



THE NATURALIST

*The monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter
Virginia Master Naturalist Program*

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 No. 3 March 2010

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Message from the president

Graduation Celebration and a Big Thank You!

Greetings Naturalists,

I am proud to announce that in just a few more days, we will graduate our fourth cohort of Historic Rivers Virginia Master Naturalists - and what a great group of folks they are! I hope everyone will attend the graduation celebration on Wednesday, March 10th, starting at 6 pm at the James City/Williamsburg Community Center.

Details of the event have been kept top secret! I understand there have been emails addressed to "undisclosed" recipients! Hmmmm..... All I know is ... our Host Committee seems to be very "UPbeat" about the celebration and has something very special planned.

What I can disclose is dinner will be potluck, with food provided by Cohorts I, II, and III. Members of Cohort IV are the guests of honor, so they will not need to prepare any of the dinner. If you have ever attended one of our potluck dinners, you know that we have some amazing cooks in our chapter, so the food will be delicious!

Our guest speaker for the celebration will be Dr. Randy Chambers, C.B. Talbot Professor of Biology, and Director of the Keck Environmental Lab at the College of William and Mary. Dr. Chamber's research interests include wet-

lands ecology and biogeochemistry. He will be speaking on issues related to watersheds and water quality.

After our speaker, we will hold our elections for the 2010 Board of Directors. We have a full slate of candidates. Several members of our newest Cohort have stepped up and volunteered to take on some key roles. Ted Sargent has agreed to take on the job of Vice President in charge of Programs. Patty Maloney and Louis Ullmann have volunteered to share the job of Secretary. Dean Shostak has agreed to be the new Field Trips coordinator, and is already hard at work investigating several exciting field trip opportunities.

Before we elect our new Board, I want to thank the members of the 2009 Board of Directors for all their hard work and dedication over the last year (and three extra months)! It was a great pleasure to work with all of you! Your leadership has helped our chapter flourish.

See you at the graduation celebration. As always, thanks so much for all you do!

Susan Powell, President
Historic Rivers Chapter
VA Master Naturalist Program

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Adrienne Frank, and Gary Driscole

Upcoming HRC Monthly Programs

March 10, 2010 (Wednesday): Graduation for Cohort IV and Annual Meeting, 6 – 9 pm at Williamsburg James City County Community Center, 5301 Longhill Road. Speaker will be Dr. Randy Chambers, C.B. Talbot Professor of Biology and Director, Keck Environmental Lab, College of William and Mary. His research focuses on wetlands ecology.

April 14, 2010 (Wednesday): “Sketching Nature” by our own Linda Miller, Volunteer in Cohort IV.

May 12, 2010 (Wednesday): “More about the Chesapeake Bay” by Jill Bieri, Owner, Chesapeake Experience.

Master Naturalists at Farmers Market: May 8

"That's right, you heard right, the secret word for tonight is mudshark. And with the mudshark secret word.....the mudshark arpeggio."
Oops -- channeling Frank Zappa again. Where was I?

Oh, yes! We have a date for Habitat Day at the Farmers Market in Williamsburg! Saturday, May 8, perfect for nice weather and talking about nature in our own yards, back and front. For those of you who have done this before, you know how much fun it is. Why, just seeing Sheila doing her Dora the Explorer impression was worth the price of admission last year!

Let me know via email if you want to be part of the fun, either for planning, preparation, execution, or all three.

No idea too strange!

Kathi Mestayer

kwren@widomaker.com

Kathi Mestayer

Notes from the Board

All meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members. Jeanette Navia reminds all to turn in their hours for 2009. You can't get certified unless you send in your hours!

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What to do on a snowy day?

Pull english ivy, of course! And here's a little seedling from the back yard, with a root that's about 18" long. Pretty impressive.

And dead.

Kathi Mestayer

Photo courtesy of Kathi Mestayer

Advanced Training Opportunities

Date	Title	Location	Time	Remarks/Contact
March				
6 Mar	At Water's Edge --VA's Wetland Habitats	University of Richmond	0900-1500	rccsca@comcast.net
7 Mar	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
13 Mar	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
13 Mar	HRBC Field Trip	Mathews County	0800-1200	Dave Youker
13-14 Mar	No Child Left On the Shore-York River sampling	Watermen's Museum		Michael Steen 757-887-2
21 Mar	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
25 Mar	Birds of Prey in the Bay	VIMS	1900	call 804-684-7846.
27 Mar	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
25 Mar	Tree Summit 2010	Washington DC	0800-1600	http://caseytrees.org/t
April				
4 Apr	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
10 Apr	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
10 Apr	HRBC Field Trip	Mathews County	0800-1200	Dave Youker
18 Apr	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
24 Apr	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan

April Monthly Meeting.....

