

# VALLEY VIEWS

**Potomac  
Valley  
Audubon  
Society**

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October 2009

## **Children's Education Programs Continue to Grow in Popularity**

At PVAS's last Board of Directors meeting in September, Executive Director Kristin Alexander presented a detailed overview of the reach of PVAS's educational programs for children during the 2008-2009 school year and the summer of 2009.

The numbers were impressive.

Kristin's report indicated that a total of 2,409 school children from 18 different schools participated in our programs for the K-6 grades during the 2008-2009 school year.

That's 465 more school children than we reached the previous year, which translates into an increase of about 24 percent.

Within the overall 2,409 total, 918 children were enrolled in our Watershed education program for fourth graders and the other 1,491 children participated in our programs for the other K-6 grades.

Most of these children were from schools in the three counties of the Eastern Panhandle but we also offered special programs during the year to one school in Washington County, Maryland, and another in Winchester, Virginia.

Our new Wee Naturalists program for preschoolers, which we piloted in the fall of 2008 and launched in earnest early in 2009, also proved very popular with 55 children participating during the period.

During the summer of 2009, 185 children attended one or more sessions of our Audubon Discovery Day Camp (which completed its seventh season this summer) and another 11 participated in the special, one-week digital photography camp for teenagers we cosponsored (for the fourth year in a row) with the National Conservation Training Center.

If you put all of these numbers together, PVAS's educational programs for children reached a total of 2,649 children between September 2008 and July 2009.

This figure does not include the children we reach through special events, like our spring Egg Hunt and Wildflower Festival, or through our participation in events organized by others, such as school health and science fairs or NCTC's annual open house.

*See Children's Programs, Page 5*

## **Don't Miss Our Second Annual "Green Home" Fundraiser!**

PVAS will hold its second annual "Green Home" fundraising event on October 24.

The event will be held from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at an award-winning "green" home completed last year in the 300-acre Broomgrass organic farm community in Gerrardstown in Berkeley County.

It will include a reception, tours of the home, and opportunities to view other facets of the Broomgrass community, such as the grounds and a nearby pool and pool house. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Dress will be casual.

All proceeds will be used to support the Society's educational programs for local children.

The home which is the centerpiece of the event was designed by Martinsburg architects Matthew Grove and Lisa Dall'Olio as their own residence.

It was one of only two structures in West Virginia to receive an Honor Award for Excellence in Architecture from the West Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 2009 (the other winner was the new Institute for Scientific Research building in Fairmont, a massive, \$83-million project).

The home incorporates many cutting-edge green features.

Tickets to the event are required, and space will be limited.

Basic tickets are \$45 per person. Those who pay \$150 for two people will be recognized as Donors, those who pay \$200 for two



*Grove Dall'Olio Home*

*See Green Home, Page 3*

Potomac Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enjoying the natural world through education and action.



Hello everyone:

Once again this month, we've got a lot to report.

In particular, we hope you'll note the article on the number of kids served by our children's education programs during the 2008-2009 school year and the summer of 2009.

In all, the article indicates that nearly 2,700 youngsters participated in those programs during the period.

That's a record-high number and it's very gratifying. These programs have long been the heart of what we do and we're glad they continue to be so well received by the community.

This hasn't happened by accident, of course; three individuals, in particular, deserve the lion's share of the credit for the success of these programs: Kristin Alexander, our Executive Director; Ellen Murphy, our Youth Education Director; and Suzi Taylor, who developed and directs our wonderful new Wee Naturalists program.

Looking ahead, you'll also note in this newsletter that we're planning to expand our camp offerings next summer by piloting a satellite camp on the grounds of the new CraftWorks craft center in southern Jefferson County.

If this goes well it could lead to a full-blown satellite camp at CraftWorks in the years ahead.

That would be a welcome development because it would solve one of our major dilemmas: the fact is, we've run out of room to accommodate any more campers at our Yankauer Nature Preserve even as demand for our summer camp sessions keeps growing.

We're thankful to the folks at CraftWorks—Linda Case, the owner, and David Lillard, the Executive Director—for their willingness to give this satellite camp a try, and their very generous offer to make capital improvements at their own expense to house it.

