provide his expertise and experience as needed.

In addition of all of his PVAS work, Peter has been actively engaged with several other organizations since moving to Jefferson County, contributing his time, publicity expertise, and organizational skills. He has been involved with Friends of the Shepherdstown Library, the Shepherdstown Men's Club, Shepherdstown Rotary, Two Rivers Giving Circle, Meals on Wheels in Jefferson County, and Shepherdstown Semi-Quincentennial (250th Anniversary) Celebration Organization.

We are so pleased that Peter has been recognized for his incredible service to the community! PVAS has been a very fortunate recipient of his talents and dedication, and sincerely thank him for increasing and improving the capacity of PVAS and other organizations that serve the citizens of the Eastern Panhandle. Congratulations, Peter!

Annual Meeting on June 1

This year's PVAS annual meeting will be held the evening of Saturday, June 1 at the Yankauer Nature Preserve. The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a potluck supper. Afterwards, we will recognize outstanding PVAS volunteers and the annual meeting will be called to order for the election of new Board Members.

All PVAS members are encouraged to attend, and children are welcome. For the potluck supper, please bring a dish to share. Those whose last names begin with the letters A-H are asked to bring vegetables or fruit; I-L, a dessert; M-R, a protein dish; and S-Z, a starch dish. Please bring your own dishes, flatware, and cups to reduce waste. PVAS will provide water and lemonade.

For more information, contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org.

PVAS Receives Two New Watershed Grants

The generosity of the Chesapeake Bay Trust means that PVAS will be able to expand our Watershed Education Program to Washington County MD schools during the 2013-14 school year and offer a teacher training session for elementary teachers in West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Together, these two grants total over $31,000!

In Washington County sixteen classes of fifth or fourth grade students will participate in a 10-hour program that will feature the construction and planting of a rain garden at each participating school. Students will grow native grasses in their classroom as part of the curriculum and plant the grass in their rain garden. Cacapon Institute will help create and install the gardens, and members of the Antietam Creek Watershed Alliance have offered to help in a number of ways.

A second grant will be used for a day of training in watershed information and activities for interested teachers and a sailing trip on the Chesapeake Bay on board the Schooner Sultana. Bus transportation from this area will be provided for the day long trip. Details about both of these grant opportunities will be made available to teachers.

Election of Board Members

Each year, PVAS holds elections of its Board of Directors. There are thirteen board positions called for in the PVAS bylaws. Four of the positions are officers, and the remainder serve as at-large members. Election of board members is staggered so that approximately one-third of the seats are up for election each year. The term of office for all board members is three years with a maximum of two consecutive terms; however, a person that serves two consecutive terms and is elected as an officer may extend their board membership/officer position by one additional term by unanimous decision of the board.

With the retirement from the PVAS Board of Mina Goodrich and Kathy Stolzenburg this June, PVAS will have five Board vacancies and the office of Board Secretary to be filled by election at our Annual Meeting on June 1.

We are fortunate to have four current or former PVAS Board members eligible and willing to be nominated to the Board – Leigh Jenkins, Jane Vanderhook, Clark Dixon, and Wil Hershberger. For the two remaining positions, Tanner Haid and Amanda Whitmore have been nominated.

In summary, the 2013 Nominations are:

Board term of 2013-2014: Leigh Jenkins and Clark Dixon-
Board term of 2013-2016: Tanner Haid, Jane Vanderhook, and Wil Hersberger
Officer term of Secretary, 2013-2016: Amanda Whitmore

The slate of candidates is as follows:

Board Candidates:

Clark Dixon, At-Large Board Member: Clark is retired from the National Park Service with 34 years of supervisory and management experience as Supervisory Park Ranger, Nature Center Director, Park Manager (superintendent), and Regional Program Manager. As a Park Manager and Superintendent he oversaw four National Parks during his career. Since retirement in 2003, Clark has taken up other pursuits including substitute teaching in Jefferson County, WV schools. Clark has served over 45 years (youth and adult) in leadership roles with the Boy Scouts of America and has served other youth organizations in varied adult leadership positions.

Tanner Haid, At-Large Board Member: Tanner resides in Harper's Ferry and is a recent Shepherd University graduate who majored in Environmental Studies. Tanner is employed by the Cacapon Institute as their Urban Forestry Coordinator. Tanner's background also includes two field seasons with the USGS Aquatic Ecology Lab, employment as Land Steward at CraftWorks at Cool Spring, and six years experience as a whitewater river guide.

Wil Hershberger, At-Large Board Member: Wil has been president of PVAS and the Frederick County Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society. Wil is a founder of the Potomac Valley Nature Photographers and co-owner, with his wife Donna, of Nature Images and Sounds, LLC. Wil has co-taught Birding 101/201 classes offered by PVAS since its inception 27 years ago and has led many outings for the chapter. He is an award-winning photographer, and his images have been published in books, calendars, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, and more. He also records voices of birds, frogs, insects, and other animals and has nearly 2,000 recordings archived at the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Wil co-authored the book, "The Songs of Insects," with Lang Elliott in 2007. Wil is currently sub-committee chair of the Grassland Birds Initiative of the PVAS Conservation Committee and principle developer of the online and in- person presentations of the Backyard Naturalist Program.