Linda Miller

The act of observing and recording nature offers so much. It requires close attention. It improves drawing skills. It encourages the act of reflection. Keeping a nature or field journal is a powerful and wonderful tool to help us observe carefully and remember what we see. Many of us are uncomfortable drawing because we do not consider ourselves to be "artists". We all know how to write to handwrite, so the ability is there. In this workshop, Linda C. Miller of Cohort IV will provide directed and fun activities to help us focus our observations.

Please bring a pad of paper with about 10 sheets, a ballpoint pen, and a 2B pencil. Lined paper is just fine, if you don't have a sketch pad. Everyone will receive a kneaded eraser. Those wanting to buy materials, please consider *Walls Alive* in Williamsburg.

Advanced Training Opportunities with the Virginia Living Museum

Workshops

March 2, 2010

Virginia's Prehistoric Past

Discover how volcanic eruptions, ice ages and global warming sculpted the land features we know as Virginia today. Examine ancient fossils, rocks and minerals from the museum's collections to uncover clues that reveal Virginia's amazing and event-filled geologic history.

Presented by: Dan Summers, VLM School Education Curator

Ages 18+

Time: 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$5 Members; \$7 Non-Members. Active volunteers are free.

March 20, 2010

Ukrainian Egg (Pysanky) Workshop

The art of wax resist egg dyeing, called Pysanky in the Ukraine, is a tradition that dates back to primitive times. These intricately decorated eggs have long been given as special gifts. Learn the basics of making these special eggs creations from an expert and take home your own one-of-a-kind Pysanky in this very small group workshop. There is only room for eight people so call now to reserve a place.

Time: 9:30am-4 pm (1 hour for lunch - our Wild Side Café awaits)

Age: 13+ ; 10 - 13 with an adult.

Cost: \$85 Members; \$95 Non-Members

April 6, 2010

Virginia's Amphibians and Reptiles

Explore the part of the natural world that slithers, crawls, and hops. Take a close-up look at the anatomy and survival strategies. Meet some of the Museum's live animals.



Presented by: Betsy Wolin, VLM Education Associate

Ages 18+

Time: 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$5 Members; \$7 Non-Members. Active volunteers are free.

Safaris

March 20, 2010

Canoe Bennett's Creek

Activity Level 4

Out of North Carolina's Lassiter Swamp comes this wondrous, slow moving stream. Our canoes will take us through the domain of barred owls, herons, warblers, deer, and past the homes of many other southern wetland creatures.

Age: 18+ (9-17 with an adult)

Time: 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Cost: \$40 VLM members; \$60 non-members

April 10, 2010

NEW! National Zoo Kiwis

Activity Level 2

Come behind the scenes on a special guided tour of one of the National Zoo's most unusual animals, the Kiwi. There will be Kiwi feathers, eggs, x-rays, skeletons and more to look at and ask questions about. There will also be time to visit with some of the 400 species that live at the National Zoo.

Age: 18+ (8-17 with an adult)

Time: 7 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Cost: \$40 VLM members; \$60 non-member



Cohort IV Winter Botany Class

February 2010

Left to right: Renee Hirsch, Bruce Stewart (behind Renee), Rhonda DeChirico, Ted Sargent, Christina Woodson, Les Lawrence, Lois Ullman, Dean Shostak, Steven David, Don Shepler, Charlie Dubay, Hugh Beard.

Left to right: Les Lawrence, Ted Sargent, Don Shepler, Steven David at tree # 19 on the Winter Botany quiz.



Below: Renee Hirsch & Rhonda DeChirico



Photos courtesy Shirley Devan

Aristotle

Father of Zoology

By Dean Shostak

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. in Stagira, a small coastal town in Macedonia, now part of modern-day Greece. His mother, Phaestis, descended from an aristocratic family on the island of Euboea. Aristotle's father, Nicomachus, was a wealthy doctor who took Aristotle with him on his travels to treat the injured and sick. This is where Aristotle was first introduced to science, as it was understood in his time. Aristotle also began to study reading, writing and mathematics. It was expected that Aristotle would become a doctor because physicians were thought to be descendants of Asclepias, the god of healing. Nicomachus took Aristotle with him when he became the personal physician of King Amyntas II, ruler of Macedonia. This is when Aristotle became boyhood friends with Prince Philip, who would later have Aristotle tutor his son who became Alexander the Great.