One more thing: Thanks are also due to Matthew Grove and Lisa Dall'Olio for allowing us to use their beautiful new home at Broomgrass in Berkeley County as the site for our second annual "Green Home" fundraiser on October 24.

If you're interested in green building or cutting-edge architecture for its own sake, this is an event you won't want to miss.

And it's a good cause even if you aren't interested in those things: all the proceeds will help support our abovementioned children's education programs.

—Peter Smith

## Look for PVAS Display at Apple Butter Festival

PVAS will again have a display at this year's Apple Butter Festival in Berkeley Springs, so if you attend stop by and say hello.

The PVAS display will be located with the other conservation-related displays, on Independence Street by Hunter's Hardware.

The Festival will be held October 10 and 11.

## PVAS Will Pilot Satellite Summer Camp at CraftWorks Next Year

In addition to holding its regular Audubon Discovery Day Camp at the Yankauer Nature Preserve next summer, PVAS will pilot a satellite day camp at CraftWorks at Cool Spring, the new craft center six miles south of Charles Town.

Because of its location, this satellite camp may be much more convenient for families who live in the southern half of Jefferson county.

Full details remain to be worked out but the satellite camp will be of two week's duration for its first year.

Fees will be the same as those for the existing camp at Yankauer.

The natural features of the CraftWorks property are very different from those of the Yankauer Preserve, and camp sessions there will be designed to make use of those features.

The CraftWorks management is generously renovating and enlarging an existing farm structure that will serve as a shelter for the camp, bringing electric service to that building, and also providing a parking area.

If all goes well, PVAS will work toward offering full summers of camp sessions at the CraftWorks site in future years.

## Eidolon Parking Lot Under Construction

A much-needed parking lot is under construction at PVAS's Eidolon Nature Preserve in Morgan County.

The lot will be located about 200 yards inside the preserve entrance. It will be gravel-surfaced and include a bus turnaround and parking space for about 20 cars and two buses.



As part of this project, too, the preserve's gravel road will also be repaired and upgraded, especially near the preserve entrance, where erosion has become a serious problem.

All these improvements will make it easier to accommodate group events at the preserve.

The contractor is Clinten Reed, of Berkeley Springs.

The goal is to complete all this work this fall.

Funding for the project is coming from proceeds from the preserve's endowment, grants from the Tom and Virginia Seely Foundation and the Carl M. Freeman Foundation, and donations from CNB Bank and a variety of individuals.

*Green Home* (continued from page 1)

will be recognized as Patrons, and those who pay \$250 or more for two will be recognized as Supporters.

All ticket costs will be fully tax-deductible.

Everyone on PVAS's mailing list should receive an invitation. If you do not receive one or if you are not on our mailing list and would like to attend, please call 304-676-3397 or e-mail [pvasmail@aol.com](mailto:pvasmail@aol.com) and provide your name, address, and phone number.

The announcement of the Grove-Dall'Olivo home's 2009 AIA award says the judges "felt the project has an almost improvised, collage-like quality in that the more one views the house, the more intriguing it becomes. The design fully integrates all aspects of site, materials, and design concept."

The owner's goals were to design a site-specific residence that responds to earth, water, sun, wind, views, and the woodlands.

The design is centered on an open living-dining-kitchen area where most of the family's time is spent. This area includes a solar crescent paved with loose river stones for seasonal plants and vegetables, a masonry heater with bread oven, and an open kitchen plan with precast concrete countertops.

The home was made energy-efficient, through the use of geothermal heating and cooling, passive solar, and the capacity for active solar. A constructed wetland and bio-kinetic filtration system treats wastewater. Renewable domestic woods—such as red oak, yellow pine, Douglas fir, maple, cypress, and red cedar—were used for the flooring, beams, cabinets, and exterior siding. Insulated concrete forms were selected for their ability to curve and achieve a high thermal value.

Other green building features include roof water collection, daylighting, LED lighting, soy- and cotton-based insulation products, and a living roof.

## Remember United Way/ CFC Fund Drives

Remember that the annual fundraising campaigns of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) are underway.

Both campaigns will last through December 15.

