

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council, Inc.

13555 Beaver Dam Road
Cockeysville, MD 21030



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DRIVE CAREFULLY:
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**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
AND SIGN UP A FRIEND, TOO!**

Many branches make a strong tree. Many members make a strong Council. Check your mailing label for the status of your membership: "C" for current, "E" for expired, and "X" for *this is your last issue unless you renew now*. Use this membership form to renew and give a copy to a friend, too.

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- \$ 15 Individual
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- \$ 12 Senior Citizen/Student
- \$ 25 Non-Profit
- \$ 50 Sustaining
- \$100 Corporate
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- \$150 Lifetime



Checks payable to ORNC Council, Inc., 13555 Beaver Dam Rd., Cockeysville, MD 21030

TRAILBLAZER

Feb/March 2013



Supporting Oregon Ridge Park
and Nature Center for 30 years

**IT'S SUGARING TIME
AT OREGON RIDGE!**

**COME AND
GET IT!**

MAPLE SUGAR DAYS

**February 16 and 17, 23 and 24
10 AM to 4 PM**

Tap and Taste at Oregon Ridge. . .

2013 marks 32 years of tapping maples at Oregon Ridge. The early and prolonged drop in temperature hints that this could be a record year for sap collecting. The trees are busy storing up energy and harnessing sap. If the nights remain cold and the lengthening days warm above freezing, all that energy and sap will be released in abundance, ready for tasting, when tapping begins in February.

. . .Then Hurry to the Sugar Shack

The evaporator will be steaming, boiling sap into syrup. You don't want to miss it! Grab the kids, some friends, and come and get it . . .

Sweet Maple Syrup for the Tastin'

IT'S FREE and FUN!



Photo by Rob Schwarz

**ENJOY A STACK OF PANCAKES
WITH REAL MAPLE SYRUP
AT THE ANNUAL
PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

**Oregon Ridge Lodge
March 2 and 3 8 AM to Noon**

Tickets at Door: Adults - \$7; Kids 2 to 8 - \$3

Gobble up some grilled sausage, too. Buy tickets to win a box raffle, take home some syrup and spring flowers, visit our gift shop and. . .

**Support Us by
Joining the ORNC Council !**



COUNCIL SPEAKER SERIES

GOSPEL OF ALL THINGS GREEN

Janet Draper
Smithsonian Horticulturist

March 18, 2013, 7:30 PM

The Mary Livingston Ripley Garden arouses the senses. This was the exact intent of its creator, Mrs. S. Dillon Ripley, wife of the eighth Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute and a plant scholar-collector and avid gardener. Mrs. Ripley's idea for a "fragrant garden" is now a tranquil haven within the busy National Mall, discreetly located adjacent to The Castle, tucked between the Arts and Industries Museum and the Hirshhorn Museum.



During her *Gospel of All Things Green* presentation, Horticulturist Janet Draper will introduce you to the vast array of plants that delight thousands of visitors to Mrs. Ripley's inspirational garden. Draper's goal is to expose as many people to as many plants as possible to "expand the plant palette."

Janet Draper's background is vast as well. After earning a BS in Horticulture at Purdue University in 1987, Janet interned at Ball Seed Company in Illinois, Mt. Cuba Center

for Native Piedmont Plants in Delaware, Staudengartnerel Graf von Stein-Seppelin in Germany, Beth Chatto Gardens in England, and for Kurt Bluemel, Inc., right here in Baldwin, Maryland. Prior to joining the Smithsonian Institute in 1997, she was the Horticulturist for Kurt Bluemel, Propagator for The Plantage in Cutchogue, NY, Perennial Manager for Homestead Gardens in Annapolis, an Estate Gardener/Designer, and a Contractor for Oehme von Sweden estate maintenance.

Janet Draper's talk will inspire you to hop in your car or jump on the metro to experience for yourself this outdoor refuge in the heart of Washington, D.C. (MJS)

ON THE TRAIL WITH ORNC GUIDES

Trail Guide Training Begins February 5

Trail guides gather each morning in the ORNC staff area to exchange tidbits of information about what might be seen on the trail that day. Some even spend a half hour previewing the trails. Secreted in their pockets are acorns, bugs, rocks, and other nature treasures to surprise the children. These hardy volunteers are undaunted by rain, cold, wind or heat. They are just eager to share with visiting school children, some of whom rarely see a real forest.