Leigh Jenkins, At-Large Board Member: Leigh has lived fulltime in Morgan County, WV since 1989, after moving there from the Washington, D.C. area. She was raised in El Paso, Texas where she was an active member of the Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. She worked as an Environmental Specialist for Gifford-Hill and Company, a cement corporation, in Texas before moving to the Washington, D.C. area. She presently teaches Advanced Placement Biology and Advanced Placement Environmental Science, as well as Advanced Biology, at Berkeley Springs High School in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. She is a member of the Morgan County Master Gardeners and also active in the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology from Texas A & M University and a Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of Texas at El Paso. She returned to Shepherd College in 1994 to receive her teaching certification in Biology and is currently a candidate for a Master of Arts degree in Science Education/ Curriculum and Instruction at Shepherd University.

Jane Vanderhook, At-Large Board Member: Jane is retired from a career as a Computer Systems Software Designer. She previously served on the PVAS Board as Treasurer from 2004 to 2008. She is an active community volunteer and has served on the boards of Jefferson County Youth Soccer League, Country Day School and her homeowners' association. She holds a degree in Experimental Psychology. She is currently the chair of the PVAS Youth Services Committee.

Officer Candidate:

Amanda Whitmore, Secretary: A native of Shepherdstown, Amanda now lives in Boonsboro with her husband and year-old son Eli. Amanda graduated from Shepherd University in 2004 majoring in Environmental Studies, and in 2010 earned her MA in Historic Preservation from Eastern Michigan University. Amanda is currently employed by the National Park Service at Gettysburg as Volunteer Coordinator. As a PVAS volunteer this past year Amanda worked closely with Sandy Sagalkin and drafted the Board-approved PVAS Proposal for the Backyard Naturalist Program.

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, Executive Director of PVAS



Everyone warned me that life would change once a child came into our lives. So true! Sure, we're doing a lot more laundry than ever before, and the work/life balance is an interesting juggling act. But it's more than those things. You begin to rediscover the tiny little details in the world around you.

I'm up a lot earlier than I used to be. While I admit that makes me a little bleary eyed, I'm also able to enjoy the dawn chorus of birds – especially now that it's warm enough to have the windows open at night. And as we begin to introduce JJ to new words and experiences, we are rediscovering the small details we take for granted as adults: the softness of daffodil petals, how cold the water is in a spring stream, the deafening volume of spring peepers, the infinite variety of textures in tree bark, and the intricate patterns of lichen on rocks. (Of course we're also suddenly more aware of how many sharp objects there are in the woods, from sticks to thorns, but that's part of the adventure!)

Last spring we were a little preoccupied with JJ's arrival and I admit I wasn't as tuned in to spring as I normally am. Perhaps it is my year's hiatus from spring that is making me appreciate it more this year, perhaps it was the extra long winter, or perhaps it's enjoying the season through a child's eyes. Whatever the cause, we're so glad to welcome spring's arrival!

Annual Appeal Thanks!



This year's annual appeal was successfully concluded at the end of March. The appeal raised more than ever, closing at $35,859.25. This is about $1,600 more than last year's record-breaking appeal, and we are truly grateful for the generosity of our members and friends.

We have a busy year planned, and your support will help us accomplish our goals. As you'll see in this newsletter, we are sponsoring MANY events for International Migratory Bird Day, extending our 4th grade watershed program into Washington County, launching the new Grassland Birds Initiative, planning for the infrastructure of Stauffer's Marsh, and developing a new Backyard Naturalist program. We wouldn't dare take on all of these projects without your generous support. Thank you, and we look forward to keeping you posted on how we put your funds to good use throughout the year!

PVAS Meeting to Feature Author of *Cerulean Blues*

Katie Fallon, author of *Cerulean Blues, A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird*, will be the featured speaker at the PVAS monthly meeting May 8, 2013 at 7 p.m. at the National Conservation Training Center. The talk will be part of PVAS's celebration of International Migratory Bird Day.

Katie is one of the founders of the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia, near Morgantown. She has taught Creative Writing at WVU and Virginia Tech and published many articles on environmental issues. Since publication of *Cerulean Blues* in October 2011, Katie has been a popular speaker throughout the Appalachian region.

The book details the life history of the Cerulean Warbler, the fastest declining warbler species in the U.S. These tiny blue and white warblers nest high in deciduous trees where they pick insects from leaves. They arrive at breeding territories at the end of April and start their migration to South America in late August. Today there are eighty percent fewer of these birds than forty years ago. Much of their decline is attributed to forest destruction here and in their wintering grounds. Thirty-five percent of the world's population of this species breed here in West Virginia. In *Cerulean Blues*, the author documents the efforts of many people in the U.S. and in South America to conserve the birds. While the species' decline is disturbing, Katie's description of the passion and determination of the people fighting to save this bird are encouraging.