PVAS receives funding from United Way and CFC each year and encourages its members to give to their campaigns.

CFC is, of course, the mechanism for federal employees to contribute to their local United Way. PVAS members who are federal employees can designate PVAS as the recipient of all or part of their CFC contribution by entering PVAS's CFC number (29061) on the CFC form that they file with their employing agency.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Alexander at [pvasmail@aol.com](mailto:pvasmail@aol.com) or 304-676-3397.

## Berkeley Springs Birding Festival Well-attended

This year's Berkeley Springs Fall Birding Festival was blessed with fine weather, drew good crowds, and those who attended voiced enthusiastic support for continuing and expanding the festival in future years.

The festival was held in Berkeley Springs the weekend of September 18-20.

This was its second year, and its first year under PVAS sponsorship.

PVAS hopes to continue sponsoring the festival, and current plans call for scheduling it the third weekend of every September.

This year's attendees included a mix of people from near and far, many of whom were beginning birders.

Those who came from outside the Berkeley Springs area included a physician from Cumberland, Maryland, who had learned about the festival from her local newspaper to a young couple from Washington, DC, who had found the festival on the Internet.

The festival events and attendance figures were as follows:

A Friday evening Ice House presentation on bird songs by naturalist Wil Hershberger drew an audience of 45 people.



*Wil Hershberger presenting*

Sixteen people joined Wil and Joe Gentile for a Saturday morning birding and general nature walk at the Eidolon Nature Preserve.

A dozen children and adults participated in a Saturday workshop for beginning birders, led by Kelly Smith and Ellen Murphy at Warm Springs Intermediate School.

Fifty-five people attended a Saturday evening presentation at the Country Inn by raptor expert Liam McGranahan.



And 34 turned out for a Sunday morning bird walk with Wil and Liam on a privately owned mountainside meadowland property

## Summer's Over, School Programs Are Starting

Now that summer is over, PVAS has geared up for school programs through the fall, winter, and spring months. Classes are already signing up for outdoor learning programs at Yankauer Preserve.



Some of these programs are being funded by the City of Ranson which again is providing every child at Ranson Elementary the opportunity to experience Yankauer.

These programs are designed to complement the graded curriculum and rely on volunteers to make them happen, so don't hesitate to volunteer to help share your love of the out-of-doors with students.

Several classes have already begun the Watershed Education Initiative. This fall version of the watershed program is being conducted in two schools thanks to the WV FLOW grant extension. This service-learning grant will officially end December 31, but until then, it is funding the program for fourth graders at Ranson Elementary School and Potomack Intermediate School.

At these two schools, 260 students are learning about water quality issues and how their local actions can affect the Chesapeake Bay. A service component of the program will allow the students to survey their own school ground for watershed concerns and put up markers alerting the public that the area is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

An additional watershed program is being conducted for 60, fifth-graders at Ranson Elementary because their watershed program was cut short by school scheduling challenges last spring. The fifth graders will participate in a short version of the program, but it will include a review of what they learned last spring, the field trip and a service project. The service project will involve caring for potted pine seedlings which will eventually be planted at the new Flowing Springs Park in Ranson.

The newest watershed program for this fall is a pilot program with tenth-grade biology students at Martinsburg High School. This exciting development provides PVAS a way to broaden and focus the curriculum for older students. It will also help us evaluate student retention of the program since some of the students likely participated in the watershed program when they were in fourth grade.

All other schools that have participated in the watershed program in the past will be served during the spring semester of 2010. Students in both semester programs will be able to use new LabQuest hand held data collection systems that will allow them to learn hi-tech water testing techniques and interface with classroom computers. This new technology will help connect our program with West Virginia's Twenty-first Century Learning Standards.

## Wee Naturalist Program Expands to CraftWorks

"Wee Naturalists," our very successful adult-child preschool programs, have been so popular that we are expanding the program to a site in southern Jefferson County. CraftWorks at Cool Spring, a craft school six miles south of Charles Town, has invited PVAS to hold additional programs on their property the third Thursday of each month beginning in September. These programs will be in addition to the monthly "Wee Naturalist" programs at Yankauer, held on the third Wednesday of each month.

