

# Monticello Bird Club

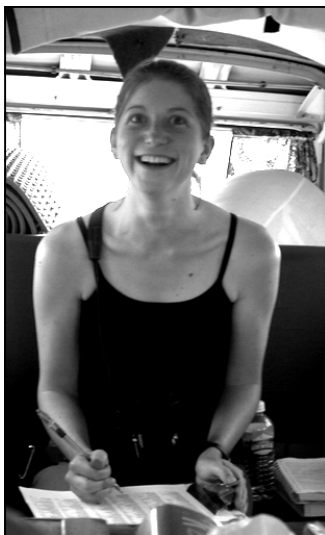
May 2006

Volume 20, Number 9

## Where in the World is Emily Snell-Rood?

Dear Monticello Bird Club members,

I wanted to give an update for those who were interested in what became of the crazy 11-year-old girl who joined the bird club in '91 and left town in '98 for college. I spent four years at the College of William & Mary where I greatly enjoyed researching birds; first investigating the species found on created and natural wetlands (sorry, no Ivory-billed Woodpeckers), and then on determinants of social rank and access to food in White-throated Sparrows (getting there first in the fall makes a big difference!).



Emilie Snell-Rood

the thousands in a small room! I'm studying the evolution of learning and behavioral plasticity by looking at costs of being a genetically good learner (e.g., big brains, exploratory behavior) and the trade-offs associated with these costs (e.g., breeding later, laying larger eggs, being fatter). I am thrilled to now be exploring the fascinating world of insects which, prior to 2003 I mainly considered a food source for birds. But I still draw a lot of inspiration from birds--I'm not sure avian creatures could ever leave our hearts.

ing bird, insect and plant surveys on Nature Conservancy land in Mexico, and bringing bugs and birds to kids and the public. I read the MBC newsletter with glee whenever I am home, and secretly hope that one day soon I can meet up with the Monticello Bird Club again. I have many fond memories of the MBC and can never capture in words what it meant to have such a great group of mentors during middle school and high school. Please get in touch if you are ever in the Tucson area (I'll take you to some of the local hotspots – we have a few!) or if you would like to chat – I would love to catch up with those of you from years past, and I would love to meet anyone who has joined since 1998! Hope to see you all soon, Emilie Snell-Rood. [emilies@email.arizona.edu](mailto:emilies@email.arizona.edu).

*[Thanks to Bill Minor for suggesting this story and tracking down Emilie!]*

Outside of research, I spend a lot of time exploring the area around Tucson, direct-

After graduating with a BS in biology in 2002 I moved on to the University of Arizona in Tucson. I am now in my fourth year of a Ph.D. program in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. I ended up working on butterflies here (the birds of the insect world), for the main reason that they are much easier than birds to rear by

### Comments From the President

Let's try something new. On Saturday, May 27, 2-4 pm at the Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building, let's have a Binocular Show & Tell event. The purpose of this is to give people who are interested in purchasing binoculars an opportunity to learn about some of the equipment that is available. It is difficult to find stores or places where there is a good variety of choice, and where people can discuss the pros and cons of specific binoculars with others who have used them. We hope that this will provide a service to club members who are thinking about purchasing new equipment as well as to the wider public. We will publicize the event as we do our meetings.

Currently we have seven people who have agreed to come with the following binoculars: Eagle Optics 8x42; Swarovski 10x42, 8x42; Bausch and Lomb Elite 10x42, 8x42; Leupold 10x42; Nikon 10x50; Nikon Monarch 8x42; Minolta 7x35, 10x50; and Zeiss 10x42. We could certainly use more folks with your binoculars. Please let me know if you would be willing to participate. Never having tried something like this before it is difficult to anticipate how many people will respond to our invitation, but let's give it a try. As the old saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

—Jennifer Gaden, president

Inside May	2006
<i>Member's Night</i>	2
<i>Bird Notes &amp; News</i>	2
<i>MBC Minutes</i>	2
<i>Field Trips</i>	3
<i>Chickasaw Plum</i>	4

## Bird Notes & News...Notes & News

### NGOS NEED LAPTOPS

Donate your used laptop computers to Latin American NGOs for their field staff to use in conservation projects. American Bird Conservancy will receive them, make sure all hard drives and memories are erased, and get them to the folks in the field. Contact Paul Salaman at psalaman@abcbirds.org.