On May 9, Katie will join a PVAS-sponsored bird walk at PVAS's Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County, starting at 8 a.m. The walk is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Sandy Sagalkin at 240-291-6465 or monsansagalkin@myactv.net.

(Also see "International Migratory Bird Day" on page 7)

Nursery Open House Will Benefit PVAS

The Winston Gardens Native Plant Nursery has once again pledged to donate to PVAS 15 percent of the proceeds from its upcoming spring Open House Plant Sale. The donation will be used to support the Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve. The Open House will be held the weekend of May 4 and 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day. Light refreshments will be served and a door prize will be offered.

Operated by noted area landscape designer Virginia Winston and her husband Eldon, it specializes in trees and shrubs that are native to this region and typically offers more than two dozen different species for sale. These range from popular favorites like Sugar Maples and Redbuds to hard-to-find species like Fringe Tree, Witch Hazel, and Black Haw Viburnum.

The nursery is located in northeastern Berkeley County, at 1121 Hollida Lane, one mile off Swan Pond Road. For directions and a full list of the plants available, go to the Nursery's website at www.winstongardens.com, orcall the Winstons at 304-267-6924.

Common Yellowthroat

by Wil Hershberger



Common Yellowthroat, ©Wil Hershberger

One of my favorite experiences of spring is the arrival of the Common Yellowthroat (*Geothylpis trichas*). Once quiet, marshes and bramble thickets now ring with the explosive and expressive songs of this masked-bandit of spring. Males arrive in our area in late April and immediately select and defend a territory, proclaimed by the continuous singing throughout the day. When the females arrive, about a week after the males, they are courted in earnest. After she selects a mate, he will follow her around the territory closely, perhaps defending her from other neighboring males. She selects the nest site and builds the nest herself. There are very few records of males assisting with this effort. She will complete her task in 4-5 days, using coarse grasses to construct the cup of the nest and finer materials to line the interior. Later in the season she will complete a nest in as little as 2 days! Nests are placed within a few inches of the ground, but that placement can be a problem in wetland situations. If the water level rises, the nest could be inundated. About 2 days after the nest lining is complete, four eggs are laid over four to five days, with each egg being laid in the morning. The female incubates the eggs herself for about 12 days. The helpless young are brooded by the female and are able to leave the nest at 8 days old. At this stage they remain near the nest for several days and are fed by the parents. A few days later, the male takes over the feeding chores while the female begins a new nest. The young will be capable of short flights around 12-14 days after hatching. These little guys mature very quickly.

The male defends his territory and attracts females with his song. He learns only one song that he sings for the rest of his life. There are slight variations from one rendition of the song to the next in the number of syllables that he adds or deletes from the ending. Typically, the song starts out softly and crescendos to an expressive explosion of notes that you would not expect form such a small bird. Here is a link to one of my recordings of Common Yellowthroat song that I captured in Frederick County, MD on July 1, 2000: http://tinyurl.com/COYE-SONG.

Male Common Yellowthroats also perform a flight display complete with a special flight song. Each male has just one flight song that is given throughout the breeding season. These flight songs and displays are given rarely, just a few times a day, and appear to be a response to the presence of a predator. It has been observed that flight song rate increases when a person is in the territory of a male Common Yellowthroat. The male starts his flight song from an elevated perch and continues singing as he flies a distance of about 20 feet. During the flight, the male flutters his wings and bobs his tail up and down, creating an undulating appearance to the flight. The direction of this flight display is typically away from the territory rather than toward it. It is believed that the male is trying to attract the attention of the predator and lead it way from the nest. The special song given during the flight display could act as a warning to the female that a predator is in or near their territory. I have yet to record this amazing flight song even though I have witnessed it a number of times. Here is a link to a recording of this amazing flight song that my friend Lang Elliott recorded in New York: http://tinyurl.com/COME-FLIGHT

Next time you find yourself in an area where you can hear Common Yellowthroats singing, stay a while and watch for the special flight song and display. However, there certainly is nothing like hearing the first "Wich-i-ty, wich-i-ty, wich-i-ty, wich" of spring. The marshes and thickets, after a long and quiet winter, are now finally alive — alive with birdsong.

Nature Writing Group

Potomac Valley Nature Writing Group formed in 2009 to promote the art and appreciation of nature writing. We meet September through May to discuss a monthly book selection. Members can also participate by contributing reviews, comments or sharing their own writing online at the PVNWG blogspot. In April we read David Carroll's *Swampwalker's Journal*--and held our meeting at Altona Marsh. In May we become students of Tom Brown and his *Nature Observation and Tracking*, skills to practice during our summer hiatus. For more details, email pvnaturewriters@gmail.com or visit http://potomacvalleynaturewritinggroup.blogspot.com/.

Thanks to Race Sponsors!

By the time you get this newsletter, this year's April 20 **Race for the Birds** will be over. A full account will appear in the June issue of Valley Views. Here, as we put this newsletter together in mid-April, we want to recognize the race sponsors for their generous contributions.