Aristotle's career in medicine ended when Nicomachus and Phaestis died in 374 B.C., leaving Aristotle an orphan sent to live with his father's relative named Proxenus. During his teen years, Aristotle learned rhetoric, poetry, and music. When King Amyntas died during this time Macedonia entered into a period of civil war. Proxenus sent 17 year old Aristotle to Athens to continue his education at the Academy of Plato. Aristotle arrived in Athens in 367 B.C. and stayed at the Academy for 20 years, first as a student, then as a teacher. Aristotle and Plato became friends but there were differences in their philosophies and methods. Plato searched for perfection and did not believe truth could be found on Earth. Aristotle looked at real objects with real imperfections and asked why things were the way they were. Plato sought knowledge looking into the mind; Aristotle sought knowledge by observing the natural world. Aristotle perceived all matter to be a mixture of four basic elements: earth, water, fire and air. If these elements exist in their pure states then Earth would be at the middle of the Universe, with a layer of water around it. The next layer would be air, and finally fire. Aristotle also thought that there would be fifth and pure element called "ether" for the fixed stars in the heaven that did not mix with the other elements

At the age of 37, Aristotle left Athens to teach at a new Academy in Assus, now in modern day Turkey. He was supported by Hermias, who conquered that area and set up the city-state of Assus. This was an eventful year for Aristotle who married Hermias' niece Pythias, then 18. This same year Aristotle lost his mentor Plato. Aristotle wrote of his grief,

Who alone, or first among men revealed both in his way of life and in his formal teaching that to become good and to become happy are two sides of the same endeavor. Now, no man can ever win this praise again.

It was during this period that Aristotle began to observe and record the natural world around him. He traveled around Assus and also to the island of Lesbos to collect and examine animal and plants. This distinguished him from his colleagues who preferred to keep their hands clean, pondering the stars or the inner mind. Maybe because of his father's influence to work in the real world, Aristotle cut open and dissected many dead animals. He began to create theories for what he was seeing in nature, and then tested his ideas with observations. This became the foundation for the modern-day scientific method. He described over 500 species of animals, and interviewed travelers and fisherman to learn more, much like Darwin centuries later, who would write to collectors around the

world for specimen samples and observations. Aristotle wrote and lectured on most fields of his time, often quoting others works. But his work in biology was so different he felt the need to explain his effort,

If any person thinks the examination of the rest of the animal kingdom an unworthy task, he must hold in like disesteem the study of man. Let us not shrink like children from the investigation of the humbler creatures. In every natural object there is something to excite our admiration, ...So we, too, must take heart and approach the examination of every living creature without reluctance or disgust, for in everything is some part of nature, some element of beauty.

From his work during his time Aristotle created four of his most famous books: *On the Parts of Animals*, *The History of Animals*, *On Motion in Animals*, and *On the Generation of Animals*. He separated animals into "blooded" and "bloodless." Bloodless animals were the invertebrates. He further divided bloodless animals into four main groups: soft outside (octopus), hard outside that can be crushed (crayfish), hard outside that must be shattered (snail), and lastly insects. Blooded animals were divided into man, birds, quadrupeds with live birth, quadrupeds with eggs, fish that gave live birth (dolphins), and fish that lay eggs.

Not only was Aristotle interested in the physiology of animals, but also their behaviors and habitat. More philosophically, he wrote about nature's "intention." For example, if you plant a pumpkin seed you will get a pumpkin plant. If you burn the seed, you destroy its structure, and its intention. Not all of his observations were accurate, but considering the lack of any scientific equipment, his knowledge of the animal kingdom was truly amazing.

In 344 B.C. Aristotle was invited by now King Philip, who he was friends with in childhood, to come to Pella in Macedonia and tutor 13 year-old Alexander. Aristotle spent 3 years with Alexander, until the young warrior went off to fight against the combined armies of Thebes and Athens. In 335 B.C., at age 20, Alexander became king when his father King Philip was murdered. It was this year that Aristotle returned to Athens, now under Macedonian rule, not to return to the Academy, but to start his own school. Since Aristotle was not a citizen, he could not own land in Athens. His closest friend was Antipater, whom Alexander left in charge of all of Greece. Antipater helped Aristotle secure a location just outside the city in a grove of trees near the temple to Apollo Lyceus, the wolf god. Aristotle's school became known as the Lyceum. He would give his lectures in the walkways of the temple, which gave the school the nickname, the Peripatetic School. What remains of Aristotle's work are in the form of lecture notes on the widely various subjects he taught. Aristotle also collected and displayed living specimens in his Lyceum. Alexander sent samples of animals, plants, and rocks from the distant lands that he conquered. The Lyceum is believed to be the first zoo and museum.