The times of the program, 9:30-11:00 a.m., and themes will be the same at both sites. The program is open to children ages 3 to 5. All participating children must be accompanied at each session by a parent, grandparent or other adult relative, or guardian.

The program is aimed at providing regular opportunities for small children and loving adults to explore nature together safely under the guidance of an experienced PVAS instructor. All sessions are conducted rain or shine and use a hands-on discovery approach. To ensure that everyone receives close, personal attention, enrollment is limited to ten child/adult teams per session.

Families may register for one, several, or all of the sessions at either the CraftWorks or Yankauer locations but pre-registration is required. The fee will be \$7 per child/adult team per session for one or two sessions, and \$5 per session for three or more sessions.

The Wee Naturalists program was initiated last January with start-up funding provided by a grant from the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation's Two Rivers Giving Circle.

Pre-registration is required for both locations. To register for the Thursday programs at CraftWorks, go to [www.CraftWorksatCool-Spring.org](http://www.CraftWorksatCool-Spring.org). Registration materials for the Wednesday programs at Yankauer can be found at [www.PotomacAudubon.org](http://www.PotomacAudubon.org). For more information, contact the Wee Naturalist Director, Suzi Taylor, at 301-432-1908.

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## Sign Up Now for October Nature Photo Workshop

PVAS is still accepting registrations for a nature photography workshop that will be held the weekend of October 23-25 at Capon State Park outside Berkeley Springs. The deadline to register is October 9.

The workshop will be led by Wil Hershberger, one of the area's leading naturalists and nature photographers, and his wife, Donna.

The workshop will run from 6:30 p.m. Friday, October 23 to 12:00 noon on Sunday, October 25.

It will be aimed at beginners and photographers with some experience. It will cover all aspects of nature photography focusing on 35mm format equipment (film and digital), with classroom and field sessions. Topics of discussion will include light, composition, equipment, workflow, and finding suitable images.

The cost to participate will be \$150 for the entire weekend.

Participants must be at least 18 years of age.

Full information and registration forms are available on the PVAS website at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org). Or, contact Kristin Alexander by e-mail at [pvasmail@aol.com](mailto:pvasmail@aol.com) or telephone at 304-676-3397.

Registration forms should be submitted with a \$25 deposit to PVAS, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

Wil and Donna Hershberger are founding members of Potomac Valley Nature Photographers and operate Nature Images and Sounds in Hedgesville, WV.

Wil is a former PVAS president, the former first vice-president of the Shenandoah Photographic Society, and a former moderator of the flora and macro forum at NatureScapes.net. He is also a member of the American Ornithologists Union, the Society of Field Ornithologists, the North American Nature Photographers Association, the Professional Photographers Association and the North American PhotoShop Professionals.

His nature photographs have been published widely.

## Still Time to Join Great Smoky Mountains Park Trip

There's still time to join PVAS for a long weekend of camping in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park as the National Park Service celebrates the Park's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We will travel to the Park on Friday, October 30, spend two full days there, and travel home on Monday, November 2.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is world-renowned for the diversity of its plant and animal resources, the beauty of its ancient mountains, and much more. The Park is mostly forested, and its fall foliage should be near its peak color during our trip. For more information, see the Park's website at [www.nps.gov/grsm](http://www.nps.gov/grsm).

The Park is about 450 miles from the Eastern Panhandle. Estimated travel time is about nine hours each way.

PVAS will provide all transportation. We will be camping in tents at campsites within the Park over the three nights of the trip. There are no motels or hotels located within the Park.

Activities will include hiking and wildlife watching (including elk watching). Possible additional activities include fishing, horseback trail riding, bicycling, and a visit to the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont.

Trip participants must supply their own bedding, equipment, food, as well as a tent if they have one. PVAS will provide tent space for those who do not have a tent of their own.

PVAS will pay for all transportation and campsite costs and will charge a fee to cover these costs. The amount of the fee will range from about \$120 to \$195 per person, depending on the number of people who sign up and fuel costs at the time.

Participants will be responsible for their own food costs and for the costs of any activities that require special fees, such as fishing or horseback riding.

