



Monticello Bird Club

January 2005

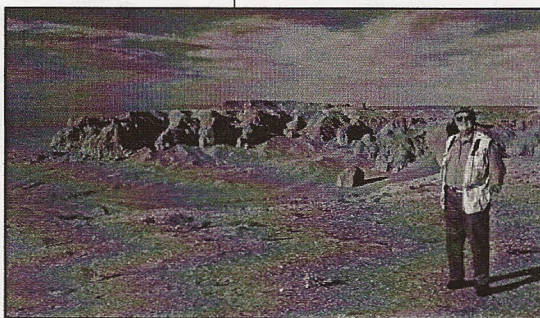
Volume 19, Number 5

January Meeting Topic

Mongolia Mesmerizes Visitors

Our January 13th destination is as strange and exotic as it is beautiful. Erwin Bohmfalk has prepared a talk and slide presentation on "Mongolia, Beautiful Land of Nomads and Nothingness." We will visit the Gobi Desert, including the "Flaming Cliffs," where in 1922 Roy Chapman Andrews discovered the first and largest source of dinosaur eggs, jaws and skulls in Central Asia. We will visit magnificent Siberian Mongolia, including Lake Khövsgöl, which is one of the deepest and largest sources of fresh water in the world, (it holds 2% of the world's fresh water; 90 rivers flow into the lake, only one flows out.). We will visit central and northern Mongolia with their scenic mountains covered with wild flowers. In addition to ancient temples, we will visit the "Gers" which are the homes of the famous Mongolian Nomads, a beautiful and gentle people living the simplest of lives. Our speaker, Erwin Bohmfalk, was born

in Kansas City, Texas, located appropriately between the towns of Kenedy and Nixon. He served as a pilot in the Army Air Corps during WWII and later received his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Colorado. For 26 years, Mr.



Erwin Bohmfalk and the famous Flaming Cliffs of the Gobi Desert.

Bohmfalk worked as a research chemist and supervisor for the DuPont Company, including a stint in the Netherlands. (continued on page 2.)

Sail Into Spring With Two Future Bird Club Talks

February 10: Ruth Burch

Butterflies and moths are Ruth's passion and the topic of her entertaining slide presentation. She will provide information about creating a butterfly habitat, including plant selection and garden design.

March 10: Thelma Dalmas

Dubbed "Warbler Road" in a 1978 article for the VSO newsletter, this forest service road in Botetourt County is the topic of Thelma's slide presentation. She will discuss "Spring on Warbler Road" and explore both birdlife and wildflowers.

Comments From the President...

I heard a bird cluck in the dark of December... a soft, contented sound coming from the woods that line the road where I walk every morning. I didn't have to see the bird to know what it was – the Hermit Thrush, my favorite winter bird. I'm not sure why this bird has particular appeal for me. Maybe it's because it is a quiet, subtle bird that I see now and then during the winter, but not every day, so it's a bird that I always stop to watch. I like the way it moves low in the woods from tree to tree, often stopping on a branch and remaining motionless. Is it listening for some distant message or just hoping that its stillness will persuade me to move on?

Sometimes the thrush comes to our bird bath for a drink, and on stormy days it is sure to visit our pea-

nut butter feeder. We put out blocks of a mixture of peanut butter, lard, oatmeal, etc. in wire containers that hang longitudinally. The thrush can't handle this. It won't just cling to the wire sides and peck; it insists on fluttering in mid air like an inept hummingbird. Maybe it gets a clump of food and maybe not. So my dear husband devised a horizontal arrangement for the feeder on which the thrush can stand and have a proper meal. You're welcome, Mr. HT.

In early spring, just before the Hermit Thrush moves north and the Wood Thrush reappears, I will hear the Hermit Thrush singing. No longer a soft cluck, but a series of musical whistles and twirls that shift in starting pitches and always seem to be at a distance. It suggests the end of a season and the start of a new one, and leaves me with a feeling of hopeful sadness.

—Jennifer Gaden, President

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Monticello Bird Club

"I Heard a Bird Sing" by Oliver Herford

I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December
A magical thing
And sweet to remember.