After the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. Athens rebelled against the Macedonians in the city. The same charges of heresy that cost Socrates his life were made against Aristotle. Fearing history would repeat itself, Aristotle fled to Euboea, his mother's birthplace. Aristotle's health broke down, and in 322 B.C. at age 62 he died of a fever. He left a will that has survived that revealed a great deal about his generous character.

The content of Aristotle's works survives in original form (rarely), and in the quoted writings of ancient scholars of the time quoting passages from Aristotle. When Athens fell to Rome in 84 B.C. Aristotle's scrolls were taken to Rome and read by Cicero, who spread the teachings of Aristotle. What we have as Aristotle's works today are from Roman scholars around 40 B.C. Aristotle's influence was dominant in scientific thinking from about 100 A.D. until 1870. It wasn't until the 18th century Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus introduced the binomial system we use today.

Linnaeus and Cuvier have been my two gods, though in very different ways, but they were mere schoolboys to old Aristotle. -- Charles Darwin

Anderson, Margaret J., and Karen F. Stephenson. *Great Minds of Science, Aristotle, and Scientist*. Berkeley Heights: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2004. *Philosopher*

Cooper, Sharon Katz. *Aristotle, Philosopher, Teacher, and Scientist*. Minneapolis: Compass Point Books, 2007. *Compass Point*

Barnes, Jonathan. *Aristotle, A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. *Press, 2000.*

McKeon, Richard, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. New York: Random House, 1941.

Kenny, Anthony, ed. *The Oxford History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. *University*

Honderich, Ted, ed. *The Philosophers, Introducing Great Western Thinkers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. *University Press, 1995.*

Save the Date for New Quarter Park!

From Sara Lewis

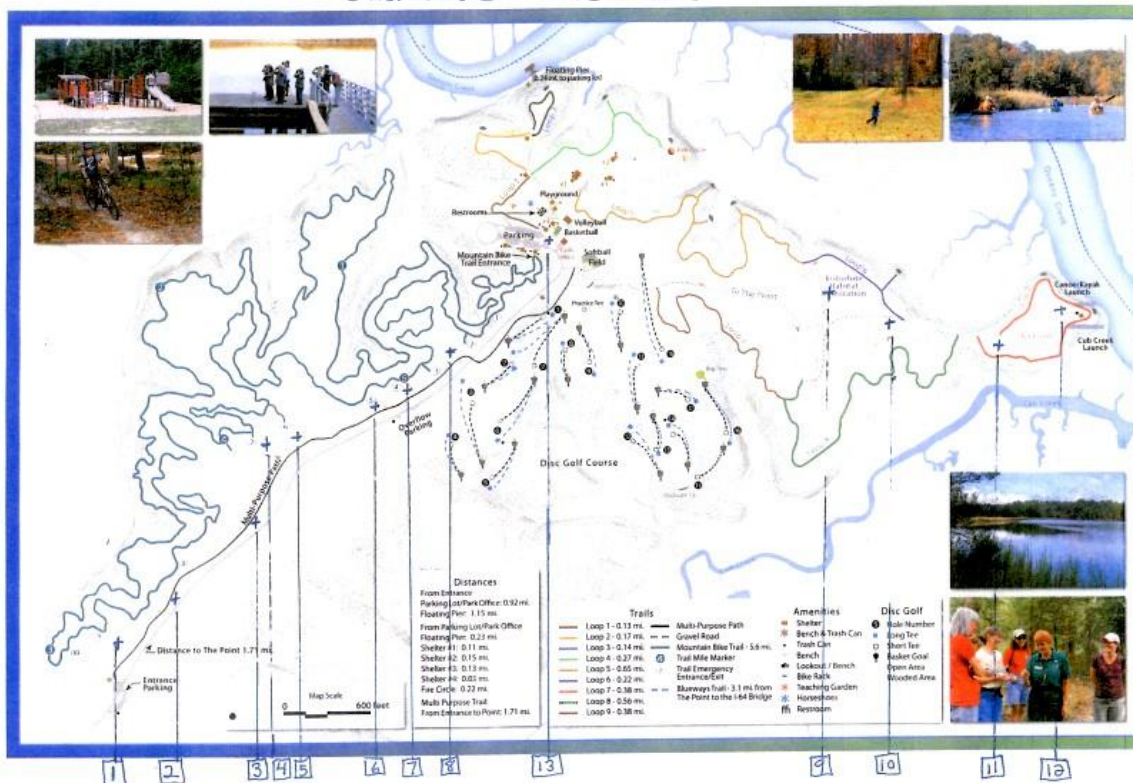
Pitch in and earn volunteer hours by helping with ongoing projects at New Quarter Park .