You don't want to miss this exciting trip, which will be led by PVAS Board member Clark Dixon. For more information and/or to sign up contact Clark at 304-725-9634 or [dixonconsultants@aol.com](mailto:dixonconsultants@aol.com).

*Children's Programs* (continued from page 1)

Regardless of their specific content, all of PVAS's children's programs are aimed at helping children gain a better understanding and appreciation of the natural world. All of them offer hands-on experiential learning led by experienced instructors.

Supervising all of these programs is Ellen Murphy, PVAS's Director of Youth Education, who has many years of experience in developing, directing, and delivering educational programs for children.

Our programs for preschoolers are led by Suzi Taylor, a former PVAS camp director who also has extensive environmental education experience.

### Volunteers Needed for November 7 Birdseed Delivery

Volunteers will be needed at our 3 distribution locations (Ranson & Berkeley Springs, WV, and Williamsport, MD) from 10:00 a.m. until Noon. Please call Diana Mullis (304-267-3482 or email [dianamullis@aol.com](mailto:dianamullis@aol.com)) and sign up to help.

### Join October 24 Bird Walk at Blue Ridge Center

Come along for a fall bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship in nearby Loudoun County, Virginia, on October 24.

The walk is being jointly sponsored by PVAS and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. It will begin at 8:00 a.m. and be led by veteran PVAS birders Nancy and Elliot Kirschbaum, of Shepherdstown.



It will be held rain or shine. Pre-registration is not required and there will be no fee.

The walk should offer a good opportunity to see a variety of arriving winter birds, such as Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and White-throated Sparrows.

The Blue Ridge Center is a beautiful 900-acre property that includes valley meadows and heavily forested slopes. It is located at 11611 Harpers Ferry Road (Route 671), a few miles south of Harpers Ferry and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers.

The walking group will meet at the property's visitor's center. Detailed directions can be found on the Blue Ridge Center's website at [www.brccs.org](http://www.brccs.org).

Participants should dress appropriately for the weather conditions at the time and bring binoculars if they have them.

For more information contact Nancy Kirschbaum at 304-876-6881 or [nancyk500@comcast.net](mailto:nancyk500@comcast.net).

## October 14 PVAS Program Will Focus on Backyard Habitats

PVAS will sponsor a presentation about “Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitats” the evening of Wednesday, October 14, at the National Conservation Training Center outside Shepherdstown.

The speaker will be Annette Ipsan, the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service’s educator for horticulture and the Master Gardener Program in Washington County, MD.

The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. in Room 111 of the Center’s Instructional East Building.

Admission is free and anyone is welcome to attend.

Landscaping to provide habitats for wildlife has become increasingly popular in recent years. Even small yards can be landscaped to attract birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and small animals. Trees, shrubs, and other plants provide shelter and food for wildlife.

Annette joined the Maryland Cooperative Extension in 2006 after working 20-years in corporate communications. She launched her “green” career by becoming a certified Master Gardener in 2002, then working at a 400-acre nursery for several years.

A communications graduate of Shippensburg University, she teaches environmentally responsible gardening through talks, newspaper columns, community events and individual horticulture consultations.

## Watch for Details on Owl-banding Trip

PVAS is once again trying to organize a special nighttime field trip this fall to watch an expert catch, band, and release migrating owls on South Mountain, in Washington County, Maryland.

The trip will be likely held sometime in late October.

These trips have long been a favorite for whole families. If you are interested in participating, watch for details by email or—if you aren’t on our email list—keep an eye on the PVAS website.

## Master Naturalists Take on Mile-a-Minute

On August 22, volunteers from the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists gathered to eradicate several areas of Mile-A-Minute (*Persicaria perfoliata*)

that is beginning to invade areas of the new Flowing Springs Park in Ranson (next to Home Depot). The problem plants had been pointed out by WV State Forester Herb Peddicord just the day before and a “shot-in-the-dark” emergency email produced 11 PVMN members prepared with leather gloves and garbage bags



with just 18 hours notice! Within 2 hours, a huge pile of the vine had been piled up to be burned by the City of Ranson.