### JOHN MEHNER DIES

MBC wishes to extend condolences to the family and friends of John Mehner who died April 13. An uncompromising champion of the environment, he

spearheaded the effort to build the Pearce Science Center at Mary Baldwin College. His pioneering work with the effects of DDT on the American Robin was acknowledged by Rachel Carson in her book, *Silent Spring*



## May 11: Member's Night

Come one, come all to Member's Night and bring your pictures to share. A laptop computer and projector will be available for those of you with digital images.

Bring you images stored on a CD, DVD or a digital film reader that can plug into the USB port of a computer. For those of you with film slides, a slide projector will also be available. Please contact Brenda Tekin to let her know you plan to bring images or if you have questions. Contact [brenda@birdsof virginia.com](mailto:brenda@birdsof virginia.com) or 962-4936.

**Also:** those precocious Stone Robinson 4th graders will give a PowerPoint report on their experiences with the bird feeders that MBC provided for them last fall. You don't want to miss this! We may all pick up some power point tips....

## Members to Vote for MBC Officers

The Nominating Committee, headed by Dede Austin, submitted the following list of candidates to serve as the Executive Officers of the Monticello Bird Club for the year 2006-2007.

President.....Jenny Gaden  
Vice president.....Jim Hill  
Secretary.....Peggy Cornett  
Treasurer.....Henry Konat

This slate will be presented at the May 11th MBC meeting for a vote. MBC members may also make nominations from the floor. In addition to the Executive Officers, Amy Gilmer will be joining the MBC Board as the new Newsletter Editor.

We are still looking for some enthusiastic folks to help us with the Program Committee and Field Trip Committee. This is not a job that takes a lot of time; just some creative thinking and a desire to make the club a little bit better! Contact Jenny Gaden for more information.

## 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 June issue is May 22.** Please email information to Nancy King at [turnermtn@mindspring.com](mailto: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](http://www.ecoventures-travel.com/mbc)

## Monticello Bird Club Board Members

<b>President</b>	Jennifer Gaden	<a href="mailto:jgaden@earthlink.net">jgaden@earthlink.net</a>	293-6275
<b>Vice President</b>	Jim Hill	<a href="mailto:jimcarhill@adelphia.net">jimcarhill@adelphia.net</a>	975-6523
<b>Secretary</b>	Peggy Cornett	<a href="mailto:pcornett@monticello.org">pcornett@monticello.org</a>	984-9816
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bob Gilges	<a href="mailto:rgilges@msn.com">rgilges@msn.com</a>	823-7638
<b>Field Trips</b>	Lois Gebhardt John Zimmerman	<a href="mailto:cvillebirder@earthlink.net">cvillebirder@earthlink.net</a> <a href="mailto:jozimmva@aol.com">jozimmva@aol.com</a>	972-2446 974-9293
<b>Programs</b>	Ron Kingston	<a href="mailto:kingston@cstone.net">kingston@cstone.net</a>	293-5173
<b>Publicity</b>	Ellen Dudley	<a href="mailto:emdudley@nexet.net">emdudley@nexet.net</a>	244-2688
<b>Hospitality</b>	Priscilla Kingston	<a href="mailto:kingston@cstone.net">kingston@cstone.net</a>	293-5173
<b>Newsletter</b>	Nancy King	<a href="mailto:turnermtn@mindspring.com">turnermtn@mindspring.com</a>	293-7201
<b>Membership</b>	Robyn Kells	<a href="mailto:rkells@ntelos.net">rkells@ntelos.net</a>	970-1044
<b>Birdseed Sale</b>	Howard Davis	<a href="mailto:howardsuedavis@juno.com">howardsuedavis@juno.com</a>	964-1242

