

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council
13555 Beaver Dam Road
Cockeysville, MD 21030



Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PARKTON, MD
PERMIT NO. 120

Is Your Membership
Current?



DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION AND PARKS



Honey Harvest Festival 2012



Dulaney High Key Club

Snapshots

by Jocelyn Curtis

TRAILBLAZER

Nov 2012 - Jan 2013



Supporting Oregon Ridge Park
and Nature Center for 30 years



UPCOMING ORNCC SPEAKERS SERIES

January 21, 2013
Saved by a Highway? Bog Turtles
Bob Bull
Bog Turtle Surveyor for
Wilson T. Ballard Co., Inc.

March 18, 2013
Gospel of All Things Green
Janet Draper
Horticulturist for
Mary Livingston Ripley Garden
Smithsonian Institution

April 15, 2013
Bringing Nature Home
Doug Tallamy
Professor/Chair Entomology and
Wildlife Ecology at UDEL
Presentation at Oregon Ridge Lodge
\$10 per person; \$5 for ORNCC members

May 20, 2013
Through the Seasons of Bombay Hook
Pat Ruchlewicz

Unless otherwise stated, presentations are free and begin at 7:30 PM at the Nature Center. There is no speaker in December, February, or June to August. Please call the Nature Center to contact Program Chair Sue Leslie if you would like to give a talk, or if you have a suggestion for an interesting speaker.

VERACRUZ, MEXICO AND THE RIVER OF RAPTORS with Hugh Simmons

Monday, November 19, 7:30 PM

Fall brings changing leaf color, cooler temperatures, and the ticking inner clocks of migrating species. In this area, usually high in the sky, there's a chance of seeing a smattering of migrating hawks. Now multiply that by thousands and you will have a mental image of the migration activity in Veracruz, Mexico.

The Sierra Madres mountain range crosses Mexico from northwest to southeast, coming within five miles of the Gulf Coast in the state of Veracruz. Here the hills, mountains, and ocean come together, funneling millions of migrating birds from North America through a relatively small area. It is the largest concentration of migrating raptors in the world. In early October, on any given day, over half a million raptors may be passing overhead in Veracruz. The record for one-day is 1.5 million hawks! This flyway not only provides seasonal passage for hawks and vultures, but also for over 200 other migrating bird species, dragonflies, and butterflies.

Nature photographer Hugh Simmons has captured this amazing migration with his camera. He is a keen birder, serving on the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society as well as Audubon Maryland/DC and Chesapeake Audubon, Baltimore's local chapter.

Avoid neck torquing or "birder's neck" by joining Hugh Simmons to experience the Rio de Rapaces — River of Raptors. **SL**

HELP US CELEBRATE AND DECORATE

December 14, 7:30 PM

Join the *Decorate the Nature Center Party* on Friday evening, December 14. There will be plenty of greens, pinecones, teasel, and other natural materials to make ornaments to decorate our trees and to take home for your own holiday decorations. Festivities are free. Admission is bringing your favorite holiday treat to share.



Merrymaking begins at 7:30 PM. Join us for a nostalgic evening of singing carols, stringing popcorn and cranberries, and feasting on cookies and other delectables.

OTHER HOLIDAY EVENTS

Holiday events abound this December at Oregon Ridge. They fill up quickly, so call soon for reservations. All take place from 2 to 4 PM.

Unbelievably, there are still openings in the *Holiday Wreath Making* class on December 1 and 2. Just bring clippers and gloves; we provide all the greens and adornments, the frame, wire and ribbon. For just \$10 (\$8 for members), you can take home a lovely, large wreath for your front door.

The ORNC Staff spends days gathering natural materials for *Natural Ornaments*, including teasel, pine cones, acorns, walnut shells, and milkweed pods. On December 8 and 9, create a fox (*see photo above*), reindeer, angel, mouse, or a fantastical critter. You need only bring your imagination and a little creativity. We'll also make some special treats for the birds. Children must be 5+; fee of only \$3 (\$2 for members).

Make an old fashioned *Gingerbread House for You and the Birds* on December 22 and 23. Build and decorate your own masterpiece to take home, then help us create another one with seeds and fruits for the over-wintering birds. Children must be 8 or older; fee of \$5 (\$4 for members).