This year's leading "Platinum" Level sponsor (contributing $1,000 or more) is Hoxton Financial, Inc., the Shepherdstown-based wealth management firm. The accompanying photo shows, from left to right, Potomac Valley Audubon Executive Director Kristin Alex-



ander and Hoxton Financial team members Stacy Lindberg, Leota Trainor, Jessie Gleason, Amanda Runkles, and Allson Nasteff.

This year's other sponsors are as follows:

Gold Level ($500 or more)

Martinsburg Journal; The Observer newspaper; Friends of Mark Benedict; Shepherd University Wellness Center; Shepherdstown Chronicle; Spirit of Jefferson Newspaper; Two Rivers Treads; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center.

Silver Level ($250 or more)

Associated Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons; Chick-fil-A of Martinsburg; HypnoCoffee Coffee Roaster-Coffee Bar; Jefferson Security Bank; Progressive Printing.

Bronze Level ($100 or more)

AC&T Co., Inc.; Bavarian Inn; Bistro 112; Susan and Joe Brookreson; Caribbean Islands Travel Service; Clissy Funkhouser-FunkyCPA.com; D'Accord Boutique; Davitt McAteer & Associates; Dickinson & Wait Craft Gallery; Domestic; Edward Jones Investments, Shepherdstown; Grapes and Grains Gourmet; Hau Ink; Lynne Wiseman@ERA.com, Realtor; Mellow Moods Café; Mountain View Solar; Potomac-Mecklenburg Garden Club; Shepherdstown Pharmacy; Shepherdstown Sweet Shop.

As always, PVAS appreciates the strong community support for this event. You can express your appreciation as well by supporting these businesses and organizations, and by thanking them for their sponsorship the next time you see them.

The Wildflower Festival Was Wild!

Over 80 individuals and families attended our annual Wildflower Festival on April 6, even though the wildflowers tended to be shy this year! The cold spring temperatures delayed the appearance of most flowers, but PVAS volunteers focused on the advent of spring in their guided hikes. The absence of foliage created amazing sunlight and shadows along the trail and it was a beautiful day for a walk in the woods.



Family activities were available at the Pavilion and a special StoryWalk® was featured on the Cedar Loop. This new activity combined a woods walk with reading the children's book, *Miss Rumphius,* posted page by page on the trail. Members of the community had written special poems for the day which were posted along the Kingfisher Trail. Photographer S.J. Brown displayed some of her animal photographs and everyone enjoyed refreshments.

A special thank you goes to all the volunteers who helped make the day a success: Mary Duke, Kathryn Henry, Kathy Bilton, and Diana Pavlik led hikes, Flo Wilbik and Emily Gross helped with activities, Kendra Adkins coordinated the poetry walk, and Jan Hummer coordinated the StoryWalk®. We couldn't have done it without you!



Wildflower Festival

It's Almost Time For Camp!

Audubon Discovery Camp sessions at both Yankauer Nature Preserve and the Peter Burr Farm are filling up, evidence that another fun camp season is almost here! If you have not registered, there is still time, but don't wait. Some sessions are already full, but we do take waiting lists for those. There is no fee for the waiting list. While there are no guarantees, we try hard to accommodate those on the list.

Teens in high school are invited to our Digital Nature Photo Camp that will be held at the Shepherd University Center for Contemporary Arts, June 17-21. Campers in the program will learn the basics of digital photography and composition techniques for taking the best pictures, even if they have never held a camera! A Nikon 35mm digital SLR camera will be provided to each camper to use during the week and all the photos taken will remain with campers after the camp is over.

A $50 deposit will secure your child's spot in a session with the balance due in May. T-shirts will be available for pre-order online and will cost $10. Sizes range from Youth XS to Adult XL. Our shirt "mascot" this year is a frog on a kiwi green shirt. Audubon Discovery Camp has been offered since 2003. Registration for all camp sessions is at www.PotomacAudubon.org/discovercamp.

Outdoor Explore! Is Open To Families

Our Outdoor Explore! events for 6 to 9 year olds will continue for two more months, thanks to a grant from the WV Division of Natural Resources. These special outings have given younger children the experience of free exploring in a variety of natural areas around the area. But now these outings are open to families as well as kids!

In May, there will be an early morning birding adventure at Yankauer Preserve called "Bagels and Birds." Get up early on Saturday, May 11 (7:00 a.m.!) to spend time at Yankauer Nature Preserve exploring the trails for birds and listening for their early morning songs. Bird banding will be taking place that morning so you might even have the chance to hold a bird for a few moments before releasing it! Bagels and juice will be provided to give you early morning energy.

On June 8th, explore Flowing Springs Park together as you explore the stream and search for insects in the grass, the trees, and the water. For a change of pace, look for animal scat and dens. Insect nets, magnifying glasses and wading boots will be provided, although you may prefer your own river shoes. Bring a snack for mid-morning.

There is a small fee for each child age 6-9 (none for parents) and registration for both events can be completed on the PVAS website, www.PotomacAudubon.org. For more information, contact Ellen Murphy at Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org or 304-676-8739.