# Spring Into Spring with MBC Field Trips

## ***South River Falls Saturday, May 13***

John Zimmerman will lead this trip which will cover several different habitats. At least 10 species of warblers are possible including cerulean, Blackburnian, Canada, hooded, black-throated blue, chestnut-sided, and ovenbird. We might also spot Yellow-throated Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Veery, and Scarlet Tanager. The trip is a moderately difficult climb - a 3.5 mile loop descending from an elevation of 2940' on Skyline Drive to 2120' at the brink of the falls through a second growth deciduous forest of oak, maple, hickory and patches of pine and back up to Skyline Drive. **Meet at 6:15 am in the Giant parking lot, Seminole Square on Rte. 29.** Will return to Seminole Square around noon. Contact leader John Zimmerman at 434-974-9293 or jozimmva@aol.com.

## ***Rivanna River Trail Wednesday, May 17***

If your weekends are too busy to bird, try a weekday morning walk with Stauffer Miller. We'll **meet at 7:30 am at Riverview Park**, which is at the end of Chesapeake Street in Charlottesville, for a pleasant walk on the Rivanna River Trail. The walk should last 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on the numbers of birds we're seeing. Contact leader Stauffer Miller at 296-5505 or stauffer@seepub.com.

## ***Cowbane Prairie / Rte 610 Saturday, May 20***

Interesting habitat on this trip will range from Blue Ridge hardwood forest and edge at about 3000 feet, to old fields, marshy meadow, and pastures in the Shenandoah Valley. Leader John Zimmerman says we should find a good diversity of species. Hiking will be difficulty to easy. **Meet at 6:15 am in the Giant parking lot, Seminole Square.** Plan to carpool. Alternately, you can drive to Afton Inn parking lot at exit 99, I-64 and meet us there at approximately 6:45 am. We will caravan along Rte 610, stopping from time to time to bird the roadsides and continue to the intersection of US 340 in Stuarts Draft. Turn left to Cowbane Natural Area on Rte 909 where we will park and walk. It will be wet and soggy (hopefully). Contact leader John Zimmerman at 434-974-9293 or jozimmva@aol.com.

## ***Ivy Creek Natural Area Saturday, June 3***

Join Leigh Surdukowski at 7:30 am in the parking lot of the Ivy Creek Natural Area for a leisurely walk to observe the birds of the area.

## MBC Minutes for April 13, 2006

President Jenny Gaden called the meeting to order with a Red-tailed Hawk bird whistle. Quite impressive! There were 40 present, including several newcomers: Pat Willis (actually her 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting) and Bobby Burke, a novice birder who is blind.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bob Gilges reported no activity this month. Please welcome new member, **Anne Gibson**.

**Field Trips:** Bob Zimmerman was not present, so Jenny summarized the April and May field trips and urged people to check out the newsletter for more details. She reported that the Dragon Run field trip was full.

**Announcements:** **Brenda Tekin** will be coordinating Member's Night and said we have the capability this year of showing photos from CDs, Power Point, and DVDs. She will bring a laptop for this purpose. We will also have a projector to show slides, the old-fashioned way. Please contact Brenda if you would like to show your photos so the rest of the club may enjoy them.

**Jenny** said the fourth-graders from Stones Robinson will make a short Power Point presentation at the May meeting to show what they learned about birds from the bird-feeding kit donated by our club last year.

**Dede Austin** announced that she has found volunteers to fill the executive board and introduced those present.

**Henry Konat** will be the new treasurer and **Amy Gilmer** will be the new newsletter editor. All other offices remain the same. Jenny said we are still looking for a few people to serve on the Field Trips and Program Committees. It doesn't take much time.