SAVED BY A HIGHWAY? The Bog Turtle and MD Route 30

with Robert Bull

Monday, January 21, 7:30 PM

North America's tiniest turtle is disappearing. Bob Bull will explain why and how Maryland Route 30 and the State Highway Administration saved a bog turtle metapopulation. Bob is a recognized bog turtle surveyor in Maryland. He has worked as a consulting ecologist for 16 years with the Wilson T. Ballard Company, engineering consultants based in Owings Mills. Bob was part of the win-win solution involving Rt. 30, the bog turtle, and the Hampstead By-Pass, a vital piece of transportation infrastructure completed in 2009 that provides protection and preserves genetic flow for a fragmented group of 8 or 9 sites of bog turtles.

The bog turtle (*Glyptemys mühlenbergii*) is a small, semi-aquatic turtle, found only in the eastern United States, that grows to only 4 inches. The wood turtle is its closest relative. Considered threatened at the federal level, the bog turtle is



protected under the Endangered Species Act. Most of its habitat has been compromised or eradicated through invasive plants and urban development. Because bog turtles need to spend a considerable time basking in the sun, the ideal habitat is early successional. Erosion and run-off of nutrients into wetlands accelerates succession, bringing shade to the area. Additionally, demand for this little reptile is high in the black market pet trade.

What does a bog turtle surveyor do on his off days? Bob and a handful of volunteers dodge snakes, spiders, and ticks to search for bog turtles and identify new sites. He also shares his knowledge through informative talks and presentations. **SL**

MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

President Jim Curtis's article (page 4), gives an overview of the Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council and its significant role in supporting the Nature Center and Park. Here, and in future issues of the *Trailblazer*, we will introduce you to our Board members. We start by saying farewell to a man who has served on the Board for more than 18 years.

Joe Warfield recently decided to retire as Chair of the Exhibit Committee to spend more time with his wife, Cas, and to pursue with full vigor his many other interests. Joe has



been a volunteer at ORNC in many capacities for nearly 20 years. In 2008, he was chosen as ORNC's Shining Star, an award given by Baltimore County Recreation and Parks to outstanding volunteers. He is a skilled botanist and a knowledgeable historian, and these interests served him well as Exhibit Chair. He oversaw the design and installation of a variety of nature and cultural history exhibits, including at least 12 freestanding exhibits within the Center and most of the outdoor exhibits such as the Natural Resource Loop and the Gazebo and Gypsy Moth Display located on the Red Loggers Trail. Luckily, Joe will stay on as a Trail Guide, and hopefully continue to educate visitors on his botany hikes.

Joe has spent the last several weeks breaking in the new Chair of the Exhibit Committee, Anita Tyler. Anita began volunteering in 2008, and joined the Maryland Master Naturalist program in 2011. Last year she took over ORNC's blog *Naturalist Corner*, which keeps members and visitors informed about the day-to-day activities at the Center. Anita brings not only a new face, but also new ideas and skills to move forward in a tech driven world. Anita has worked for W. R. Grace for 30 years in the field of communications. She has also volunteered for other outdoor organizations. When asked why she accepted her new position on the board, she answered, "I love sharing the outdoors with families and

look forward to developing exhibits that will enhance their experience."

Dave Power stepped down as Publicity Chairman at the end of the 2011-2012 fiscal year. Dave is one of our original Council members, which means he has been a friend of ORNC for 30 years. His lifelong interest in nature began early as an Eagle Scout and led him to ORNC, where he has always been a regular attendee at the monthly Speaker presentations. Upon retiring after 36 years as a microbiologist/technical writer with the Becton, Dickinson and Company, he decided to actively volunteer and was soon invited to serve on the Council Board. As the Publicity Chair, he distributed newsletters, calendars, and flyers to libraries and other public locations and maintained an updated mailing list. Dave will continue to volunteer at our special events, serving hotdogs, cleaning tables, or doing whatever is asked of him. He is a trooper.

Mike Burns has taken over the reins as Publicity Chairman. Mike is a past ORNCC President and Secretary, and has served on the board for nine years, most recently as a Director. Since retiring as a journalist with the Baltimore Sun, he has traveled the world and visited seven continents. Mike and his wife reside in Phoenix and have four daughters still in school. When asked why he enjoys volunteering at ORNC, Mike articulated nicely the role of all ORNCC Board Members:

Lending a hand to promote and preserve this important environmental setting has been a personal priority over the two decades since we visited with our first child. Vital programs enhance and explain the history and natural workings of this wonderful place, a core mission of the Council that I'm proud to serve.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE, MEET . . .