The immediacy of the effort was needed because the vines were beginning to re-seed, creating a bigger problem by next spring. Mile-A-Minute is a very fast growing invasive vine from Asia that was accidentally introduced in the 1930s. It looks similar to morning glory, but with tiny, curved thorns, and can rapidly grow over shrubs and other vegetation, threatening their regrowth. The eradication process will be a continuing process.

The new Flowing Springs Park is still in the planning/development stage, but the Ranson Parks and Recreation Board has designated the area to be left as a natural area for wildlife enthusiasts. The land contains the source of Flowing Springs Run which will now be protected from development.

The “9-1-1 Emergency Award” goes to Sherri Cooper, Carol DelColle, Addie and Keith Dailey, Jim and Sam Jenkins, Nan Johnson, Susan Marklin, Wanda Miller, Ellen Murphy, and Herb and Rachel Peddicord.

## Growing Native Seed Collection Continues Through October

PVAS teamed up again this year with the Potomac Conservancy to hold two Growing Native tree-seed-collection events in the Eastern Panhandle: one on September 12 at the Eidolon Nature Preserve and another September 26 at the Yankauer Nature Preserve.

For those who cannot attend either but would like to help, the Conservancy has installed seed-collection kiosks at three locations in the Panhandle: the Yankauer Preserve, the Farmers Market in Inwood, and the Morgan County government complex on Mercer Street in Berkeley Springs.

People can gather acorns, hickory nuts and other tree seeds

on their own at their own pace and drop them off at these locations anytime through October 31. This is a good outdoor activity for families with small children, and it can be an interesting and instructive project for older children to undertake on their own.

Full instructions on procedures for gathering and dropping off seeds can be found on the Growing Native website at [www.growingnative.org](http://www.growingnative.org).

The Growing Native program is aimed at improving water quality in the Potomac River. The seeds collected through it are



donated to state tree nurseries where they are nurtured into small tree seedlings. The seedlings are then planted along streams and rivers in the Potomac watershed to help restore forests that filter pollution and run-off.

Since the program's inception in 2001, volunteers have collected more than 119,000 pounds of seeds and helped restore hardwood forests along nearly 800 miles of streamside land.

## Berkeley County Does It Right!

The Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority (BCSWA) has quite a few accomplishments... awards and citations from higher-ups, including the "The President's Volunteer Service Award," and designation of Recycling Champion by the Recycling Coalition of West Virginia. We love to see their recycling program set such high standards, and we would like to see all jurisdictions follow this sterling example. Here are the highlights:



- The development of the South Berkeley Recycling Center. The center is located in Inwood, Berkeley County. The center is a 10-acre site and was a former massive tire pile. The center now has approximately 30,000 recycling customers per year and is widely recognized as a community asset.
- Development of the plastic bottle recycling program for the county. This effort included the task of getting two entities to work in co-operation with the BCSWA to implement the program. The program has been in operation for eight years and has recycled over 325,000+ pounds of plastic bottles.
- Implementation of plastic bag recycling as a component to the county's recycling program. After years of prolonged delays and seemingly endless closed doors, the BCSWA and TREX Lumber implemented the acceptance of low density and high density polyethylene plastic bag recycling to the county's recycling arsenal.
- Yard waste recycling collection site. This effort was implemented at the Grapevine Road Recycling Center and continues today. This successful program has been expanded to now include the South Berkeley Recycling Center. This program has collected over 10,321+ tons of material and saved residents over \$430,000.00 in landfill costs alone.

Congratulations, BCSWA, and here's hoping others will follow you soon! For more information and schedules of upcoming events go to the BCSWA Web site at [www.berkeleycountycomm.org/services/recycling-plans.cfm](http://www.berkeleycountycomm.org/services/recycling-plans.cfm).

## Don't Miss October 3 Freedom's Run Event

The field for the October 3 Freedom's Run marathon from Harpers Ferry to Shepherdstown is full but there's still time to sign up for one of the other running events that will accompany this exciting, new October 3 event: a half-marathon, 5K and 10K runs, and a children's fun run.

You can also participate by walking, or volunteering for the event.

Proceeds will, in part, be used to match a potential Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant that will fund projects like natural trails and play spaces at local elementary schools in Jefferson County to encourage outdoor physical activity.