**Jenny** has re-scheduled the "Binocular Show & Tell Day" for Saturday May 27 from 2:00-4:00 pm at Ivy Creek Natural Area. This event will be open to members as well as the public. She passed around a sign-up sheet.

**Jenny** talked about her personal experience helping Bobby Burke enjoy a First Saturday Bird Walk. She said it was a 90-minute commitment and an easy walk around Ivy Creek, avoiding the trails and rough terrain. She asked others to contact her who might be interested in helping people who are blind learn to appreciate birds.

**Jenny** offered a collection of maps, guides, magazines and other publications to take home. She also pointed to a collection of "anti-predator sticks" for nest-boxes and offered them free to members.

**Bird Sightings:** **Brenda Tekin** revealed that Bald Eagles are nesting in  
(continued on next page)

# Chickasaw Plum Blossoms in Spring

The Chickasaw Plum or Sand Plum is usually a thicket-forming shrub. But

*Prunus angustifolia* is occasionally found as a small tree; in fact, the specimen I have growing at Omanu is a single-trunked small tree that flowered for the first time this spring (2006). There was a cloud of white blossoms in late March. The fruit is a 1/2

inch lustrous red (or yellow) "plum." The fruit is eaten by several species of birds and the thickets can also provide natural cover. The suckering, coloniz-

ing form of this plant is not suitable for small gardens but is ideal for en-

trance roads, edge habitats, or as part of a wildlife hedgerow. It will grow in a range of soil types in either sun or partial shade.

This shrub was apparently brought

from the southwest by the Chickasaw Indians and cultivated before the arrival of European colonists. The Chickasaw Plum is now naturalized from New Jersey, south to central

Florida, west to Texas and north to Kansas.



Chickasaw Plum in "a cloud of white blossoms."  
Photo: gillespiemuseum.stetson.edu.



Chickasaw Plum leaf, up close.  
Photo: gillespiemuseum.stetson.edu.

The Chickasaw Plum is yet another native shrub worthy of a try in your wildlife garden.

—Bill Leaning

## MBC Minutes (Continued)



Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo: Brenda Tekin

Highland County. She, with the VA Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, has confirmed a nest that looks like it is at least two years old. The birds are on the nest now. She also said there is a Red-shouldered Hawk's nest at UVa's Ivy Road Parking Garage, right on the corner of Ivy Road, halfway up a Sycamore. (See photo, left.)

**Nancy Newman** said a friend of hers saw a mature Bald Eagle swoop down for some road kill on Rugby Road. The bird literally stopped traffic!

**Betty Moody** watched an adult Bald Eagle and Osprey at ICNA. **Bill Leaning** reports the best start ever for his bluebird boxes—29 eggs and 5 babies. **Henry Konat** says he observed white eggs laid by bluebirds in one of his boxes. **Bob Gilges** said his neighbor Marlene Condon has heard Whip-poor-wills. Bob has 7 Wood Ducks on his pond and he's heard woodcocks displaying. **Paul Blair's** Rufous Hummingbird is still coming to his feeder, as of the end of March. **Bonnie Saxton** saw bluebirds and a

Pileated Woodpecker in her backyard. **David White** observed Blue-winged & Green-winged Teal and Wood Ducks on the Panorama Farm pond, and **Jenny Gaden** says there are Wood Ducks on the Key West pond.

**Francis Fife** asked is anyone knew how to stop crows from washing their bread and chicken legs in his fountain. No one had a solution.

**Ron Kingston** read a short fact sheet about the Northern Mockingbird, Thomas Jefferson's favorite bird, on the 263<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of TJ's birthday. The mockingbird is also MBC's "club bird."

Jenny Gaden introduced the speaker, Teta Kain, and said Teta's talk would be videotaped for Mo Stevens, Albemarle County's premier birder and field botanist, who is recovering from a stroke. Mo started compiling the Albemarle Christmas Bird Count back in 1946.

—Nancy King  
(for Peggy Cornett, secretary)