Training occurs in February and September. This session runs from February 5 through 8, 10 AM to 1 PM. For new trail guides, there is a \$25 fee, which is refunded after leading that first solo hike. The only prerequisites are a yen for the outdoors and enthusiasm.

February's training agenda includes: Maple sugaring, amphibians and reptiles, geology, and a special guest speaker. After the training session ends, you can tag along with one of the seasoned Trail Guides until you feel comfortable leading a group alone. The children's gusto is contagious. You are sure to recapture that wide-eyed awe of wonder when uncovering a spotted salamander or splashing in the stream to net a crawdad. Trail Guides engage the children through their senses, so they will want to learn more about nature and the environment after they leave. It is all about fun, not scientific facts.

An extra perk is a monthly field trip just for the Trail Guides to special nature areas. If you are young at heart and love nature, join us. We need you. (MJS)



TODD THROPP EMBARKS ON A NEW PATH

Todd Thropp's grandparents introduced him to the Nature Center when he was a preschooler. Even then, he was *into* nature. The summer before he turned five, his mother Peggy sneaked him into the 5-6 year old Junior Naturalist camp run by BCPS Teacher Naturalist Glenn Swiston. Later



on in middle and high school, he volunteered to help with Glenn's summer programs. One of the things many of us most remember about young Todd, however, is not his penchant for nature and the environment. We remember his advanced knowledge of computers. He was a young man of the times, who seemed to know instinctively how to navigate the earlier days of technology.

I was the Administrative Assistant (AA) then, competent in using the computer as long as nothing went awry. One morning while tackling a pressing assignment, our one-year-old laser printer irksomely ceased printing. After exhausting my bag of quick fixes, I unplugged the machine and hauled it over to the company that sold it to us for repair. A couple of days later they returned it saying that unfortunately we would have to replace it. Todd happened to come in that afternoon, heard me cursing the darn machine, and after assessing the situation, very confidently suggested, "Let me take it home and see what I can do."

A day or so later he brought it back, plugged it in, and . . . Eureka! The lights came on and its familiar hum signaled *let's get back to work!* Todd said the only thing wrong was a short in the cord — a simple fix that the big boys could not find, and probably did not even consider as the problem. Todd was maybe 14 at the time, but the Council paid him what we would have paid the professional techs at the computer store.

In the summer of 2007, Todd worked as a seasonal naturalist for Cromwell Valley Park. That fall, just before I retired, he began working as a part-time naturalist at Oregon Ridge. In 2008 he decided to move into the still vacant AA position, hoping that it would be a gateway to a full-time Naturalist's position. Many visitors and callers asking questions about Maryland's natural environment appreciated his knowledge as a Naturalist. Many on the Council Board quickly recognized

and appreciated his skills with the computer and his ability to "find" things online. Past ORNC Director Kirk Dreier remembers, "He was like *Radar O'Reilly* to me — could procure anything the Center needed." "Radar" Thropp was especially helpful this fall in finding just the right projector to use for programs in the auditorium, again outsmarting the professionals at a local audio-visual company.

In November 2012, Todd decided to leave ORNC to continue his journey on a new path. The Council will miss his expertise. We wish Todd well on his journey and hope he will not be a stranger to Oregon Ridge.

MJ Shanks, Editor

TRAILBLAZER STAFF

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Articles for the April-June 2013 issue
are due February 18.

Rob Schwarz makes maple sugaring a family adventure on his north central Pennsylvania homestead. Read about his firsthand experiences collecting sap, boiling syrup, and more on his blog **Daily Hike** at:

<http://dailyhike.wordpress.com>.

MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

In the last issue of the *Trailblazer*, Publicity Chair Mike Burns and Exhibit Chair Anita Tyler were introduced in the first of a series of "Meet the Members of the Board" articles. In this issue, we'd like you to meet Archives Chair John Bainbridge and Volunteer Chair Pat Krasowski.

