

The Naturalist

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FROM THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER
VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

Virginia
Master
Naturalist



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The President's Message

By Adrienne Frank

On January 10th, several members of HRC participated in two back-to-back meetings sponsored by James City County: The Clean County Commission and Keep JCC Beautiful. These are volunteer and staff groups that help to engage in community-based projects related to litter prevention, recycling education, and beautification. Since as Master Naturalists we are stewards, learning about and participating in these efforts is exciting and needed.

The Clean County Commission was established in 1979, as a coalition of local volunteers appointed by the Board of Supervisors. They are dedicated to promoting recycling, litter control, environmental education and beautification projects. The Clean County Commission meets every month on the first Thursday 5:30-7:00 p.m.

In 2017, JCC became an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, and created the Keep

JCC Beautiful initiative, in association with the Clean County Commission. A small committee from our chapter has joined with KJCCB volunteers and staff to identify a site and plant a demonstration wildflower meadow. Our Annual Report provided a summary of our work planting wildflowers at the entrance to Freedom Park and the beginning of a new wildflower garden at Warhill Sports Complex. In our Annual Report to the VMN State Office, we highlighted our work with KJCCB (see content below).

Another off shoot of partnering with JCC is participation in the Virginia Adopt-a-Park program. The Adopt-a-Park program is a new initiative from the Virginia Department of Transportation State Adopt-a-Highway program. Thanks to our champion, Connie Reitz, for adopting the Powhatan Creek Park and Blueway as the first litter clean up site for our chapter.

This year, the Clean Commission volunteers will be out at a number of JCC Parks & Recreation Events talking about litter, recycling, and other topics. See calendar of events on explorejccva.com/calendar.aspx?CID=26. Our chapter's Outreach Chairs already have some of those same JCC events on our Volunteer Service Calendar. One example is on April 13, 2019 there will be a county-wide Clean-up Day. After the clean up, the commission will sponsor a picnic to thank volunteers. We'll need your help for this litter pick-up day!

Our Outreach team typically coordinates our participation at several JCC events, providing information about our chapter and conducting educational activities with children and adults. In June, the team may want to join in and have an activity at the Neighborhood Block Party at the Abram Frink Community Center.

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HRC Litter Baggers at Commerce Park, part of a group dedicated to keeping James City County Beautiful. Photo by Shirley Devan

Events like this may help our chapter to reach out to a greater diversity of local residents.

Here are some terms and activities you may already know:

Zero Tolerance for Litter Policy (JCC passed June 12, 2018) A handout is available that includes the resolution and litter guidelines.

askhrgreen.org A website for keeping a cleaner, greener Hampton Roads with ideas about clean communities, waterways, green education, recycling, landscaping, and more. It gives advice about actions that individuals and ways that groups of all types can get involved.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle The Clean County Commission provides education about best how to reduce, reuse, and recycle. They support activities such as

an Annual Litter and Recycling Expo, and it gives out awards to Clean Businesses.

JCC supports a number of campaigns that strive to reuse, reduce, and recycle, including:

James City County Parks & Recreation Bottles in Blue Campaign

Recycle Rangers Campaign

Monitoring of Illegal Dumpsites Campaign

Reducing Straw Pollution Campaign

Litter Hotline Campaign, and more

Dawn Oleksy is the staff liaison to both the Clean Commission and KJCCB, and she has a tremendous amount of information about what our community and individuals can do to make our quality of life better. I am hoping to have Dawn come and present information at one of our General Meetings.