John Bainbridge
Archives Committee Chairman

Pat Krasowski
Volunteer Chairwoman



THOUSANDS HELP CELEBRATE HONEY HARVEST FESTIVAL 2012



Over 2000 people feted the Honey Bee at this year's Honey Harvest! Interim director Winny Tan and her staff did very well running this program for the first time. Honey Harvest Event Chair Erin McCleary helped with her excellent organizational skills; Volunteer Chair Pat Krasowski put together an experienced team of workers; and Publicity Chair Mike Burns arranged for an appearance on Fox 45, which was credited for the big turnout. Parking presented a challenge due to the Legacy Chase taking place right up the road and a big wedding going on at the Oregon Ridge Lake, but the Dulaney Valley High Key Club did a great job directing traffic

and finding available parking spaces.

The cool, cloudy weather and colorful fall backdrop added ambiance to the festivities. The clouds dispersed enough on Sunday for Starman Jer to showcase the sun with his special viewing scopes. Temperatures warmed enough to bring out the bees for the live beehive demos performed, without one sting, by Honey Queen Alyssa Fine and our assisting beekeepers. Thunder finally rolled in with gusto late Sunday, but the band kept right on playing until the rains came.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

BANDS, CRAFTS PEOPLE, DEMONSTRATORS AND VENDORS

- Ronda Allen (Smokey the Bear)
- Richard Anderson (87th PA Corps.)
- Lena Appleby (Crafts)
- Brian Brauer (4th N.C. Co.)
- Jackie Brooks (Bitto Headbands)
- Clearspring Bluegrass Band
- Lynn & Sophia Faulkner (Crafts, Face Painting)
- Alyssa Fine, Honey Queen 2012
- Jerry Feldman (Star Gazing)
- Jerry Fisher (Hive Demo)
- Nancy Greene (Free Range Lamb Products)
- The Honey Bees Band
- Debbie and Alex Hontz (Crafts)
- Karen Jackson (Goff Museum)
- Grace Leatherman (Spinner)
- Lauren Leffer (Crafts, Puppet Shows, Goff Museum)
- Christian Lillie (Petting Zoo)
- Master Gardeners – Leigh Cochrane and interns
- Andrew McGowan (Goff Museum, Ice Cream demos)
- Ted McNett (Blacksmith)
- McDaniel Apiaries
- Katharine Patterson (Spinner)
- Possidente Family (Crafts)
- Laura Snyder (Hive Demos and Extractions)
- Derrick Tan (Cider Pressing)
- Melissa Tillery (Face Painting)
- Snyders Apiaries
- Bees by the Bay
- Joseph "Reb" Staub (Blacksmith)
- Roger Williams (Hive Demo)
- Kathy Woods, Walter Massey, Debra Trout, and Elena Mathis (Phoenix Wildlife Ctr.)



FRIENDS OF ORNC:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Gary Anderson | Bill LaBarre |
| Jesse Anderson | Sue Leslie |
| Carole Armor | Bob Lett |
| John Bainbridge | Vita Maghsadi |
| Cindy Barretta | Deming Magner |
| Danielle Barretta | Erin McCleary |
| Tami Bentz | Kevin O'Neill |
| Ed Bull | Dave Power |
| Mike Burns | Alison Ramirez |
| Noot/Anne Canoles | Joe Salvaggio |
| Jeanne Cole | Landon Silverman |
| Jim/Jocelyn Curtis | Scout Stein |
| Seth Dawson | Rashid Taleb |
| Georgette Frederick | Paul Waldman |
| Katya Gavin | Bella Wanis |
| Mary Genovese | Chris Wanis |
| Susan Genovese | Joe Warfield |
| Andrew Gingerich | Alex Waugh |
| Mark Gingerich | Emily Witt |
| Jack/Ann Kerns | Eliza Yachimowicz |
| Pat Krasowski | |

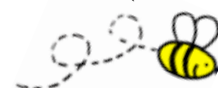


DULANEY HIGH KEY CLUB (Parking Team)

- Sai Alur
- Mary Irina Bartholomew
- Arshad Fakhar
- Samad Fakhar
- Ruthvik Gali
- Helen Gao
- Durian Gim
- Sricharan Gumudavelli
- Swati Guin
- Soman Khan
- Jaemin Kim
- Hugh Knuu
- Gabriel Lee
- Ivy Li
- Joey Lin
- Chris Lodge
- Julia Long
- Teja Mulpuri
- Fatima Muzaffar
- Sumanth Neermulla
- Rachel Oh
- Jane Song
- Vincent Song
- Peter Tan
- Tina Yi

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Gene & Linda Williamson for hosting and offering transportation to the visiting Honey Queen, as they have done for many years.