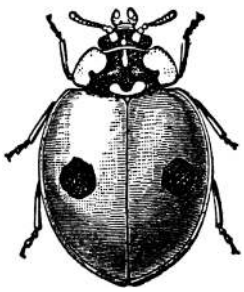
Spring Egg Hunt



It was a chilly day for our 6th Annual Spring Egg Hunt, but 19 preschoolers and their families didn't mind! On Sunday March 24, they descended on Yankauer to search for eggs hidden along the Cedar Loop. These eggs were painted to resemble wild bird eggs, rather than the traditional bright and pastel colors, but the sharp-eyed children didn't have any trouble finding them. On clean-up, only 7 were found (and 2 others later in the week!) Two "special" eggs made of marble, were also hidden and they lucky finders received a special basket with a chocolate-peanut butter egg, "frog" eggs, a magnifying glass, and nature-shaped cookie cutters.

All the children also had the opportunity to participate in egg and spoon races, a penguin egg race (using huge plastic eggs), reading egg-themed books, and a guessing game focused on other animals that lay eggs. Finally, each child could decorate a sugar cookie as part of their snack. Susan Fluharty and Diana Mullis provided the cookies for the event, Melanie Snyder and son Owen and the Mark Madison family hid the eggs with the assistance of several members of Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity from Shepherd University. Thanks to everyone who helped make the day a super success!

What Kind of Insect is That?



Kindergarten students have often asked "What kind of insect is that?" when PVAS staff have visited their classroom this spring. "Insectigations" is one of our most popular warm-weather school programs. Students at Rosemont Elementary and Opequon Elementary Schools in Martinsburg have been discovering that all insects have three body parts, six legs, and an exoskeleton. They have been searching their schoolyards for interesting bugs. This is just one of the school programs that PVAS presents during the spring semester, although our Watershed Programs are winding down (with final field trips to the Potomac River or one of its tributaries.) We've served over 900 students through school programs this school year and almost 1100 more through the watershed program! If your school or class is thinking they should arrange for a program, but just haven't made the call, don't wait! Our program dates usually fill quickly and we don't want you to miss out. You can contact Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739 or Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org.

Noted Scientist To Speak at Shepherd May 10

As part of the International Migratory Bird Day celebrations this year, PVAS and Shepherd University are co-sponsoring a talk featuring Dr. Eric Dinerstein of the World Wildlife Fund. The talk, which is free and open to the public, will be at 7:00 p.m. at Reynolds Hall on May 10.

Dr. Dinerstein is the Vice-President and Lead Scientist for the Fund's Conservation Science Program. The American Association for the Advancement of Science has described Dr. Dinerstein as "a die-hard adventurer who has traveled the world practicing conservation on the frontlines - working on everything from snow leopards in northern India to tigers in Nepal to fruit bats in Costa Rica. He led the first team to identify every ecoregion on the planet and define the most biologically important of those, a framework called the Global 200 that now guides World Wildlife Fund's fieldwork in more than 100 countries."

Dr. Dinerstein's new book, *The Kingdom of Rarities*, focuses on environmental factors that have led to unique habitats that harbor critically rare animal and plant species, and on conservation measures that can enhance these species' chances for survival.

Prior to Dr. Dinerstein's talk, there will be a "Meet the Author" reception at the Bistro 112 Restaurant on German Street from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Admission will be $15 for the general public and $5 for students. The event will feature heavy hors d'oeuvres and cash bar. Students must show IDs at the door. Reception tickets can be purchased at www.potomacaudubon.org/imbd.html. Pre-registration is required.

Questions can be directed to Sandy Sagalkin at 240-291-6465 or monsansagalkin@myactv.net or Ed Snyder at 304-876-5428 or esnyder@shepherd.edu.

International Migratory Bird Day

PVAS and other organizations have teamed up to put together a special series of local events in May to mark the 21st anniversary of International Migratory Bird Day. Initiated in 1993 by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, IMBD aims to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of migratory birds in North, Central and South America.

All but one of our events will be free, and anyone with an interest is invited to participate. Fuller details are available on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org, and online registration is available there for events that require it. For more information about specific events, contact Sandy Sagalkin at monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465 unless otherwise noted.

The schedule of these events follows below.

Saturday, May 4: **Antietam Battlefield/Snavely Ford bird walk**. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Burnside Bridge parking area. Free and no pre-registration required. Co-sponsored by PVAS and the Washington County Bird Club. For more info contact Nancy Kirschbaum at 240-347-7751 or nancyk500@comcast.net.

Saturday, May 4: Introduction to Birding. A brief, PVAS-sponsored overview of the subject for non-birders, people would like to become birders, or for those who simply don't have the time to commit to PVAS's full "Birding 101" course. Will start at 8:00 a.m. and include classroom time at Shepherd University and field experience along the C&O Canal across from Shepherdstown. Free but participation is limited to 20 people and pre-registration is essential.