Chapter Board

Chapter Advisor	John Gresham
President	Adrienne Frank
Vice President, Programs	Linda Morse
Co-recording Secretaries	Sue Mutell, Connie Reitz
Treasurer	Barbara Neis
Membership	Renee Dallman
Volunteer Service Projects	Shirley Devan
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Basic Training	David Lunt, Janet Harper
Past President	Judy Jones
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Education & Outreach	Sherry Brubaker, Karen Grass
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Field Trip Coordinators	Maud Ann Wilson, Barb Bucklin
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Webmaster	Jeanette Navia
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Liaison to the State	Susan Powell



Witness Tree Photo by Judy Jones
(Legend has it that Pocahontas canoed by this tree)

A Letter from the Boss, Michele Prisby

Dear VMN Historic Rivers Chapter Board Members

Thank you so much for your 2018 annual report. It was extremely thorough; I felt that I got an in-depth understanding of all the projects you described. That's so helpful as Tiffany, Terri, and I use these reports to help tell the great stories of the impacts VMN volunteers are having in Virginia. I also like to use the report as a springboard for continuing dialogue about how things are going in your chapter. I've copied the current list of board members that we have, but please share this communication with any other chapter members who you believe should be included.

You all continue to be doing excellent work in your community that is clearly making a difference for natural resource conservation and education. The Eastern Meadowlark projects demonstrates well how a citizen science project can result in conservation outcomes (in this case, improvements in the mowing schedule for the habitat), especially when the volunteers are in communication with the land managers. And, your bat and butterfly projects both show how citizen science and environmental education can be woven together. I also commend you on achieving your goal to increase your stewardship activities. I think it is great to have those opportunities in the project mix in order to appeal to volunteers with different interests and to make a visible difference in your community. Nice work, everyone!

As in past years, I have taken the numbers and stories from your chapter's annual report and made them into an infographic. You can use this infographic on social media, share it with your partners and community leaders, and circulate it to your chapter members. I've attached it as a PNG image and a one-page PDF document, and you can also find an online version at create.piktochart.com/output/35486949-historic-rivers-2018-infographic. Please let me know if you need it in any other format.

Thank you for all you do, especially serving in leadership roles. All of the volunteers and your chapter as a group continue to be so impressive! Please let me know how we can best support you in your endeavors.

**Keep on volunteering!
Michelle**

"Keep James City County Beautiful" "Team Up 2 Clean Up" (AKA HRC Project S2e)

By Shirley Devan

One of our Chapter's goals for the past two years has been to increase the number of stewardship hours. Towards that end, in early 2018 Historic Rivers Chapter partnered with local James City County's "Keep James City County Beautiful" (KJCCB) effort to help make James City County more attractive and "wildlife friendly" by beautifying roadsides and other public areas and by picking up litter. Web site: jamescitycountyva.gov/3577/Keep-James-City-County-Beautiful

The Chapter's primary contact at the County for this project was Dawn Oleksy, James City County's Environmental Sustainability Coordinator. The Chapter's Project Champion was Shirley Devan.

The Chapter worked with the County on two aspects of their "Keep James City County Beautiful" Campaign:

- "Wildflower Beautification Campaign"
- "Team Up 2 Clean Up" — Litter cleanup in support of the "Zero Tolerance for Litter Resolution" passed by the local Board of Supervisors in June 2018.

These two KJCCB efforts actually ended up being a cooperative project with JCC Parks and Recreation, the JCC General Services Landscape Team, and the JCC Planning Department.

WILDFLOWER BEAUTIFICATION CAMPAIGN

To support the campaign, the Chapter worked with James City County Parks and Recreation as well as the County's General Services Landscape Staff to target a high-visibility area to create a quick visual impact with colorful, pollinator-friendly native plants.

For the pilot project, the group agreed to plant the median and north side of the entrance to Freedom Park in the spring so that visitors would enjoy the color and the pollinators in summer. Historic Rivers Chapter, with advice from member Bill Vanzetta and county staff, purchased a seed mix and the county staff prepped and amended the soil in March. On April 11, Scott Brandt of James City County Landscape Team met with HRC members Bill Vanzetta, Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscole, and Shirley Devan to spread the wildflower and pollinator plant seeds in the two areas at the entrance to Freedom Park.

Shirley sent photos of butterflies she made who were attracted to the flowers at the entrance to Freedom Park over the summer. "These photos really are beautiful," said Ms. Oleksy. "My boss, Grace Boone, asked if we could get the higher resolution versions and have them made into prints for our office walls."