Mark your calendar now for the May 1 Bobwhite Habitat Restoration workday! This will be an all-hands-on-deck day to plant natives to be donated by Cynthia Long, pull up clumps of fescue, and otherwise tidy up the place so that Quail will come to roost this spring. The Historic Rivers Master Naturalists are working on this project in partnership with the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Williamsburg Bird Club. The workday will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude when we're finished or get too hungry or tired to stay any longer or whichever comes first. Any and all volunteer time is greatly appreciated. Bring gloves, rakes, and other garden tools you like to use.

Mark your calendar for the fourth Saturday of each month from 9:30 to 11:30 (right after the 7 to 9 a.m. Bird Walk) to help with Teaching Garden planting and maintenance. Ken Thompson has had to suspend his training due to a new job, but Jeanne Millin and I will be heading up the effort. (Psst! Ken will be there too, but he's just not our "official" leader now.) Again, bring your gloves and garden tools, and please bring native plants or seeds. We're also looking for some native shrubs to plant in a "false" access path that dog walkers are using to subvert the pet cleanup message and Mutt Mitt station! Any understory trees (like dogwood and holly) or shrubs (like wax myrtle or anything with unpleasant stickers!) will be appreciated.

Finally, get more information about adopting a bluebird box at the park elsewhere in this newsletter. Don't forget that most of our Walk & Talk programs count for Advanced Training hours. Double check with Dave Youker if you have questions. The March Walk & Talk program will be lead by Dave Ruble, environmental educator with the DEQ. His topic will be calculating your environmental footprint. I hope you can make it to the park to meet and hear from this special guest.

Birdhouse Locations



Adopt-A-Bluebird-Box at New Quarter Park by Sara Lewis

After more than a decade of maintaining the Bluebird Boxes at New Quarter Park, our good friend Greg Millsagle, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited at Kiln Creek, has moved to another place in the far end of York County, so has resigned as volunteer-in-chief of our Bluebird Trail. I am reaching out to you and others to help New Quarter Park carry on this noble project.

To encourage volunteers to help out in a manner that's not too overwhelming, we are breaking up the task and launching it as an Adopt-A-Bluebird-Box program where you or you and a group of friends can adopt one or more boxes to watch and maintain.

Your volunteer effort can be minimal or a lot more. It's up to you. Just visit your box once a week to once a month to be sure it's in good repair. Or watch it a little bit more often and tell us when birds are using it. Take photos, watch birds fledge, borrow a ladder from the office and look inside every now and then to estimate how many clutches and how many baby bluebirds fledged. Send your photos and information to me so that I can post it on the NQP Facebook page or submit it as a York County press release. If you'd like to present a program on bluebirds, I'll help you plan, publicize, and execute!

I've submitted the paperwork to have this approved as a project for which you can log volunteer hours. Here's the project description as I submitted it:

Adopt a bluebird box at NQP. Coordinate choice of box with Sara Lewis. Monitor the bluebird box once a week to (at least) once a month. Inspect box for damage or vandalism and report problems to NQP office staff or Sara Lewis. Watch for bluebird activity. At least once during the season, take a ladder to the box and look in for nesting activity, abandonment, occupation by other animals, etc. Report issues to Sara Lewis. If watching closely and know that fledging has occurred, clean old nest out of box and watch for second and possible third clutch to be laid. At the end of the season, report the estimated number of birds that have fledged from the box.

Additional although not required activities include photographing the season and writing a report for the HR-VMN Chapter newsletter or coordinating and conducting an educational program for children and/or adults about bluebirds.

So, would you like to Adopt-A Bluebird-Box? See the photo for box locations and numbers. So far, BBB#1 has been adopted by Dean Shostak, BBB#7 by Gary Hammer, BBB#8 by Jeanette Navia, BBB#12 by Ted Sargent, and I have adopted BBB#13. Eight boxes are available for adoption! Won't you help? I look forward to hearing from you.

Digging in the Dirt (or how to chase those winter blues away)

By Alice Kopinitz

Old man winter just didn't seem to want to leave. Snow, snow, and more snow. Finally, the forecast predicted our temperature should rise to 50 degrees. That sounded pretty good and so it was time for a ROAD TRIP.

Felice Bond wanted to head to Aurora, North Carolina and play in the fossil dirt. That sounded like fun. Felice, Seig and I left Williamsburg about 6:30 am heading south. We were in Felice's new car and had lots of room for all our "stuff".