ALEX WAUGH: A Ridge Runner with a Goal

Alex Waugh has a vision for his future — herpetology. He is fascinated with reptiles and amphibians, and plans on becoming a herpetologist. Working as a Ridge Runner at Oregon Ridge Nature Center is one step towards achieving his goal.

When he was deciding where he would like to spend some of his time volunteering, he searched for a place where he could handle animals. Luckily, he found Oregon Ridge



Nature Center. He enjoys observing and caring for all of the animals, but his favorites are Jasmine the opossum, Squeaks the flying squirrel, Leo the wood turtle, and the box turtles. Jack the Starling was a favorite, too, until he passed away this summer.

Alex is a bright junior at Dulaney High, his favorite courses being in AP Environmental Studies. He enjoys being a member of the Ridgie team so much that he is going to recommend it to his AP pals at school. Though he is a recent 2012 recruit, he has taken his responsibilities seriously, even making suggestions on how to improve things in the Center. For instance, he thinks the baby bullfrog and the spotted salamander should be placed out in view of the public so people can see them better and, as a result, learn more about them.

At home, Alex owns a leopard gecko, a multi-spotted and very handsome, nocturnal, ground-dwelling lizard, which he has named Aris after the Greek God of War. He enjoys caring for Aris and playing video games. He also loves art.

We look forward to watching Alex grow as a herpetologist, and expect that one day we will find him working in a university, natural history museum, or for a state Game and Wildlife department. Who knows? He may become a full-time naturalist right here at Oregon Ridge. Stranger things have happened.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW

There are still openings in some programs. Check out the Fall Calendar by visiting our website: www.oregonridge.org. There are children's clubs, special fun days, courses, weekend hikes, and holiday events. Don't miss these events:

FALL BIRDING AT THE RIDGE November 18 (from 8:30 to 10 AM) It's FREE!

Join naturalist and avid birder Katharine Patterson for a hike to peek in on our feathered friends. Beginners are welcome.

SLUGS ARE SLEEPING November 24 or 25 (from 2 to 4 PM) \$3 (\$2 members)

Many animals sleep the winter away. Learn who's snoozing and make a slimy craft to keep.

PUMPKIN PARTY NIGHT HIKE November 30 (from 6 to 8 PM) \$6 (\$4 members)

Learn the origins of pumpkin carving and why the pumpkin was an important food for early settlers. Decorate your own pumpkin to take home for the holidays.

STARLINGS AND STORIES December 15 or 16 (from 2 to 4 PM) \$3 (\$2 members)

Starlings are on the move. Fly on over to the Nature Center to listen to bird stories and to make a feathery craft.



COUNCIL NEWS FROM PRESIDENT JIM CURTIS

When I'm volunteering at the Nature Center I often find that many visitors are unaware of the Council and our role in the Nature Center and Park. Many of you may wonder how the Council is organized and operated, and how we relate to the County government.

Our Council was created in 1982 to support the Nature Center and Park. We started as a volunteer organization, and in the last year, we became a non-profit corporation. Of course, we are still an all-volunteer organization. The Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks and their advisory Board keeps tabs on us by a certification process that evaluates nature center and recreation councils. This is basically a financial review to verify our integrity. Further, as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, we must also conform to the IRS requirements.

Most of our everyday contacts are with the employees of the Department of Recreation and Parks. This agency, headed by Director Mr. Barry Williams, manages the Parks and Recreation centers around the County. The Department of Recreation and Parks employs the staff at the Nature Center and maintains the building and grounds. We work closely with the Nature Center staff and have a very cooperative relationship.

In support of the Nature Center and Park, the Council's activities include:

- Planning, organizing and funding special events and programs
- Creating and funding displays and exhibits
- Publishing newsletters and web sites
- Purchasing durable goods for the Nature Center
- Maintaining the library and gift shop
- Funding and operating a scholarship program

Also, most importantly, we manage the finances involved in these activities by handling the fees and donations at the Nature Center, raising funds through our various fund-raising activities, and dispersing these funds as appropriate.