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**Eastern Swallowtail Dark Morph
at Freedom Park entrance**

Photo by Shirley Devan

PART 2, THE WILDFLOWER BEAUTIFICATION CAMPAIGN

KJCCB embarked on a second pilot project to create a wildflower garden to help reduce soil erosion, provide for pollinators, reduce mowing, and add to the beautification of an area that receives a lot of visitors.

In late summer, Historic Rivers Chapter, again joined forces with the KJCCB, the VA Native Plant Society, local garden clubs, James City County Parks and Recreation, Planning Department, and Landscape services, to choose a “high impact” area.

After considering several spots, the group chose an embankment at the Warhill Sports Complex near Wanner Stadium. This 9500 square foot area is visible from the soccer fields below the embankment. In September, County staff removed grass, added amendments to the soil, and prepared the area for the seeds.

A small committee of volunteers helped to choose the types of seeds and the Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists supported the purchase.

Early in October JCC Grounds staff spread the seed mix at Warhill Sports Complex. Examples of wildflowers include Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Weed, Coreopsis, Wild Bergamot, Coneflower, Aster, and others.

In spring 2019 this high traffic area near ball fields will be alive with colorful, low maintenance wildflowers attracting pollinators, butterflies, and wildlife and deterring littering.

TEAM UP 2 CLEAN UP

The second part of our Chapter’s support of “Keep James City County Beautiful” Campaign was the “Team Up 2 Clean Up” effort to support the County’s “Zero Tolerance for Litter” policy passed by the County Board of Supervisors in June 2018.

As part of this campaign, Chapter volunteers signed up to participate in the 40th Annual Countywide Spring Cleanup in mid-April, coordinated with the Clean County Commission.

James City County cited several reasons for its emphasis on litter cleanup:

- A lot of litter moves into our streams, rivers, and eventually to the Bay
- Litter spoils the areas where we live and the open spaces we play in.
- Car batteries, tires, creosote pilings, etc., contaminate drinking water.
- Wildlife often mistake litter for food or prey.
- Litter is often an indicator of more major pollution issues.
- Studies have shown clear links between litter and crime rates. When an area is poorly maintained, criminal behavior often follows. On the flipside, litter-free environments are typically safer, and people tend to litter less in clean areas.
- Litter takes several decades to biodegrade.

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Hart Haynes, Les Lawrence, Judy Jones, Ginny Carey, Jennifer Trevino, Nancy Barnhart, Jan Lockwood, Sharon Plocher

Photo by Shirley Devan

Our Chapter embraced this stewardship project to reduce impact of litter on wildlife and to reduce runoff and the impact of litter on our waterways, among other reasons.

For the 40th Annual Spring Cleanup, James City Clean County Commission provided trash bags in advance and a location for free return of filled trash bags—Jolly Pond Transfer Station located at 1204 Jolly Pond Road.

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The County asked our Chapter to pick up litter in three locations. The Chapter project champion chose the dates:

- **April 13 & 16, 2018:** James River Commerce Park eight volunteers on April 13; nine volunteers April 16; Total hours = 35
- **April 18, 2018:** Centerville Road from Freedom Park to Jolly Pond Road, nine volunteers; Total hours = 20 hours
- **April 20, 2018:** Longhill Road from Freedom Park to Longhill Swamp bridge nine volunteers; Total hours = 19

Volunteers accumulated 60 bags of refuse plus larger items (sofa, basketball backboard, car parts) retrieved by the County's Solid Waste collection truck.

The HRC recorded 159 stewardship hours on this project.

"Once again, THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU! You all truly earned a gold star for all of your efforts. We are so grateful for your partnership," said Ms. Oleksy from the county.

Peg Boarman, Chair of the Clean County Commission told Shirley, "Thank you all for the splendid work you all accomplished for the Spring Clean Up. Yours was quite a task to be challenged with. I am most grateful and so is the entire Commission."

The project champion encouraged Chapter members to continue the "Team Up 2 Clean Up" effort throughout the year. Because Chapter volunteers are out in the community almost

every day of the week—Wildlife Mapping, monitoring bluebird boxes, monitoring Osprey nests, the list goes on—they were encouraged to take on the challenge of a "two-fer."

