



Monticello Bird Club

January 2012

Volume 26 Issue 5

Pete Myers to speak at the Bird Club Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 7:00pm

“If you happen to be hiking in Sugar Hollow and come upon an almost-senior citizen jogging up the South Fork of the Moorman’s fire road with binoculars in one hand and iPhone in the other, you’ve met Pete.” That’s the way our January 12th, 2012 speaker, Pete Myers, describes himself.

Besides being Sugar Hollow’s super tech, Pete is a man of many accomplishments. He has photographed birds from the Arctic to Tierra del Fuego in his more distant past, birds of Albemarle County more recently. In photos he will show to the bird club, he will emphasize a perspective inspired in part by Georgia O’Keefe. Pete is also an accomplished user of eBird and BirdsEye, technological applications of great use to birders. Pete in fact helped create BirdsEye. He will include in his talk electronic applications that can enhance birding.

Pete received a doctorate at the University of California Berkeley, specializing in shorebird ecology and behavior. For seven years he was a research ornithologist at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. While there, he founded the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, which has worked to protect

key shorebird migratory staging areas throughout the hemisphere. From there he went to National Audubon, where he was senior vice president for science. In 1990 he moved to Charlottesville with his family to become director of the W. Alton Jones Foundation, a position he held twelve years. In 2002, he founded Environmental Health Sciences, a web-based science and journalism non-profit that now employs over thirty people.

Many of you will recall that in March 2011, Pete found a first Virginia record of Violet-green Swallow right here in Albemarle County. Not only that, he got remarkable photos of it. Come hear on January 12th this man we might call the Legend of Sugar Hollow.

On another subject, many of you will do some travel in the upcoming months. As you travel, remember the bird club. Take some photos, and consider presenting them at the club. You don’t have to be a great photographer or entertainer to be one of our speakers. You never know, you might be a far better photographer or entertainer than you thought. I am always on the lookout for programs.

Let me hear from you if you have any ideas. And don’t forget about dinner with the speaker. We are now taking our speakers to The Brick Oven, in Rio Hill Shopping Center. It’s an excellent restaurant that gets food and check to us expeditiously. So far, it greatly outshines other restaurants we have recently tried.

Looking ahead to February 2012, our speaker will be Ron Luque of Charlottesville. Ron’s painting of Redheads, “Early Light,” won the recent state waterfowl conservation stamp contest. Come hear how Ron does his amazing brush work.



Barn Swallow photo by Pete Myers

Much Gratitude to Jim Nix

Jim Nix, who has recently stepped down as the one-person Membership Committee, deserves far more than just a formal round of thanks. A former Club President, Bird Seed sale czar, enthusiastic leader of countless walks, and all-around mover and shaker, he has been one of the most active members since way back in the previous century. He will continue to be that energetic, he hastens to add, but just not in this capacity. Lesslie Crowell has big shoes to fill but can call on Jim for advice. Once again, our gratitude for years of service and see you soon.

Comments from The President

Lou Tanner

It is appropriate that the word ‘serendipity’--or “pleasant surprise” as one dictionary has it—also comes from the Indian subcontinent indirectly because that is what a recent MBC meeting brought to mind for me. An obscure book about the history of Indian ornithology which Dave Hogg had brought in for recycling had an article that grabbed my attention. It discussed the contributions to the study of birds in India of one Allan Octavian Hume, better known as the founder in 1885 of the Indian Congress Party. Congress, as it is generally known, was the movement and party that Gandhi shepherded towards independence in 1947 and that dominates Indian political life to this day. At this time of year I always show my class the movie Gandhi so all this made for a fascinating set of coincidences and much food for thought over the holidays.

Over almost half a century Hume collected in the old-fashioned way that makes modern bird lovers cringe. He also had a network of similarly obsessed collectors, who transferred to him their own trophies, and the thousands upon thousands (upon thousands) of specimens were then warehoused in his home in Simla, the British summer capital in the foothills of the Himalayas. Eventually, over 82,000 of them were shipped to the British Museum though only 63,000 of these might have been his(!). An eccentric character if ever there was one, Hume has long been considered the “father”—or “pope” according to one observer--of Indian ornithology.

On a fruitless owl walk at Ivy Creek years ago, the fellow behind us in a line of sorts hailed from the southern India state of Tamil Nadu. It only later occurred to me that the last owl we had seen at that point was in a tree in that very state a couple of years before. That life is so very full of coincidences — or serendipity — makes it an endless banquet.