"We are nearer to Spring
Than we were in September,"
I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December.
—Oliver Herford—

The author of this poem, Oliver Herford (1863-1935), was born in England but lived most of his life in the United States. While he was recognized for his poetry, Herford was also a well-known illustrator and quite a wit, in his day. Here are a few samples of his quotes:

- "Only the young die good."
- "Many are called, but few get up."
- "Tact is to lie about others as you would have them lie about you."

The Reg'lar Lark by
Oliver Herford.
Courtesy of the Cab-
inet of American
Illustration.



Bird Club Key Info

The Monticello Bird Club normally meets at 7:30 p.m. 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.

The editor of the MBC Newsletter welcomes submissions including articles, photographs and notices. **DEADLINE for the February issue is January 26.** Please email information to Nancy King at turnermtn@mindspring.com or send to P.O. Box 22, Ivy, VA 22945.

Monticello Bird Club
P.O. Box 4362
Charlottesville, Virginia 22905
Please visit our website at
www.ecoventures-travel.com/mbc

Pale Male Moves New Yorkers

New York has its first celebrity bird! Pale Male, the Red-tailed Hawk who has resided on a 12th-floor perch at 927 Fifth Avenue since 1993 was "evicted" by the Co-op Board last month. His crime? A messy nest and extraneous pigeon parts decorating the sidewalk below. Pale Male was immortalized in Marie Winn's "Red Tails in Love" and many New Yorkers quickly came to his defense—they picketed outside the tony Fifth Avenue building and voiced their anger to the parks commissioner.

One person wrote, "The Pale Male episode just proves the truth of the old adage: Money can't buy class. Any New Yorker who helps reduce the pigeon population, free of charge, and in an environmentally responsible way, deserves to build a home on Fifth Avenue."

There's a happy ending to this tale. The 927 Fifth Avenue Co-op Board has decided to restore Pale Male's

nest site but the hawk and his mate, Lola, have been spotted a few blocks away constructing new digs atop the swanky Carlyle Hotel.

—Excerpted from *New York Times*
December 19, 2004

Continued from page 1

Erwin Bohmfalk

He currently owns and operates The Purple Foot, a wine & cheese shop and restaurant in Waynesboro. But that doesn't keep him from traveling; he has visited all seven continents including Antarctica and the geographic North Pole.

Please join our speaker and other MBC members on January 13 at Wild Greens Restaurant in the North Wing of the Barracks Road Shopping Center at 5:30 pm for an informal dinner.

Monticello Bird Club Board Members

President	Jennifer Gaden	jg3p@cstone.net	293-6275
Vice President	Jim Hill	jimcarhill@adelphia.net	975-6523
Secretary	Peggy Cornett	pcornett@monticello.org	984-9816
Treasurer	Bob Gilges	rgilges@msn.com	823-7638
Field Trips	Scott Clark	sc8y@swissinfo.org	296-5823x3325
Guest Speakers	Bill Leaning	omanu@cstone.net	964-1610
	Jim Nix	jnix@cstone.net	973-7366
	Ron Kingston	kingston@cstone.net	293-5173
Publicity	Catherine Wray	CatWry@aol.com	971-9271
Hospitality	Priscilla Kingston	kingston@cstone.net	293-5173
Newsletter	Nancy King	turnermtn@mindspring.com	293-7201
Membership	Robyn Kells	rkells@ntelos.net	970-1044
Birdseed Sales	Howard Davis	howardsuedavis@juno.com	964-1242
	Teresa Shaner	twshaner@adelphia.net	964-9420

Don Your Long Underwear for Winter Field Trips

Join us as we travel to the coast in search of wintering sea ducks and gulls. Past