While out wildlife mapping or monitoring birds, Master Naturalists picked up the litter and plastic in the areas they were walking. There were encouraged to keep a supply of plastic bags (or paper bags) in the car, to take the bag home and dispose of it in a garbage or recycle bin. Volunteers were encouraged to record part of their time in the field (at least ½ hour) to Project S2: "Team Up 2 Clean Up."

Here is an example of combining Wildlife Mapping with "Team Up 2 Clean Up." Hart Haynes, who leads wildlife mapping on Greensprings Trail, reported that Sherry Brubaker carried a trash bag the entire 4.5 miles of our trek, picking up trash along with help from the rest of the group. On a recent outing, Sherry went above and beyond with one of the items she picked up and carried in her trash bag until it could be properly disposed of.

This stewardship project is significant because of the Chapter's collaboration with local government and the establishment of ongoing relationships that will facilitate future success in creating pollinator-friendly gardens on County properties and public spaces.

The Chapter also received recognition in the local press and social media, as submitted by the County.



Jennifer Treveno happily holds up a car part she found along Centerville Road. Photo by Shorley Devan



Pam Schnabel closed another trash bag near Commerce Park. Photo by Shirley Devan

MY NEW CARDINAL/BBLUEBIRD HOUSE

By Cheryl J. Jacobson

For those of you who attended the Christmas Party, you probably recognize the Cardinal bird box that I won as a door prize. It has been a busy Holiday season and I didn't get it installed until 1/5/19 at ten am. By 10:10, I already had a bluebird that staked out the house for himself. The bluebirds are doing very well in Kingsmill as I have five that come to my suet feeder at one time. This is my second bluebird box. Perhaps I need yet another box.



Cohort XIII News—Bios

Gathered by Shirley Devan

FRANK L. SMITH

I grew up surrounded by farmland in Bedford County. My father taught government in high schools in Roanoke, but he had wanted to be a forest ranger. So he was often outdoors hiking among the pines and oaks in Jefferson National Forest, especially along the Appalachian Trail, and I was his very willing companion. He loved looking for wildflowers on our own property and along the trails. He kept a journal, noting not only the weather and location but when he first saw a certain flower bloom each spring. (Some he delighted in were Bloodroot and Trailing Arbutus.)

Family camping trips were a highlight of every summer, and my two sisters and brother and I explored Virginia that way. Between my senior year in high school and my freshman year at William and Mary, the family headed west to Colorado, where my dad was enrolled in a college program. While there we saw Mesa Verde, Four Corners, and Rocky Mountain National Park. I'll never forget the sight of hundreds of Rocky Mountain Columbine in the high upland meadows.

In college, while majoring in English, I took a number of courses related to the out-of-doors: Biology, Vascular Plants, Ornithology, Ecology. Highlights of each semester were field trips to places such as Hog Island and the Eastern Shore.

LARK G. SMITH

My father was a Foreign Service officer for part of his career, so I grew up in Virginia, Bangladesh, and Uruguay. Probably my two brothers and I are the only ones who can say that! My father's love of birds, and my mother's love of singing, help explain my first name.

In Bangladesh, I woke up early each morning and went out into the back yard to see what birds I could find. I was impressed by the White-rumped Vultures in a construction lot not far away. I remember seeing colorful Indian Rollers on roadside wires.*

While in Uruguay, my dad and I would often go on a Saturday or weekend jaunt. In Montevideo itself, on the public grassy stretches in front of our house, we could see Teru-terus, or Southern Lapwings, when neighborhood boys weren't playing fútbol (soccer) there. In the interior of the country we looked for Rufous Horneros (Red Ovenbirds) with their large clay "oven" nests, and on rare occasions spotted a ñandú (Greater Rhea).

Back in the States, involved with college at William and Mary and then office jobs in Boston, birds were not a focal point. Through serving as a co-leader for a Girl Scout troop and outings with my husband, I occasionally saw something unexpected and breathtaking, such as a Pine Grosbeak in the Nobscot Boy Scout Reservation, or, at Gregg Lake in New Hampshire, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher blown in by a storm, or Atlantic Puffins whizzing by in the fog off the coast of Maine; but I did not become an accomplished birder.