I was not fortunate enough to have known Thad Kelly, from whose collection this small treasure came, but I wish I had and will be forever grateful for the hours of enjoyment it gave me. It might—I suspect—have even given him a laugh or two.



Meeting Minutes, December 8, 2011

Submitted by Peggy Cornett, Secretary

Meeting Minutes, 8 December 2011
President Lou Tanner welcomed a capacity crowd of 68 members and guests to the club’s December meeting and annual holiday party; and began by thanking Priscilla and Ron Kingston for organizing the festivities and door prizes. Newcomers included Mike McMahon of Charlottesville, several Master Naturalists, and the James Harrigan family.

Lou announced an upcoming planning meeting in support of the proposed McIntire Botanical Garden to be held Monday evening, December 12, at Albemarle High School. For those interested in more information about the project’s vision and objectives, visit: <http://mcintirebotanicalgarden.org>
Treasurer Doug Rogers reported that the club was on budget with an income for the period of \$10,570.50; and expenses at \$9,240.31. Doug also gave an update on membership. This year the club exceeded its goal of 107 renewing and 10 new members with a total of 109

renewing and 12 new members. Doug credited the good work of outgoing membership chair Jim Nix and thanked him for his service. Members elected Lesslie Crowell as the new membership chair.

Dave Hogg reported on two upcoming field trips: a visit to Walnut Creek Park followed by an excursion to watch water fowl at some Northern Albemarle County lakes. Dave mentioned plans underway some fairly large trips in 2012, including the popular trip to view Golden Eagles in Highland County, which will be led by Brenda Tekin and Patti Reum. In early February Dave is planning a return visit to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel for wintering birds.

Jenny Gaden invited members to join the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, December 18th. She also mentioned a way to be proactive conservationists by quoting a passage

from the book, Good Birders Don’t Wear White, which encourages us to buying the migratory bird stamps, which in turn supports the purchase of national wetlands.

Recent bird sightings were shared. While visiting Norfolk recently, Lou Tanner watched a Sharp-shinned Hawk kill a Flicker and a Robin. Two Brown Creepers were seen on the same tree in Chickahominy Wildlife Area. Dan Bieker reported a rare sighting of an Ash-throated Flycatcher in Amelia County. Bill and Clare Leaning noted the return of their Brown Creeper in Earlysville. David White caught a glimpse of the albino deer in the Riverview Park area. A nesting Red-shouldered Hawk was watched being harassed by Crows. Jerry Therrien saw an Orange-crowned Warbler in the Back Bay area, and an Eastern Phoebe in Esmont. James Harrigan’s young daughter described seeing what might have been a Red-shouldered Hawk in Charlottesville.

Club Activities

First Saturdays

Saturday, January 7, 7:30am
Saturday, February 4, 7:30am

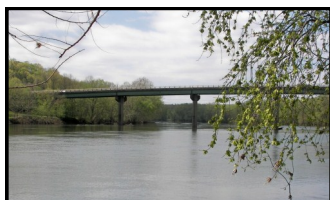
On the first Saturday of each month, at 7:30 am, the Monticello Bird Clubs offers a bird walk at Ivy Creek Natural Area for both novice and experienced bird watchers. Depending upon the weather, the walk may last 1-2 hours. Most walks focus on the areas near the main buildings and parking lot. Some walks venture out to the peninsula trail or other trails with interesting birds.

With the leaves off the trees, winter birds like the White-throated Sparrow and Rufous-sided Towhee are easier to spot. Join Lou Tanner on Jan. 7 to kick off a new year of birding. Birds sing even in the coldest months of the year. Teresa Shaner, an expert on bird calls, is leading the Feb. 4 walk. Using her ears, Teresa may find our smallest winter birds the Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets.

Southern Albemarle County

Saturday, January 14, 9:00am

Meet at the Keene Post Office (across from the veterinary office in Keene) Saturday January 14th at 9:00am. From Keene we'll make a driving circuit through southern Albemarle, stopping to walk wherever there is opportunity. We will stop in Scottsville for restrooms and a stand up lunch (there's a convenience store there that has quite good food). We'll make the traditional walk onto the Scottsville bridge to see what is on or over the river. Leader, Stauffer Miller, 434-296-5505, stauffer@seepub.com



Highland County

Saturday, January 21
Snow/rain date: Sunday, January 22

Join Patti Reum and Brenda Tekin for an all-day adventure to this unique part of Virginia with its high mountain valleys, vast woodlands, and sheep and cattle grazing farms in search of wintering specialties that include Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, finches and crossbills. Put on your woollies and plan on a warm lunch in a Monterey diner. Bring snacks and beverage.