The museum was not open until March 1 (so we thought), there are no eating-places in Aurora (so we thought), but we were prepared! We had lunches packed – it is always important to be well nourished. We had digging tools, sifters, buckets – we were ready to attack any deposits of fossil dirt. We had a change of shoes and additional clothes – it could be wet and muddy. We had an assortment of plastic bags in which to bring home our loot – who knew what treasures might be waiting for us.

As we approached our destination, we began looking for piles of fossil dirt that the phosphate mine delivers for fossil hunters to sift and dig through. We spied a pile off to one side of a small park. And look, there's another pile closer to the building. Let's go see what we can find. Yes, there they were. Fossils – just laying there waiting for us to discover them.

After about 2 hours, we were getting hungry and thought we should head for our destination. We got to Aurora about 12:30, and noted the sign on the museum said "OPEN". We did a quick walk through. There are some really great exhibits, but our stomachs were complaining. (We were told that there was a lunch place in town, but we had our picnic.) The folks invited us to use their picnic facilities across the street. We did and then played in the big sandbox across the street from the museum and another small pile near the library.

After digging, we again visited the museum, made some purchases, and got some information about our finds. We found the folks very knowledgeable about our fossils.

I wish we could have spent more time in the museum, but we did have a long ride home and it was getting close to closing time. We stopped for a delicious meal in Washington, N.C. and arrived home about 10:00 pm. It was a wonderful day and the perfect cure for winter doldrums.

Take a look at some of our finds of the day - tiger shark, mako, sand tiger, snaggletooth. Don't you want to go on a fossil hunt?



Photos Courtesy of Felice Bond and Seig Kopinitz

PRODUCT REVIEW

Digital Blue QX5 Computer Microscope

I must admit before I go any further, I love toys. High-tech, low-tech, it doesn't matter, I love them all. So I thought I could contribute, on occasion, about toys that I love as a VMN. My first entry is the Digital Blue QX5 Computer Microscope. Seven years ago, I picked one up in the discount bin at Toys-R-Us for my daughter (then only 3) who always had her pockets stuffed with "treasures" she found during the day. I really did not have high expectations for it at \$29.99 on sale. I was, and still am amazed by what this microscope can do.

The QX5 is so simple but it does so much. There is no power cord, just plug it in via USB after you load the software onto your PC (Mac users see below). Once you choose your magnification 10X, 60X, and 200X, and focus the microscope like you did in lab class, everything else is done on the computer. From the super-easy-to-use computer program you can illuminate from above or below and change the intensity. You can take pictures and video-yes video. You can add text to your images, and save as many as you like. You can export the files for e-mail or post them on the web. One of my favorite features of the microscope is that you can go "hand-held" by lifting the top of it out and holding the whole thing over what you are trying to see that is too big to get on the tray. (This has been very useful for getting splinters out of fingers). Over the years we have looked at all manner of insects, feathers, rocks, skins, hairs, leaves, etc. For my family, it has been invaluable in discovering the natural world around us. I can tell

you as a scientist, there have been many times I have been in the lab with microscopes provided (even in the training we have had for Cohort IV) and I really wished I had my QX5 to see something more clearly, and take a picture of it.

At the time of this writing, the cost is about \$100.00 and they are currently available online at www.compuvisor.com. I talked to Digital Blue today at www.digiblue.com and they said they will have more in the next couple weeks, and it is a current item for them. There are also others on eBay for sale (new or used). They are so well made I would not hesitate to buy a used one in good condition, if it has the software disc. For Mac users there is a third party company at www.edhsw.com that has made software so you can do this on your Mac.

I know this sounds like a glowing review, and it is. To be fair, if there is a downside to it, it would be spending \$100.00 on a computer microscope. But if ours ever does go someday, I can guarantee you we will get another one, even if the price has doubled.

Dean Shostak

Cohort IV

**2010 Virginia Society of Ornithology
Outer Banks Field Trip**

Photo Courtesy of Linda Miller





Winter Hours

Friday, 10 a.m. to Dusk

Saturday & Sunday, 8 a.m. to Dusk

March 2010

3 - EVMA Night Ride, 6 pm.

6 - Walk & Talk with Dave Ruble of the Virginia DEQ, 10 a.m.-Noon. Learn about our Environmental Footprint.

10 - EVMA Night Ride, 6 pm.

13 - WBC Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

20 - Bark for Life, (Relay for Life Dog Walk) Robyn Sulanowski, RSulanowski@aol.com

20 - NASA Skywatchers Stargazing Nite, see the Moon, Mars, & Saturn, 8-10 p.m.

27 - WBC Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

27 - Master Naturalists Teaching Garden Workday, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact Ken Thompson at KenThompson2003@hotmail.com.