After 44 years in Boston, I'm glad to be back in Williamsburg, exploring Virginia's flora and fauna again. I am enjoying meeting like-minded people in the WBC and VMN, and I look forward to being of service.



Now that we're retired, I look forward to honing my birding — and other — skills, and to finding greater opportunities to help protect wildlife and pass along my love of nature to others.

**Since then, populations of all four vulture species of the Indian subcontinent have plummeted, due largely to vulture-toxic anti-inflammatory drugs ingested through feeding on treated livestock.*



XIII The Lucky Number

January Cohort News By Rick Brown

Cohort XIII is back from the holidays and packing in two classes and a field trip this month.

16 of 19 trainees have already successfully completed the extra-curricular requirements towards graduation in March. The Cohort even have created their "special sign" to rival the flapping motion of Cohort X - it is made by crossing the

right hand index finger over the thumb with the other 3 digits extended. Believe me, looks better in practice than trying to describe it on paper.

January 8th Chapter members Nancy Barnhart, Jennifer Trevino and Barbara Neis provided a rundown of volunteer projects that are available to suit every appetite and Nancy demonstrated the methods and means of Observation, Data Collection & Reporting for trainees to work their way into the details of the projects. All trainees are already busy with volunteer hours and we expect to welcome a number of certified Master Naturalists into the Chapter come graduation day.

The Cohort went to the Virginia Living Museum on January 19th for classes and hands on lab work in Ichthyology and Mammalogy.

Stephen Living, from VA DGIF was our instructor for Ecological Concepts on January 22nd as we begin tying all the past months of instruction together.

Saturday, February 2nd, weather permitting, will be the group presentations of Naturalist Biographies. The members of the Cohort have been working hard on their individual naturalists'



Wildflower of the Month—November 2018

John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

By **Helen Hamilton**, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

POISON IVY

Toxicodendron radicans

“Leaflets 3, let it be!” Few plants carry 3-parted compound leaves, and this is an easy way to recognize a very irritating plant. Some bean vines have 3-parted leaves, but poison ivy is woody, and attaches with aerial roots. Not related to invasive English ivy, poison ivy can grow as an erect shrub or climber. Leaves are variable – they may be stiff and leathery or thin, hairy or not, shiny or dull, toothed or not. The red or yellow fall foliage is especially conspicuous.

Twigs are brown with short aerial rootlets; old stems, covered with fibrous roots, look hairy. Small yellowish flowers blooming in May-July produce small clusters of round white fruits in August-November.

Poison ivy is found in every county in Virginia, and widely distributed throughout the eastern and central United States. A close relative with lobed leaflets of 3, poison oak (*Toxicodendron pubescens*), does not extend into the northern states nor Canada, but is found in several coastal plain counties and across Virginia. Unlike poison ivy, poison oak never vines – it is always an upright shrub and it tends to occur in drier, sandier habitats than does poison ivy.

Human sensitivity to the irritating oil urushiol is variable, and 15-25% of the population is not at all allergic to poison-ivy and will never develop a reaction. Some people require prolonged or repeated exposure to the plant to develop a rash, but about half of all people will break out with a single contact, some requiring hospitalization. Without the leaves, poison ivy vines are difficult to identify in the winter, and for persons with high sensitivity, touching a stem or the roots will cause an allergic reaction.

Despite poisonous effects of the plant on humans, the fruits are relished by over 60 species of birds. Many seeds are passed undamaged through their digestive systems, allowing wide distribution of this noxious vine.

For more information about native plants visit www.vnps.org.



Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*)

Photo by Helen Hamilton

Upcoming Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities

The Continuing Education (CE) calendar is posted on the VMN Volunteer Management System website. When you log in to enter your hours, you can find the link to the CE calendar in the left-hand column under, Event Calendars—Continuing Education. Click an activity on the calendar and open to find a more detailed description (including registration information, contact information, any cost, etc.) of the continuing education activity. Reminder: Travel time is not a part of CE credit/hour(s). Note: Should additional applicable CE event(s) come up during the month the event(s) will be posted on the CE calendar in the VMN Volunteer Management System.