This will be a combined trip with the Augusta and Monticello Bird Clubs. The Charlottesville folks can meet up by 7:15am at the Giant Store parking lot in Seminole Square off Route 29N. Everyone will converge at the Holiday Inn in Staunton at I-81 (exit 225/SR 225/Woodrow Wilson Pkwy) for departure promptly at 8:00am. Carpooling is strongly encouraged as we will be traveling back roads with several narrow passages with limited pull over areas.



Golden Eagle photo by Brenda Tekin

For anyone who may want to extend their visit to this unique area, Patti's Eagle Annie's Cottage, located in the heart of the Blue Grass Valley, is available for short or long term rental. For more information, go to www.eagleanniescottage.com

For more information on the trip, please contact Brenda (434) 962-4936 or brenda@birdsofvirginia.com.

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

February 4, 2011

A winter visit to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel has in the past provided views of wintering ducks not seen elsewhere along the Eastern Shore. If enough persons are interested, we will plan a trip across the CBBT on Saturday, February 4. The trip will be led by Mike Iwanik, who will afterward go on up to Chincoteague. Those wishing to make the trip with Mike will be most welcome. However, those wishing to spend only the day will return to Charlottesville, perhaps after looking for wintering ducks at the Dutch Gap Conservation Area near Henricus south of Richmond.

Dave Hogg will coordinate getting security forms mailed to the CBBT. Please contact Dave via e-mail (dhogg@nrao.edu) or phone (434-974-7592) if you are interested in going on this trip. The forms must be in Dave's hands by January 16.

We will plan to meet at the parking lot of the CBBT Authority at 8:45am. This is at the south end of the CBBT adjacent to the toll booths. Dave will try to arrange the carpooling after he has all of the registration forms.

Monticello Bird Club

The Wide, Wild and Weird World of Birds and Birding

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Virginia

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at University of Virginia is offering the following course that might interest members. This particular course will meet in Staunton, VA. For more information including an online catalog of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and course registration, see <http://pages.shanti.virginia.edu/olliuva>

Course: # A66

The Wide, Wild & Weird World of Birds and Birding

Time: 10:00am - Noon

Dates: February 9, 16, 23; March 1,8

Location: R.R. Smith Center 20 S. New Street, Staunton, VA

Instructor: John Spahr

Field Ornithology

Piedmont Virginia Community College

Piedmont Virginia Community College is offering the following course that might interest members. This particular course will meet at various locations. For more information see:

http://www.pvcc.edu/schedule/class_details.php?ID=846

Course: NAS 160

Field Ornithology: Students will study anatomy, physiology, reproduction and taxonomy, with special attention to bird families and behavior through the use of preserved specimens, as well as live observation. Includes identifying birds in the wild through sight and songs/calls and explores the interrelationships between wildlife, plants, habitats and humans.

Time: 7:00am - 10:30am

Dates: Saturdays February 18—June 2

Location: Various Locations

Instructor: Daniel Bieker

With Deepest Sympathy

Barbara Ann Konat

December 6, 1939 — December 23, 2011

Monticello Bird Club wishes to extend its very deepest sympathy to Henry Konat, whose wife Barbara died on Friday the 23rd of December. From the list of organizations in which she was active—ranging from the Order of the Eastern Star to the DAR—it is clear that she had both a wide range of interests and extraordinary energy. Such are the people whose tireless efforts are what make families and society work. We know that Henry and family will miss Barbara terribly, but we hope his close ties with the Monticello Bird Club can somehow alleviate that loss.



The Monticello Bird Club meets on the second Thursday of each month, September through June, at the Education Building of the Ivy Creek Natural Area on Earlysville Road, 1/2 mile north of Hydraulic Road. Membership is \$15 per year for individuals, \$25 for a family. Membership year is July 1—June 30. The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for each issue is 9:00AM on the 4th Thursday of the month.**



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Please visit our website at

www.monticellobirdclub.org

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