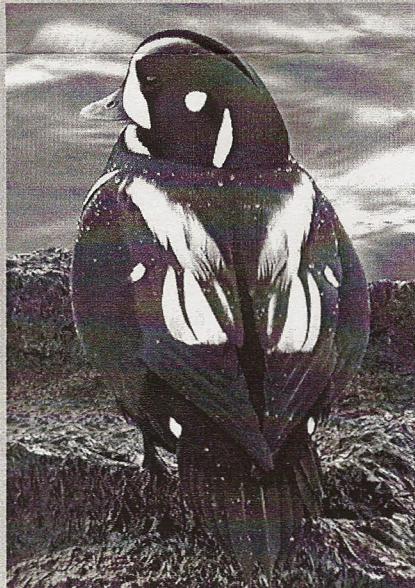
Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel & Eastern Shore NWR
Saturday, January 22

trips have produced Common and King Eider, **Harlequin Duck** (see photo by Brenda Tekin), harbor seal and much more. For those who wish to carpool, we will meet at the Pantops Shopping Center upper parking lot in front of Subway behind Hardees to leave promptly by 6:15am. Dress in layers and pack food and drink. Plan to return by 6:30pm.. Those wishing to drive need to obtain their letter of permission for calendar year 2005 by phoning the CBBT Commission at 757-331-2960.

Special note: All birders who visit the islands are urged to follow the rules and regulations received with your permission letter so that we all may continue to enjoy this privilege.

For further information and to reserve your spot, contact Brenda Tekin at 434-962-4936, 434-977-4209 or at brenda@birdsofvirginia.com.

Rain/Snow Date:
Sunday, January 23



Highland County
Saturday, February 12

North country -- land of Golden Eagle and wintering Rough-legged Hawk. Put on your thermals and woolies and join us on this driving tour of Virginia's "Little Switzerland." We will meet in Giant Grocery parking lot, Seminole Square Shopping Center to leave promptly at 7:15am.. Bring along snack and beverage and plan on a warm lunch at a Monterey diner.

For information contact Brenda Tekin 434-962-4936, 434-977-4209 or brenda@birdsofvirginia.com.

Rain/Snow date:
Sunday, February 13

MBC Minutes for December 9, 2004

This was our special holiday meeting and there was a record turn-out with around 75 attending. President Jenny Gaden presided and Priscilla Kingston coordinated the evening's festivities, which included door prizes and lots of goodies to eat.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Gilges gave a brief report on the club's finances and the current status of membership renewals. Later in the meeting Jenny Gaden mentioned that the board had a budget meeting in November and that we are open to suggestions and ideas

from the membership for use of the club's funds.

New Bird Species in Virginia: Allen Hale reported that a Band-rumped Storm Petrel was found at the Nelson County High School on September 18, the day after Hurricane Ivan swept through Virginia. This is an uncommon shore bird and a new species for Nelson County. The bird, which was around 7 inches long, was sent to the Smithsonian for verification.

Other Bird Sightings: John Zimmerman noted that a bluebird was reported at the banding station in Kiptopeake State Park. It was reported that Fran Boninti found a Virginia Rail dead on the road near her home (off Ivy Road). Bob Gilges saw a Bald Eagle at the dam in Sugar Hollow and Bald Eagles also have been seen in

Scottsville and along the Rivanna recently. Bill Leaning had a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Earlysville and a juvenile White-crowned Sparrow, with a pink bill. Brenda Tekin spotted a Merlin in downtown Charlottesville and reported that 30-35 King Swallows, a Harlequin Duck, and Black-chinned Hummingbird were spotted at the Eastern Shore.

Pine Knot Update: Jenny Gaden discussed the recent field trip to Pine Knot and asked for volunteers to help with the club's commitment to do a year-long survey of the birds at that site.

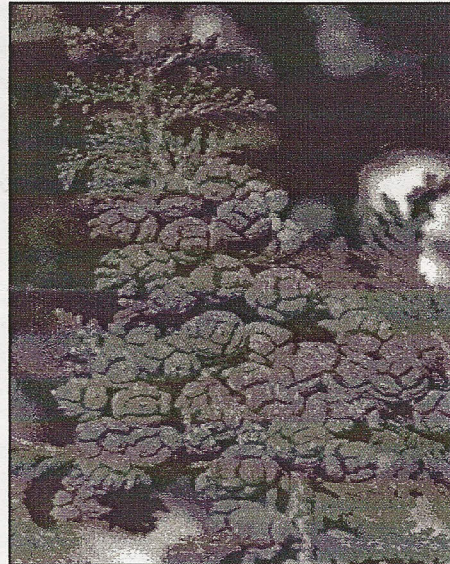
Submitted by
Peggy Cornett,
Secretary

Gardening for Wildlife: Happy, Hardy Hinoki

I recently took a walk through my "wild" winter garden and was struck by the need to add more evergreen trees. Hurricane Isabel took down close to 90 of the Virginia Pines and Red Cedars in our woods. That is a lot of evergreen winter shelter and summer nesting habitat lost. I remembered a wonderful Hinoki Falsecypress I planted in our New Jersey garden in 1984 and how, over the years, all sorts of birds had built nests in that tree. So I planted two Hinoki Falsecypress in our Earlsyville garden last year.