Christopher Wren classes that contain content on the natural environment are accepted as CE training. CW classes require registration and payment (\$\$\$) through the W&M Christopher Wren Association. Typically, there are 3 session and 6 session courses. Applicable courses are listed on the CE Calendar. VLM programs require registration through the VLM. VIMS programs require registration through the VIMS.

If you have a question about the relevance of a topic for Continuing Education or wish to check whether or not you can obtain CE hours, please contact the Continuing Education Chair, Jennifer Trevino, jbktrevino8@cox.net

SAT 01/26/2019	Williamsburg Bird Club Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 8:00 am
MON 01/28/2019	W&M Osher Learning Institute Class, "Earthquakes, Eruptions, Tsunami," 9:30-11:30, Location TBD-check website, www.wm.edu Session 1 of 3, \$\$\$
THU 01/31/2019	VIMS After-Hours Lecture, "VA Barrier Islands," 7:00-8:00 pm, VIMS
SAT 02/02/2019	HRC Cohort XIII Naturalist Biography Presentations, 9:00 am-12:00 pm, Williamsburg Community Chapel, Woodward Hall
SUN 02/03/2019	C. Wren Class, "Identification of Trees/w Leaves, Twigs, & Fruit, 9:30-11:30 am Session 3 of 3, Wmsbg. Library, \$\$\$ - Register w/C. Wren Association
MON 02/04/2019	W&M Osher Learning Institute Class, "Earthquakes, Eruptions, Tsunami," 9:30-11:30 am, Location TBD-check website, www.wm.edu Session 2 of 3, \$\$\$
TUE 02/05/2019	HRC Basic Training Class, "Dendrology," "Local Habitats, 6:00-9:00 pm, Williamsburg Community Chapel, Room 120
SAT 02/09/2019	Williamsburg Bird Club Bird Walk, Location TBD, 8:00 am
MON 02/11/2019	W&M Osher Learning Institute Class, "Earthquakes, Eruptions, Tsunami," 9:30-11:30 am, Location TBD, check website, www.wm.edu Session 3 of 3, \$\$\$
WED 02/13/2019	W&M Osher Learning Institute Class, "Earthquakes, Eruptions, Tsunami," 9:30-11:30 am, Location TBD, check website, www.wm.edu Session 3 of 3, \$\$\$
WED 02/13/2019	HRC General Membership Meeting (speaker portion), 6:00 pm, JCC Library Kitzinger Room
SAT 02/16/2019	WBotGarden, "The Good, the Bad, the Bugly in Your Garden," 10:00-11:30 am, Freedom Park Interpretive Center
SAT 02/16/2019	Williamsburg Bird Club Field Trip to Dutch Gap; further details coming soon
SUN 02/17/2019	Hampton Roads Bird Club Sunday Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am
TUE 02/19/2019	HRC Basic Training Class, "Climate & Weather," 6:00-9:00 pm, Williamsburg Community Chapel, Room 120
WED 02/20/2019	Williamsburg Bird Club Monthly Meeting (speaker portion), 7:00-9:00 pm, W&M Integrated Science Center, Room 1127
FRI 02/22/2019	W&M Osher Learning Institute Class, "ID of Trees in Winter," 9:30-11:30, Wightman Cup Room, Session 1 of 3, \$\$\$
SAT 02/23/2019	John Clayton Chapter-VNPS, "Nude Tree Walk," Wellspring United Methodist Church, 10:00 am-12:00 pm
SAT 02/23/2019	Walk & Talk at New Quarter Park, "Virginia's Big Tree Program," 10:00 am-12:00 pm
THU 02/28/2019	VIMS After-Hours Lecture, "The Young and Restless; Tracking the Sea Turtle Lost Years," 7:00-8:00 pm, VIMS

Sunrise over the Chickahominy

Photo by Inge Curtis