Monday, May 6: Bird Walk on the C&O Canal, across from Shepherdstown. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the large C&O Canal parking lot on River Road, just south of the railroad bridge. Free and no pre-registration required.

Tuesday, May 7: Birding at the Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area, in Berkeley and Morgan counties. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Eagle Mart Plaza parking lot, south of Hedgesville on Route 9. Free and no pre-registration required.

Wednesday, May 8: Bird walk at Stauffer's Marsh, in Berkeley County's Back Creek Valley. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the marsh, which is located on one-half mile south of Shanghai, on the east side of Back Creek Valley Road (County Route 7). Free and no pre-registration required.

Wednesday, May 8: PVAS program at the National Conservation Training Center. 7:00 p.m. in Room 105, Instructional East Building. The speaker will be Katie Fallon, author of the non-fiction book *Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird*. Free and open to the public.

Thursday, May 9: Bird walk at the Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County. Walk will begin at 8:00 a.m. and be led by author Katie Fallon. The focus will be on the Preserve's warblers, particularly its Cerulean warblers. Free and no pre-registration required.

Friday, May 10: Evening reception and talk in Shepherdstown with Dr. Eric Dinerstein, Vice President and Lead Scientist of the World Wildlife Fund's Conservation Science Program. Reception will be held at the Bistro 112 restaurant on German Street from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and will feature a cash bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Admission to the reception will be $15 for the general public and $5 for students. Reception tickets can be purchased at www.potomacaudubon.org/IMBD.html. Talk will follow at 7:00 p.m. at Reynolds Hall on King Street. Admission to the talk will be free. Co-sponsored by PVAS and Shepherd University. (See separate article.)

Saturday and Sunday, May 11-12: Fourth Annual Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon. Teams and individuals will compete to identify the highest numbers of bird species they find in the area within any 24-consecutive-hour-period during the weekend. Free and open to anyone who is interested, but all must pre-register. This year, those who participate are encouraged to seek pledges from neighbors and friends to help raise funds for PVAS's new Grassland Birds Initiative. (See separate article.)

Saturday, May 11: "Big Sit" at Shepherdstown's Rumsey Memorial Park. 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon. An adjunct to the Birdathon, this will be a friendly gathering to see how many bird species can be identified from a 50-foot diameter circle in the Park. A great family activity and an easy way to learn about birds in our area. Free and no pre-registration required. Binoculars will be available. The park is located at the end of Mill Street, overlooking the Potomac River.

Sunday, May 12: Mother's Day Bird walk at Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the parking area near the Area's boat launch site off Mission Road. Free and no pre-registration required.



Eastern Towhee
© Wil Hershberger

Natural History Workshop Update

Natural History Workshops, sponsored by Potomac Valley Master Naturalists (PVMN), help current Master Naturalists maintain their currency, but all workshops are open to the public.

This spring, we have had several including Project Wild Aquatic, Exploring Vernal Pools, and History and Ecology of the Chesapeake Bay. A Geology Trip around the Charles Town area had to be postponed until later this year.

Coming up in June, you can learn more about Dragonflies of WV and in December, the Natural History of Fish. A workshop on Backyard Birding, originally scheduled in January will also be rescheduled.

All of PVMN's workshops feature some formal instruction and then a field component so that participants can readily apply what they have just learned in class. There are no tests and the instructors are ready and willing to answer any questions. Registration is open now for both of these workshops at www.PotomacAudubon.org.

Additional workshops for Master Naturalists will be offered at the West Virginia Master Naturalists Annual Weekend in Tucker County. This year's event is scheduled for August 16-18. More information on meeting can be found at http://mnofwv.org/.



Clark Dixon leading the Vernal Pools class



Marilee Cunningham at the Shepherdstown Library

Save June 8th for a Champagne Garden Party!

On June 8th from 1-4pm, Alice and Neal Barkus of Shepherdstown are generously hosting a champagne garden party to benefit PVAS. PVAS members and friends are invited to explore their beautiful gardens and orchard, and enjoy a delicious "champagne lunch."



The Barkus' garden

We will have a large event tent for the day for shelter from sun (and to ensure it doesn't rain). Our wonderful event volunteers will be preparing a delicious lunch, accompanied by wine, beer, champagne and lemonade.

Tickets are $45/person. Those who pay $150 for two people will be recognized as Donors, those who pay $250 for two will be recognized as Patrons, and those who pay $500 or more for two will be recognized as Supporters. Invitations will be sent out shortly!



Pre-reservations are required. If you do not receive an invitation or prefer to purchase a ticket on line, you may do so on our website at www.potomacaudubon.org. To request a paper invitation with mail-in rsvp card, contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org. RSVP's must be received by **May 23rd**. We hope to see you there!

Register Now for Birdathon

PVAS is now accepting registrations for its third annual Ruth Ann Dean Birdathon, which will be held the weekend of May 11-12. The Birdathon is an annual event intended to cap a week of activities commemorating International Migratory Bird Day (see separate story).

The Birdathon is named in honor of Ruth Ann Dean, who was a founding member and ardent supporter of PVAS, a Board member in the early years, and an avid birder.