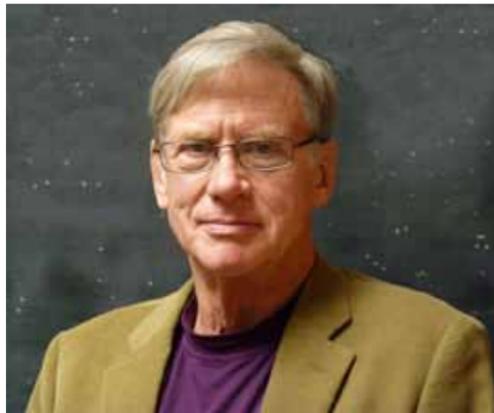
volunteering, Pat loves to read, watch old movies, and travel.

John Bainbridge became a Director on the Board in 2012, and recently agreed to chair the newly formed Archives Committee. John's challenge will be organizing the mass of information about the Park's history, which has been accumulating in disarray over the years. It is a daunting task, but we know John will prevail and create records that will be of lasting interest to park visitors. Now retired, John successfully navigated through two careers. He was a reporter for *The Baltimore Sun* and legal affairs editor of *The Daily Record*. He was also a lawyer doing civil litigation in the Baltimore area, a law clerk for judges on Maryland's highest court — the Court of Appeals, and an Assistant Attorney General for Maryland, handling criminal cases in the state's appellate courts. John has written articles for various magazines, including *Audubon* and *Smithsonian*, and coauthored with Stephen Hunter *American Gunfight: the Plot to Kill Harry Truman and the Shoot-out that Stopped It*, published by Simon and Schuster in 2005.



Mike Burns and Anita Tyler

Pat Krasowski has been a friend to Oregon Ridge for many years, but began volunteering more actively after her daughter, Courtney Peed, became ORNC's first female Director in 2009. When asked to serve on the Board in 2011, Pat bravely agreed to step into the large footprints of Jeanne Cole as Chair of the Volunteer Committee. Pat broke in her new shoes by manning the volunteer stations at the Honey Harvest Festival before jumping headlong into the gargantuan task of organizing over 100 volunteers for the Pancake Breakfast. She did a great job and is now a seasoned committee chair. Pat is a native Baltimorean and a huge Ravens and O's fan. Having started her career in retail management as a buyer for Hutzler's, she has managed the Duty Free Store at BWI's International Pier for the past 17 years. She has also volunteered at the National Aquarium for over 16 years. In between working and



Pat and John expressed their individual reasons for donating their time and talents to Oregon Ridge. Pat believes in giving back as a way to express gratitude for what has been received, with no expectation of reward. She says, "In our world today, when everything has a dollar value attached, volunteering is the best way to give back to our friends and neighbors. I enjoy working with and meeting people. ORNC gives me that opportunity..."

John explains, "Oregon Ridge Park is one of Baltimore County's jewels, an oasis in suburbia where one can feel the rhythms of nature along its trails, unhurried and pure. The Council and the Nature Center serve as guardians of the park and as vehicles for those who come to learn about the natural world and our place in it. It's a privilege to be a part of it."

It is a privilege to have Mike, Anita, Pat and John on the Board, and also the two people you will meet next in the May-June *Trailblazer*: Ginna Naylor, our librarian, and Polly Roberts, Scholarship Chair. (MJS)



OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

College bound high school seniors from Baltimore County and City, who are committed to the health of the environment and plan to earn degrees in environmental science and nature education, can start on the path to success with a scholarship awarded by the ORNC Council.

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council
13555 Beaver Dam Road
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This year we will support at least two scholarships up to \$3000 each.

YOU can help by giving generously to the 2013 Scholarship Fund.

Your tax-deductible donations should be made payable to the **ORNC Council** (specify *Scholarship Fund* on the note line) and sent to:

Donor's names will be published. If you would like to make a gift in another's name, please specify the name as it should appear on the list.

If you know a high school senior who may be eligible for a scholarship, information and application forms are available on our website: www.oregonridge.org. Applications should be postmarked no later than Friday, March 29, 2013.

Thank You for Helping Us Put Our Future Environmental Leaders on the Path to Success.

HOW DOES SAP RUN?