27 - Endometriosis Awareness Walk, 10 a.m. Suzanne Phillips at 804-832-2083 or Suzanne_Phillipsoilandgas@yahoo.com.

28 - **Cabin Fever Sunday**,
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Directions

- Exit Col Pkwy at Queen's Lake, turn right. Turn on Lakeshead Dr. (Look for sign.)
- From Peninsula: Exit I-64 at Rt. 199 toward Jamestown. Exit Rt. 143W. Right on Penniman Rd., left on Hubbard Ln. Right on Lakeshead Rd., follow to Park.



Upcoming Events

April 2010

3 - EVMA Group Ride & Meeting, 9 a.m.

3 - Walk & Talk: Rusty Blackbird Research & Spring Migration, Andy McGann, W&M Bio Dept Grad Student, 10 a.m.-Noon.

4 - Easter Sunrise Service, Fire Circle led by New Quarter Baptist Church. All welcome.

10 - WBC Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

17 - BYOK! 9 a.m.-noon

24 - WBC Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

24 - Master Naturalists Teaching Garden Workday, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

24 - Bark in the Park, Heritage Humane Society



Come to Cabin Fever Sunday on March 28!

9 a.m. - Canoe/Kayak Race on Queens Creek

10 a.m.-1 p.m. - Visit Outdoor Club Exhibits

11 a.m. - Zumba on the Basketball Court

11 a.m. - Solar Viewing with NASA Skywatchers on the Softball Field



Reserve Shelter & Fire Circle: \$50 & \$25; Call 890-3513
Disc Golf: Daily \$3, Annual \$25; Sales & Rentals

More Information at: www.meetup.com/NewQuarterPark & www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec
New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., 757-890-5840 (Friday-Sunday) . York Co Parks & Rec, 757-890-3500 (Monday-Friday)



2010 Virginia Society of Ornithology Outer Banks Field Trip—attended by Cohort IV members Linda and Jeff Miller



Photos taken at Oregon Inlet, Pea Island Wildlife Refuge South Pond, Bodie Island and the Alligator River State Park
Courtesy of Linda Miller



Cultivars and the Food Web

In response to a series of VNPS emails on the subject of a Tech/Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA) initiative on developing native plant cultivars, I wrote to Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home* and professor at University of Delaware. The proposed criteria for consideration of cultivars was/is:

1. They should be plants that are not restricted to growing in narrow environmental conditions or geographic areas
2. They should be plants that "present" well--so they catch the eye of the consumer
3. They should not be too "tricky" to grow
4. They should grow well in containers
5. They will be grown for gardening, not for restoration projects in the wild.

I posed the following question to Dr. Tallamy in an email:

"I have suggested that the plant's function in an ecosystem/food web should be added as a criterion. In addition, is there any way to make an educated guess about what cultivars would be most beneficial? I note in your book that you mention avoiding making berries bigger (so that birds can still eat them), but wonder if anything else is worth considering. - Kathi"

Here's his reply, verbatim:

"Good questions. Most often we play with flower color or shape when developing a cultivar. That typically messes up our pollinators, but may not impact leaf feeders at all. Changing leaf color (green to purple, or variegated, for example) will certainly change the leaf chemistry, which is a no no from the food web perspective. Breeders should remember that the primary benefit native plants have over non-natives is their contribution to food webs. So don't mess with that. I can tell you that every place I go people are asking how to get more straight species into the market. They don't want cultivars!"

So, there it is. Some guidance and principles (flower shape, leaf, color/chemistry) that will impact cultivars' ability to function in the food web. In summary, I have to ask why they criteria proposed for the project include "5. They will be grown for gardening, not for restoration projects in the wild." Are these mutually exclusive? Not in my yard.

> Kathi Mestayer

Williamsburg Parks & Recreation Department
Waller Mill Park
Art in the Park
 Instruction By: Linda C. Miller, Naturalist
<http://lindacmiller.blogspot.com>



Three Day Workshop: April 17, May 1 and 8



The act of observing and recording nature offers so much. It requires close attention, improves drawing skills and it encourages the act of reflection. Keeping a nature or field journal is a powerful and wonderful tool to help us observe carefully and remember what we see. You will learn sketching and drawing techniques in a class room setting, then actually be "in the field" and explore Waller Mill Park. Students will work at their own pace while Linda "visits" for individual instruction. All levels: Beginner to Advanced.