It is open to anyone with an interest, regardless of experience or expertise at birding. People can participate as part of a team or as individuals. Either way, the goal is to identify the highest numbers of bird species you can find within PVAS's territory in any 24-consecutive-hour-period during the weekend.

PVAS's territory includes the Jefferson, Berkeley and Morgan counties in West Virginia, and Washington County in Maryland.

There is no entry fee, and registration is easy. To register and to get full information about how the Birdathon works, go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org/IMBD.html or contact the event coordinator, Sandy Sagalkin, at monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465.

This year, those who participate will be encouraged to seek pledges from neighbors and friends to help raise funds for PVAS's Grassland Birds Initiative (GBI). The GBI seeks to protect the habitat of birds that make their home in grasslands in our area. These birds are declining at a rapid rate and include Eastern Meadowlarks, Loggerhead Shrikes, Eastern Bluebird and other species. The GBI works cooperatively with landowners to encourage land management practices that lead to enhanced opportunities for successful nesting. For further information about the GBI, see www.potomacaudubon.org/GBI.

A trophy will be given to the team with the highest number of species identified and other prizes will be awarded to participants for raising money for the GBI. To be eligible for awards or prizes, teams must raise a minimum of $75 for the GBI.

Last year's winning Birdathon team was the "White-eyed Weary-o's", who identified 117 different bird species in a 24-hour period. Overall, 149 different species were identified by all participants.

Feeding Birds in the Spring ... and year round



Our seed eating feathered friends (not to mention other feeder visitors) benefit from the seed provided by bird feeders year round (of course, not all birds eat seed). The need is obvious during winter's bad weather and cold, but less obvious in other seasons.

In spring, birds returning from far-away places have depleted their reserves and benefit from our fast food offerings, as do our year-round locals who are busy building nests at a time when spring rains cause most seeds to sprout.

Summer is full of the stress of feeding baby birds (at least once every 30 minutes), and a quick snack for mom and pop is welcome and beneficial.

And when fall comes again, feeders help our migrants get ready for their long journeys and also to assist those passing through.

Right now, spring has sprung, and it's time to put out those humming bird feeders!

Art Show to Include Yankauer Flowers

Marian Buckner is a long time member of PVAS and an enthusiastic fan of the Yankauer Preserve. The wildflowers and other natural scenes at the Preserve often show up in her paintings.

Beginning May 9th, she will exhibit more than 20 new oil and watercolor paintings at The Bridge Gallery in Shepherdstown. Included will be several small paintings of wildflowers blooming in their natural habitat at the Yankauer Nature Preserve.

The Opening Reception on Saturday, May 11, 5-7 pm, is open to the public.

Her working title is, "Remembering: Flowers, Meadows, and Woodlands." Flower paintings include those of earlier floral gifts from family members.

The Bridge Gallery is located on Route 230 (on the left) just outside of Shepherdstown, not far from O'Hurley's store, telephone (304) 876-2300.



Race for the Birds participants
April 2013



Birding Trip to Claymont May 21

PVAS is sponsoring a birding field trip to a new venue—the historic Claymont property outside Charles Town—on Tuesday May 21, beginning 7:00 a.m. and lasting about four hours. It is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of birding skills. Children are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult.

Pre-registration is required, as the group size will be limited to 16 participants. Register on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org or contact trip leader, Joette Borzik, at 240-440-4221 or pep4223@comcast.net.

Participants should plan to meet the field trip leader on the Claymont entrance road where a wetland meets the access driveway. The entrance is located at 667 Huyett Road and is marked by a street sign that says "Claymont Mansion."

The group will look for birds in the wetland near the entrance, then park vehicles and begin a 2-3 mile hike on the Claymont property. The trip will involve moderate hiking, and will be focused on observing song birds, raptors, woodpeckers, sparrows, and other wildlife. Hearing the chorus of breeding song birds will be one of the trip highlights.

This field trip will be conducted rain or shine. Participants should dress appropriately for the prevailing weather and bring drinking water, trail snacks, and insect repellent. Those who need loaner binoculars should let the trip leader know ahead of time.

The approximately 300 acre Claymont property is home to the historic Claymont mansion. The mansion, which was built in 1820 by George Washington's grand-nephew, Bushrod Washington, is the largest of the Washington family homes and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property is owned and managed by the Claymont Society for Continuous Education and is used to host seminars and retreats for the public. The property has recently been entered into a conservation easement that ensures it will be protected from development.

Eastern Shore Birding Trip

PVAS is sponsoring a one-day birding trip to the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge and other spots along the Delaware shore on Saturday, May 18. The Bombay Hook Refuge encompasses 15,978 acres that are mostly tidal salt marsh.

Other sites to be visited will include Taylor's Gut and the Mispillion River, where Red Knots may be found. May is a good time to witness the spring shorebird migration, and those species will be the main focus of this trip. But other birds will be included.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to come along. Children are welcome. There is no fee except for travel expenses and entry fees into Bombay Hook.