The decision making group of the Council is the Executive Board. Under our new bylaws, this group is comprised of 16 committee chairs and the elected officers consisting of: President (Jim Curtis), Vice President (Erin McCleary), Treasurer (Ann Canoles), Secretary (Ann Kerns), and four directors (Michael Burns, Jack Kerns, Carol Mantegna, and John Bainbridge). The sixteen committees and chairs are:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Archives | John Bainbridge |
| Audit | Jack Kerns |
| Budget | Mark Gingerich |
| Environmental Issues | Sherry Lyons |
| Exhibits | Anita Tyler |
| Gift Shop | Noot Canoles |
| Grants | Ann Kerns |
| Library | GINNA NAYLOR |
| Membership | Mary Jane Shanks |
| Newsletter | Mary Jane Shanks |
| Public Relations | MIKE BURNS |
| Special Events | Vacant |
| Speaker Series | Sue Leslie |
| Volunteers | Pat Krasowski |
| Web Site | Jim Curtis |

The Board usually has a turnover of one or two members each year, so we are always on the lookout for new members. As of our October Board meeting, we have one unfilled committee chair, the Special Events. This committee is responsible for organizing and implementing fund-raising efforts and special events. The committee already has several members, but we need a leader who can organize and run this important committee. If you are interested in this position, please contact me at curtisjim@comcast.net.



UPCOMING 2013 EVENTS

- Trail Guide Training** – For those who enjoy nature, hiking, and kids. February 5, 6, 7, 8, from 10 AM to 1 PM. \$25/person.
- Maple Sugar Days** – Tap trees and learn about making syrup. February 16, 17, 23, 24, between 10 AM and 4 PM. FREE.
- Annual Pancake Breakfast** – Celebrate the end of sugar days over breakfast at the Oregon Ridge Lodge on March 2 and 3, between 8 AM and noon. Tickets at door. \$7/adult; \$3/child

THE MEDUSA MYSTERY AT OREGON LAKE

By Naturalist Pam Ward

There has been a mysterious creature lurking beneath the waters of Oregon Lake, possibly for decades! It isn't Nessie. It isn't Leviathan or the Swamp Thing. It's the *Craspedacusta sowerbyi* — a freshwater jellyfish also known as hydromedusae. It sounds scary, but it isn't. "Medusa" is another word for jellyfish, a term derived from the tentacle-like head of Medusa, a marine deity in Greek Mythology.



Freshwater jellyfish often do not enter their medusa stage for years, and it is usually the only stage during which people see them since these jellyfish dwell at the bottom of the lake at all other times. Visitors swimming at the lake had the exciting opportunity to see these creatures in August and September this year. In September, two home school groups paddled canoes out into the lake to look at them. The medusa, which is about the size of a quarter, has 4000 tentacles and looks similar to a saltwater jellyfish. Though the jellyfish are toxic to the plankton they eat, they are too small to hurt a person, so some home schoolers even touched these translucent aquatics.

Craspedacusta sowerbyi reproduce both sexually and asexually. In late summer, the female medusa lays eggs, which are fertilized and sink to the bottom of the water. The ciliated (cilia meaning hair-like projections) planula (free swimming larvae) hatch and creep along the bottom until they attach to rocks or plants. In the spring and early summer, polyps are formed. These tiny, stalked forms of jellyfish attach to stable underwater surfaces such as rooted plants, rocks, or tree stumps. At any time, these polyps can produce "arms" which break off and become new larvae, which then become polyps. During winter months, polyps shrink to one millimeter in size, and when the weather warms, they start their cycle again.

Polyps can also have colonies. This happens when a polyp produces a bud, which becomes another polyp. The new polyp remains attached and the two polyps share the same stomach. Up to twelve buds may form on a single colony.

Every once in a while, a special bud known as a medusa bud forms on the side of a polyp. This breaks away from the polyp as an immature medusa, eventually becoming an adult medusa by late spring. This cycle can happen once and never again, or it can happen every year, or it can happen sporadically. Why we see medusas some years and not others is a mystery being studied. Prior to August 2012, the last citing of a freshwater jellyfish at Oregon Ridge was in 2006.

How did these creatures get here? Recently, scientists have discovered freshwater jellyfish living in almost every state. They most likely came into our country from the Amazon area in South America, unintentionally, often attached to plants or animals. It is unknown what impact, if any, they will have on our ecosystem. Although they don't appear to threaten our environment, scientists are studying the long-term effects. In the meantime, let's enjoy learning about our new neighbors!

TIPPY TERRAPIN SAYS,
"Please look at your mailing label.
If your membership has expired,
PLEASE RENEW TODAY!"



TRAILBLAZER STAFF

Editor/Design/Layout: Mary Jane Shanks
 Managing Editor: Joe Salvaggio

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Writers: Jim Curtis, Sue Leslie, Mary Jane Shanks, Pam Ward
Photographers: Jim Curtis, ORNC Staff

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER
 13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030
 410-887-1815; Fax: 410-887-1816
info@oregonridge.org; www.oregonridge.org

Articles for the Feb/March issue are due December 11.