Adult Workshop:

Workshop Limit: Minimum of 5 students / Maximum of 15 students
 Intended for ages 18 & older
 Children 12 years old and older may participate with enrolled adult
Fee: \$75 per student / 3-day workshop
Register By: April 14, 2010 **NO REFUNDS**
 Register in person at Waller Mill Park or by phone (757) 259-3778

Workshop Date #1: Classroom Instruction

Date: Saturday, April 17
Location: Quarterpath Recreation Center
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Lunch: 12:30p.m. to 1:15 p.m. *Room available for bag lunch

Workshop Date #2: Field Sketching

Date: Saturday, May 1
Location: Waller Mill Park - Shelter #4
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Lunch: 12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. *Pavilion available for bag lunch

Workshop Date #3: Field Sketching

Date: Saturday, May 8
Location: Waller Mill Park - Shelter #3
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Lunch: 12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. *Pavilion available for bag lunch

Material List:

All workshops:

- Sketching paper or spiral journal with blank pages appropriate for pencil or watercolor.
- Pencils with lead type 2B, H minimum and kneaded eraser.
- Materials may be purchased locally at Walls Alive.

Optional:

- Watercolor pencils, watercolor paints, colored pencils. No oils or pastels.

Field Sketching:

- Comfortable chair or stool
- Sun protection
- Insect repellent
- Camera, binoculars or magnifying glass
- Your favorite field guides

Comforts:

- Bring water, snack and lunch

First Annual William and Mary No Ivy Day

On Sunday, Feb 28, we had the First Annual William and Mary No Ivy Day! About 25 students showed up, along with two staff members and Dorothy Geyer (NPS) and we tore into an ivy patch on the ground and rescued half a dozen trees, some with really gnarly vine infestations. We also tried to remove ivy from the ground around the trees to slow down its return. The students were organized through the Office of Community Engagement and Scholarship (OCES), and our contacts were Joe Hayes, student Mover and Shaker, and Allison Anoll, a staff coordinator at OCES.

Following a couple of solid hours of digging, cutting, pulling, raking and generally causing english ivy serious hardship, the students met indoors and shared their observations. Here are my notes (from memory) of the group's comments (paraphrased):

It was fun to dig in the dirt!

Now I think differently about my family's ivy-covered yard.

It was interesting to think about habitat and biodiversity.

Now, I'm wondering if it was such a good idea to bring a plant home from an international trip and plant it in the yard.

It's interesting to think about how the "big" national parks (Yellowstone, etc.) and the habitat right here on campus are connected.

We really made an impact in a short period of time.

It's fun to stay on campus and do a service event; we usually go someplace else.

Can we do it again next week?

Here' my favorite shot of a "trophy root," wrested free by the three students you see holding it. We discovered, on a slope behind them, an english ivy "shrub" that must've been, oh, I don't know, older than Jamestowne. It had branches 3" in diameter, multiple root masses, and the leaf formation that denotes a mature ivy plant, along with fruit. And it was only 4' tall. Pretty scary. The tree behind them in the photo was also subject to "De-Vine Intervention.

Many, many thanks to the students, staff, and especially to Dorothy, without whom this would've been possible, but not nearly as successful and fun.

—Kathi Mestayer



A History of Botanical Art Lecture

Tuesday, March 16, 2010

The Williamsburg Regional Library

TIME: EVENING

515 Scotland Street,

Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

757.259.4040

www.wrl.org

Learn about the *History of Botanical Art*, starting with the first prehistoric drawings found in caves, to how the first printed books depicted amazing illustrations of herbals found in 15th century medicinal gardens that changed the world, and how today's contemporary artists are painting and exhibiting new works to help educate the public about our native endangered plants and pollinators.

American Society of Botanical Artists lecture, presented by ASBA members Juliet Kirby and Linda C. Miller of Williamsburg.



ZOO OPPORTUNITIES



Here is an unique opportunity to earn service hours towards your yearly 40 hr requirement for accreditation by working in the environment of one of the most beautiful elementary "green" schools around and to interact with courteous and bright children. It is a joy to see them become filled with excitement over the Zoo and to teach them about stewardship and our natural world. You will leave this experience saying to yourself "This is what my training as a Master Naturalist is all about"!

The Zoo has been invited to Poquoson Elementary on the following days:



Thur-Mar 4 12:45 to 3:00

Fri - Mar 5 12:55 - 3:00

Mon - Mar 8 12:55 - 3:00

Fri - Mar 12 12:55 - 3:00

Tues - Mar 16 1:00 3:00

Fri- Mar 19 12:00 - 2:00

Each presentation involves two back to back classes of 25 children each. You earn 2.5 hrs of service time for each day plus credit for your travel time towards your lifetime hrs.

Each day will require two VMN to handle the animals (in containers) and answer questions. Please consider volunteering , the children are looking forward to seeing you.

Clyde