By Naturalist Pam Ward

"In contemplating the present opening prospects in human affairs, I am led to expect that a material part of the general happiness which heaven seems to have prepared for mankind, will be derived from the manufacture and general use of Maple Sugar."
(Letter to Thomas Jefferson by Benjamin Rush, August 19, 1791)

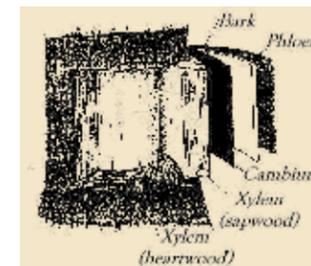
Two centuries later, maple sugar (and syrup) still pleases our palates and we have only recently discovered the science behind the flow of maple sap. How does it happen? What is the origin of maple sap?

To review what you may have learned in school, beneath the bark of a tree lie layers, each with specific functions. Two of these layers, the xylem and the phloem, are necessary for the flow of fluid through the tree. The xylem transports water up from the roots to the branches and leaves. As the water on the leaf surfaces evaporates, more water is "pulled up" [Cohesion-Tension Theory]. Once the leaves make their sugar during photosynthesis, the phloem transports the sugars from the leaves down to the rest of the tree.

So, does the sap come from the sugars in the phloem? This seems logical, but the sap actually comes from the xylem. The only time during the year when the fluid in the xylem contains significant amounts of sucrose is late February, early

March – maple sugaring time! Sap flow is not related to the normal process by which water is transported in stems during the growing season [Kozlowski & Pallardy]. The sugars in the sap come from the carbohydrates accumulated in the stem during the previous season. These are converted into starch in the fall and hydrolyzed to sucrose as the spring brings warm temperatures. The sugary sap is then pushed into the xylem.

What causes that sap to flow? It's the warm days and cool nights. The stems must freeze and thaw for the sap to flow. When it is cold, gases in the xylem dissolve and the stem pressure decreases which causes the stem to absorb water from adjacent cells. These cells then absorb water from the



next cells and so on, eventually from the roots. As it gets even colder, water freezes along the inside walls of hollow xylem cells and in the intercellular spaces. The gases in the stem are compressed and locked into ice. When the temperature warms, the ice melts and the gases, which were compressed, expand, forcing the sap out of the stem.

When the time is right, we drill a hole that is 7/16" wide and 2" to 3" inches deep into the xylem to collect the sugary sap to make a special treat – sweet Maple Syrup.

AUTHOR DOUG TALLAMY BRINGS NATURE HOME TO OREGON RIDGE ON APRIL 15

In past issues of the *Trailblazer*, you've read about Doug Tallamy's presentation *Bringing Nature Home*, scheduled for April 15 at the Oregon Ridge Lodge. Because of his repute as a well-known author and lecturer, there will be an admission charge of \$10 (\$5 for ORNCC members) at the door, or advance tickets can be purchased at ORNC.

Susan Stiles, Editor of *The Mason-Dixon LINE* newsletter for the Mason Dixon Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society, wrote an article about Dr. Tallamy in their July 2012 issue. She describes her fascination with butterfly gardens, but admits that she never gave much thought to the need to feed the caterpillars (which she often considers pests) that magically metamorphosize into the butterflies she enjoys nourishing. Here is an extended excerpt from her article:



they eat green leaves, which vary greatly in their chemical composition. While butterflies may feast on the butterfly bush flowers, no caterpillars can make a living on its foliage.

Besides the obvious need to support butterflies, I learned that all kinds of birds require an abundance of caterpillars to feed their young. A decline in native plants has led to a decline in caterpillars, which has led to a decline in our native bird populations. Growing native plants — not just flowers, but shrubs and trees, especially oaks, willows, cherries and birches — requires a bit more work on my part. But this is a change I am willing to make. I hope you'll join me. Find out more at <http://bringingnaturehome.net/native-gardening/gardening-for-life>.