Chamaecyparis obtusa, also known as Hinoki Falsecypress, are monoecious—they have both male and female flowers on the same specimen. The small cones are attractive to seed-eating birds. *Chamaecyparis obtusa* are largely pyramidal trees with pendulous branches at the tips. The species can grow 50 to 75-foot high and 10 to 20-foot wide but are, generally, about 50% smaller under landscape conditions. They can also be maintained at suitable heights by selective pruning. Pruning is best done in the

spring although branches can be removed anytime. Many of the cultivars are excellent and offer great diversity in form, color and texture. The dwarf



forms fit well into the smaller garden landscape while still providing shelter and nesting sites.

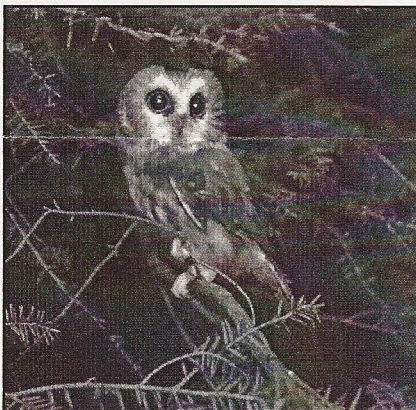
Hinoki Falsecypress do best in full sun and in rich, moist but well-drained soil. They can tolerate light shade but don't like drying winds. They are also relatively free of serious disease problems. Hinoki Falsecypress can be used for almost any landscape situation provided the proper cultivar is chosen. They

make good hedges or screen plantings. The smaller cultivars can be used in foundation and border plantings. Selected cultivars make great specimen plants or groupings. Nursery grown, Hinoki Falsecypress—*Chamaecyparis obtusa*--is of medium height (25 feet in 20 years) growing into a tall, slender pyramid with spreading branches and attractive drooping, frond-like branchlets.

CULTIVARS: "Nana Gracilis" is one of the specimens I planted at *Omanu* with dark, green foliage. It makes a wonderful pyramidal bush about 6-foot high and 3 to 4-foot wide. "Fern Spray Gold" is the second specimen planted, a dwarf cultivar of *C. obtusa* but with rich golden yellow branch tips. "Crippsii" is a full-sized tree growing as a broad pyramid with spreading branches and rich golden yellow branchlets. "Filicoides" is a small tree with dense pendulous clusters of "fern-spray" green foliage. "Nana" is a dark green dwarf cultivar to 3-foot high and 4-foot wide. There are more than 80 cultivars of *C. obtusa* listed in nursery catalogs. I, personally, think this attractive and useful evergreen should be more widely used as a bird-friendly plant.

—Bill Leaning

Brenda Tekin Photo Corner



Brenda Tekin shot this photo of a Northern Saw-whet Owl in November shortly after its release from Claire Mellinger's banding station in Rockingham County. Check out some of Brenda's other lovely digital images at her website, birdsofvirginia.com.

17 Years Ago...give or take a few

Bill Akers and Leigh Jones (Surdukowski) were still directing activities at the MBC but they were clearly looking forward to elections in April. "We need a new president and vice president for certain."

Some unusual species were reported including: an eared grebe in Lynchburg; a Lewis's Woodpecker wintering in Loudon County; and a White-winged Dove and Ash-throated Flycatcher making appearances on the Eastern Shore.

While not technically from January 1988, I found an amusing ditty from December 1986 that may bear re-printing:

Carol for Deranged Christmas Counters

"Cardinals sing, are you listening?
Grosbeak wings are a-glistening.
We'll count them all day,
Sapsucker and jay,
Searching for a wondrous winter wren."

—Editor