For more information, go to [www.FreedomsRun.org](http://www.FreedomsRun.org).



## Music in the Cedars

This year's "Music in the Cedars" continues to be a well-received and popular event. 25-45 audience members have enjoyed everything from "Second Wind Brass," a brass group made up of local community members, to singer/songwriter Todd Coyle, to the "toe-tappin' acoustical mayhem" of "The Outpatients." The event continues to be enjoyed by "regulars" who live in the neighboring community, but brings in some new faces each week as well. We'd like to thank the many musicians who have volunteered their time and talent to make this enjoyable community concert series possible: "The Outpatients;" Todd Coyle; Grigorio Lacerda and Josh Stella; "Second Wind Brass;" Betty Jo, Scott, and Gena Rockwell; and Steve Cifala.



Grigorio Lacerda and Josh Stella

## United Way Day of Caring Provides Facelift

About 85 volunteers showed up ready and willing to work at the Yankauer Nature Preserve at this year's Day of Caring. Groups included representatives from Berkeley County Health Department, the Office of Personnel Management at the Eastern Management Development Center, Master Gardeners, Potomac Valley Master Naturalists, Potomac Valley Audubon Society, USFWS National Conservation Training Center, Hedgesville High School's Student Government Association, Berkeley Co. Jr. Air Force ROTC, and community members "at large."

It was an enormously successful day. About 60 bags of stilt grass were removed and hauled away by Waste Management, the butterfly garden was weeded and the path mulched, the birding wayside was mulched and weeded, the parking lot was weeded and trimmed back to re-expose the fence and bumpers, autumn olive and some ailanthus were removed, and the pavilion area and path were weeded and trimmed back significantly.

Yankauer volunteers were rewarded with a delicious hot lunch of meatball sandwiches, black beans and rice, apples, salad, and delicious desserts, all provided by other generous and talented volunteers: Alice Barkus, Sue Kennedy, Wanda Miller, Diana Mullis, Ellen Murphy, and Jane Vanderhook.



*Hedgesville High Student Government Member Helps Out*

In Morgan County, Joe Gentile and Anne Larsen represented PVAS by helping at Morgan County Rehabilitation and Nursing Center where they painted a rocking chair and weeded a large flower garden much to the delight of the grateful residents and staff.

Many thanks to ALL who made the Day of Caring possible, from the United Way for sponsoring the event, to Tim Murphy for coordinating the Yankauer day, to Joe Gentile for coordinating PVAS' Morgan County efforts, and the many hands that made the day so productive. THANK YOU!

## The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

### New "Spooky Bird" Contest!

*Contest to help debunk myths about bird behavior*

Ithaca, NY--Halloween is just a few weeks away, so the latest environmental challenge from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [Celebrate Urban Birds](#) citizen-science project is taking an eerie approach. The contest is called "A Murder of Crows and Other Spooky Bird Tales" and is co-sponsored by the [Encyclopedia of Life](#) website.

"Believe it or not, a large group of crows is called a "murder," says project leader Karen



Purcell, "But there's nothing really scary about it. Crows are very intelligent, family-oriented birds. With this challenge, we really want to see what spooks people about birds. Then we can reveal what the behaviors are really all about. There's usually a perfectly natural, non-scary explanation!"



For the challenge, participants can take photos, do a painting, write a story or poem, even shoot a video showing birds doing something puzzling or strange to them. It may be a crow, starling, owl, pigeon, or any other type of bird.

"We've had two other environmental challenges so far this year and have received thousands of great entries," says project leader Karen Purcell. "It always amazes me how creative people are and how they've been able to incorporate the birds they find right in their neighborhoods."

**Prizes** include binoculars from Eagle Optics and Alpen, birdfeeders from YourBirdOasis.com, CDs, books, posters, and more. The first 50 entrants will receive a poster by Pedro Fernandez showing a variety of crow, jay, and other bird behaviors. Selected images and videos will be posted on the Celebrate Urban Birds website. The very best will be included in species accounts for the Encyclopedia of Life website.

#### How do you enter?

Email your entry to [urbanbirds@cornell.edu](mailto:urbanbirds@cornell.edu).