Ms. Stiles began by planting a paw-paw sapling, a gift from a fellow gardener, which is the host plant for the caterpillar of the beautiful Zebra Swallowtail (center photo). You can learn all about planting trees and other ways to bring nature home to your garden at Doug Tallamy's April presentation at the Oregon Ridge Lodge. Come in today to buy your advance tickets at ORNC, or call to reserve your seats (410 887-1815). (MJS)

After reading Doug Tallamy's fascinating and very readable book, *Bringing Nature Home*, and attending his lecture...at the York Audubon Society, I've learned that if I want to sustain wildlife, I need to feed the caterpillars. Butterflies will be attracted to any and all nectar-producing flowers, because nectar is basically the same sugar-and-water composition regardless if the plant is native or alien. But caterpillars are herbivores:

THE OREGON RIDGE COMMUNITY GARDEN READIES FOR SEASON TWO

The ORNC Community Garden is returning for 2013. Seasoned and aspiring gardeners will have the chance to grow organic fruits, vegetables, and flowers in a natural setting within park boundaries. The garden is located in an open area that is pre-tilled and receives full sunlight. There will be deer fencing and water available on-site. We will be taking applications for the new season on February 15 with the gardening season beginning on March 15. For more information, call Oregon Ridge Nature Center (410 887-1815) or send an email to Rob Bonfante at imajicka1@gmail.com. (RB)

MARK YOUR 2013 CALENDARS FOR THESE FREE SPRING EVENTS

PRIMITIVE TECHNOLOGY WEEKEND
May 4 and 5, 10 AM to 4 PM

MUSIC IN THE WOODS
May 11, 10 AM to 4 PM

Through the Seasons of Bombay Hook
with Speaker Pat Ruchlewicz
Monday, May 20, 7:30 PM

Member Reminder: The upcoming April-June *Trailblazer* is the **SUMMER CAMP** issue.

Camp Registration for Members: APRIL 15

TAKE THE "AX" OUT OF TAXES CHECK LINE 35 TO RESTORE THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

TAXES! The term would be painful even without the word within the word that is often associated with harm of one sort or another — the AX! The good news is that Maryland offers its citizens a generous way to take the "ax" out of taxes by helping the Chesapeake Bay. By checking Line 35 on your 2013 Maryland State Tax Form 502, you and others can help SAVE the Chesapeake Bay.

Checking Line 35 gives taxpayers an easy way to voluntarily contribute to the *Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund*. The proceeds from this check-off are split evenly between Bay restoration grants provided by the Chesapeake Bay Trust

and rare species programs run by the Wildlife and Heritage Division of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. With fully 90 percent of the Trust's expenditures directed to Chesapeake Bay restoration and education programs, Maryland residents can be confident that their donations are leveraged appropriately. A bonus is that whatever amount you donate this year is tax deductible in the following year.

Do some good this year! Check Line 35 on your 502 tax return. If you are filing a different form, here are the lines to check: Form 503, Line 13; Form 504, Line 26, Form 505, Line 40. (MJS)



NEW EXHIBIT HELPS VISITORS LEARN TO ID TREES

"What is that tree?" This is one of the most frequently asked questions by Park visitors. Everyone loves to watch trees change with the seasons and admire the brilliant fall foliage and the intricate bark and limb design so visible during winter. It's only natural to want to assign a name to our favorites. Now there's a new interactive exhibit at the Nature Center that can help identify a number of trees at Oregon Ridge Park by showing the tree shape, leaf, and fruit.



There are 80 species of trees growing throughout the Park. The trees highlighted in the exhibit include the flowering dogwood, pignut hickory, white oak, American beech, tulip tree, black gum, black walnut and red maple. The exhibit begins with a picture of the fruit of each tree. Subsequent slides provide tidbits on the history and use of the tree. An illustration shows the tree in full foliage in summer and bare in winter so you learn its shape. There are also drawings of the tree's leaf and fruit. The cycle of slides ends with the name of the tree.

Visit soon and learn more about the trees that cover Oregon Ridge Park and that may grow in your neighborhood, too.

Anita Tyler, Exhibit Chair

TIPPY TERRAPIN SAYS —

"It's Time to Renew Your Membership, Camp Registration Begins April 15!"

Tippy Terrapin, our Membership Mascot, wants to make sure you know that the next issue of the *Trailblazer* will include the 2013 Summer Camp Schedule. The Camp Schedule will also be included in ORNC's Winter/Spring Calendar. **Members in good standing will have the first opportunity to enroll their children, beginning April 15.** Please check your mailing label to see if your membership is current. You should see the letter "C" with the date that your membership expires.

If your child has friends who would enjoy our camps, but their families are not members, tell them to visit our website, print out the application form, and send it in with their check prior to camp registration. Better yet, if you don't need it, give them the membership form on the back page. (MJS)