Because accommodations fill up fast on the Eastern Shore, those planning to join the trip should make their room reservations as soon as possible.

The trip will be led by local birder Sandy Sagalkin. He will be traveling to Delaware on May 17 and staying overnight at the Dover Days Inn; other participants may wish to do the same. The Inn is located at 272 North DuPont Highway in Dover; the phone number is 302-674-8002. There are other lodging opportunities in and around Dover.

In any case, trip participants should plan to meet at the Days Inn at 6:30 a.m. on the 18th.

Participants should wear comfortable walking or hiking boots; bring along bug spray to ward off ticks, mosquitoes and gnats; bring water and, as necessary, a hat, sunscreen or rain gear. Binoculars will be available for those who need them.

For further information contact Sandy at 240-291-6465 or monsansagalkin@myactv.net. There may be opportunities for carpooling.

Mountain Laurel Walk at Eidolon

PVAS will sponsor a Mountain Laurel walk at its Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County on Saturday, May 18. There is no fee, and anyone with an interest is invited to attend. No pre-registration is required.

The walk will be led by the Preserve's caretaker, Joe Gentile and will offer an opportunity to see the Preserve's large and impressive stand of Mountain Laurel shrubs, which bloom spectacularly at this time of year.

Plan to arrive at the Preserve at 10:00 a.m. Wear sturdy walking shoes or boots, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather, and bring water and bug spray.

Directions to the Preserve are on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org. For more information contact Peter Smith at 304-876-1139 or pvsmith@frontiernet.net.



Jean Neely and Wil Hershberger of the PVAS Birding Committee display the new banner for our new conservation effort

Harpers Ferry Hike Set for May 2

Hikers of all ages are invited to join veteran hiker Bob Floren for a PVAS-sponsored hike along the trails of the South School House Ridge section of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on Thursday, May 2.

Lasting about 1.5 hours, the hike will wind through forest and fields and offer panoramic views and opportunities to see Civil War sites and ghostly ruins.

Everyone is welcome, and no pre-registration is required. Participants must be able to walk about 2.5 miles over generally even ground.

The hike is free but entry to the NHP parking lot will cost $10 unless you have an annual or lifetime pass.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. in Harpers Ferry NHP parking lot on Shoreline Drive, off US. Routh 340. The hiking group will carpool from there to the trailhead because of limited parking at the trailhead site.

Participants should wear sturdy hiking shoes or boots, dress appropriately for prevailing weather conditions, and bring along insect repellent and sun protection as needed.

The hike will take place rain or shine, but it will be cancelled in the event of severe weather. For more information, contact Bob at 804-398-8052 or bobbythebobcat@comcast.net.

Shannondale Springs Birding Trip

PVAS will sponsor a birding trip to the Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area, on the east bank of the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County, on Wednesday, May 22. The trip is free and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of birding skills. Children are welcome. No pre-registration is required.

Participants should meet at 7:30 a.m. at the WMA parking area by the boat launch site, off Mission Road.

The 1,361-acre Shannondale Springs property is managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and includes a mixture of forest, brush land and open fields covering rolling hills.

Possible species to be sighted include breeding spring migrants, Bald Eagles, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, vultures, Great Blue Herons, waterfowl, and woodpeckers.

The trip will involve walking about two miles over mostly level ground, although some hilly, uneven terrain will be encountered. Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them.

The trip may be cancelled in the event of bad weather.

For more info, contact Jim Farley at jamesfarley@frontiernet.net or 540-686-2056.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

ALL of your dues will stay here to support local PVAS efforts and help us grow! And here's what you'll get:

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children, including field trips, special events, workshops and courses, and environmental projects.
- A subscription to Valley Views, the PVAS newsletter
- E-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest
- Satisfaction of supporting conservation efforts, youth and adult nature education, individual and family recreation, and a wide array of programs in your community.

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for $20 ($15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: _____

To save postage costs, PVAS regularly sends its newsletter by e-mail. You can be assured that we do not share email addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail check here: __.

Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS
PO Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Thank you for your support!



If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

Some people prefer National Audubon Society membership, which includes a subscription to the Society's Audubon magazine. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at www.audubon.org and click on "join." If you join National Audubon and reside in Berkeley, Jefferson or Morgan counties in West Virginia, or in Washington County Maryland, you will automatically become a member of PVAS and have access to our events, an e-mail copy of newsletter and e-mail alerts. However almost all of your dues payments will go to the National Audubon Society; only a small percentage will go to PVAS.

RED TEXT - DOT ALERT

If red text or 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 Local membership. If you are a National Audubon Society member, the National Society will notify you directly when your membership is up for renewal.

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

MAIL TO:

May 2013 Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled PCF paper Volume 31, Issue 8

The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please contact any of the board members listed here 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 Thursday of the month (Sept.-June). Meeting location and time will be announced prior to meetings. These meetings are open to all PVAS members.

PVAS Officers and Board Members

President: Bob Reynolds (2015) ..... robert.reynolds40@gmail.com
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