1. Write "AMOC\_YourFirstNameLastName\_state" in the subject line. (Use the two-letter abbreviation for the state in which the photo was taken.)
2. Include your name and mailing address in the body of the email.
3. Tell us **why** you submitted your entry to the Murder of Crows challenge. What's the story behind it?
4. If you are sending a visual image, attach it as a .jpg
5. One image per entry, please.
6. Read [terms of agreement](#).
7. If you agree to the terms, send us your entry before October 31!

#### Deadline for entries is **Halloween: October 31!**

Visit the [Celebrate Urban Birds](#) website for more information and to read the terms of agreement regarding all entries. A PDF flier about the contest is also attached to this news release.



**Contact:** Karen Purcell, Project Leader, (607) 254-2455, [urbanbirds@cornell.edu](mailto:urbanbirds@cornell.edu)

*Crow* art by Pedro Fernandez. *Long-eared Owl* by Ted Schroeder.

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Call us toll-free at (800) 843-BIRD (2473)

south of Berkeley Springs.

Many thanks are due to Judy Webb and Helen Herlocker for coordinating the festival, and to Judy's Nature Niche store for providing very generous financial support.

PVAS also thanks the other community supporters for their generosity: Berkeley Springs Cottage Rentals and Cowboy Cabin, the Country Inn, the Fairfax Coffee House, Jane McCloud, the Morgan Arts Council Ice House, Sleepy Creek Retreat and the Sleepy Creek Watershed Association.

## Invitation to Join Potomac Valley Nature Writing Group

You are invited to join the Potomac Valley Nature Writing Group. PVNWG is for any one who loves reading and writing about nature. PVNWG meets on the last Sunday of each month to discuss authors such as Rachel Carson, Terry Tempest Williams, and David Rains Wallace. We support and encourage one another in growing as author-naturalists. We also organize outings that relate to current "book of the month."

For details about the current reading selection, directions to the meeting, and links to member blogs, go to <http://potomacvalleynaturewritinggroup.blogspot.com/> or contact Sandra Bloom, [pvnaturewriters@gmail.com](mailto:pvnaturewriters@gmail.com)

### Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Sep 25: Potomac Valley Nature Photographers Meeting
- Sep 26: "Growing Native" seed-collection (Yankauer Preserve)
- Sep 27: Potomac Valley Nature Writers (Yankauer Preserve)
- Sep 29: "Music in the Cedars" Concert
- Oct. 3: Freedom's Run
- Oct 10-11: Berkeley Springs Apple Butter Festival
- Oct 14: PVAS program Backyard habitats
- Oct. 17: NCTC Open House
- Oct 23: Potomac Valley Nature Photographers Meeting
- Oct 23-25: Nature Photography Workshop at Cacapon State Park
- Oct 24: Fall bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Studies
- Oct 24: Second Annual Green Home Fundraising Event
- Oct. 25: Potomac Valley Nature Writing Group Meeting (site TBA)
- Oct 30-Nov 2: Field Trip - Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Nov 7: Eagle and hawk-watching trip
- Nov 11: PVAS program - Monarchs
- Nov 14-15: Master Naturalist Workshop - *Leave No Trace Trainer Course*
- Nov 27: Potomac Valley Nature Photographers Meeting

### 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 C9ZY540Z)

#### Clip and mail this form to:

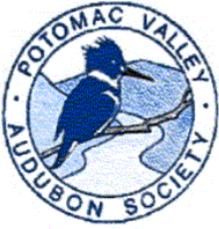
Membership Chair, PVAS  
 PO Box 578  
 Shepherdstown, WV 25443

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.



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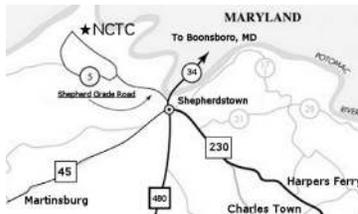
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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV, in the Instructional West Building. 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.

***PVAS Officers and Board Members***

- President: Peter Smith 304 876-1139 .....pvsmith@frontiernet.net
- Vice President: Nancy Kirschbaum ..... nancyk500@comcast.net
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***Emeritus Board Members***

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- Jean Neely .....jeaneely@comcast.net

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