

SANCTUARY

Newsletter of the
White Memorial
Conservation Center

Vol. XXVII No. 4
Fall 2009

Museum Hours:

Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.

For Information

Phone: 860-567-0857
E-Mail: info@whitememorialcc.org
Website: www.whitememorialcc.org



Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful! Turkey Vulture in Connecticut
Photo Credit: Paul J. Fusco / CT DEP-Wildlife

Turkey Vultures in Connecticut

by Julie Victoria, Wildlife Biologist, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

The ultimate recycler in the bird world is probably the Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), even their Genus name *Cathartes* translates to purifier or cleaner. Feeding on carrion (dead animals), these large birds with a wingspan of 67-72" are easily recognized soaring overhead with their wings in a v shape and their pale gray wing feathers showing underneath. The sexes are similar in appearance as they both have brown to blackish plumage and a bare (featherless) head that can vary in color from pink to red. It is from the bare head which resembles the wild turkey that this bird received its common name. The featherless head is an adaptation that allows this bird to eat dead animals without getting blood and tissue on any head feathers which may be difficult to preen off. Known by birders as TVs, the only species they are probably confused with are Black Vultures.

Turkey Vultures breed, winter and migrate throughout Connecticut. While the distribution and numbers of this bird may have fluctuated historically, it is speculated that their expansion in the Northeast was tied to the increase in the white-tailed deer population. It is possible that the increase in population was also due to the increase in the numbers of roads and vehicles and landfills. They nest on rocky ledges and the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Connecticut* (1994) indicates that the majority of confirmed nesting records

were from the western part of the state. There are few predators of the adults but the young may be preyed on during the nesting season by skunks, owls, raccoons and hawks.

Probably the most unique feature of the Turkey Vulture is its keen sense of smell. Most birds can't smell, but the studies with Turkey Vultures show that they can smell rotten meat that is completely hidden from



Tree Huggers: Turkey Vultures

Photo Credit: Horst Antosch, Adventurer and Photographer

view from quite a distance away. It is this ability that allows them to live anywhere they can find their food supply. A method of defense by the adults and the young is to regurgitate undigested food in the direction of a disturbance, even if it occurs at the nest site, to drive the disturber away with the foul smell of regurgitated food. Also, in the heat of the summer these birds often defecate on their feet and legs to cool themselves off. And if I haven't given you too much information about the Turkey Vulture's lack

of personal hygiene, these birds cannot be leg banded by bird banders because the defecation can harden like cement around a leg band and cause injury. The DEP Wildlife Division does not keep track of Turkey Vulture nest sites, the only one that I discovered unintentionally while climbing on a rocky ledge, smelled so bad that I couldn't get away from it fast enough.

Turkey Vultures also roost together at night on power lines or in tall trees. Unlike crows that roost noisily together, they are quiet since they really haven't any vocal organs and hence no call just a hiss. However, the area around the roosts can smell terrible. Because of the bird's digestive system any bacteria or disease that they ingested on their food is killed so the droppings are considered disease free but not odor free. It is this reason that homeowners that have large roosting colonies of Turkey Vultures next to their properties often don't appreciate the uniqueness of this bird.

The numbers of Turkey Vultures are considered secure in Connecticut and they are considered a species of Least Concern of the International Union of Conservation and Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) red list of threatened species. The species is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and it is illegal to take, kill or possess them.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

A violation of this law is punishable by a fine up to \$15,000 and imprisonment of up to six months.

For more information on:

Black Vultures see the May/June 2001 Connecticut Wildlife at http://www.ct.gov/departments/lib/departments/wildlife/pdf_files/outreach/connecticut_wildlife_magazine/cwmj01.pdf

Hear their hiss:

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Turkey_Vulture/sounds



Carrion On!

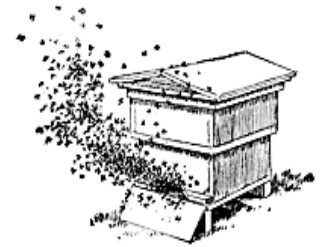
Photo Credit: Horst Antosch, Adventurer and Photographer

WHITE MEMORIAL THANKS Northwest Community Bank Litchfield Bancorp and Walmart



for making our
28th Annual Family Nature Day
possible

Thanks to Mark Moorman
of Sprain Brook Apiary,
Woodbury for installing and
overseeing our
Honey Bee
Observation Hive
again this summer!



Make a Difference

In her continuing series, Zoë Greenwood helps you find small ways to help the environment

I spent some time recently reading all of the articles I have written for this publication. All right, all right, it was a *slow* day and it was *raining again*! Obviously, all the articles have a theme... make a difference and the easy ways to achieve that goal. What struck me throughout the articles, though, was how simple it all seemed. There were no earth-shattering revelations or even all that many new ideas. What struck me was that so much of making a difference seems to be about simplifying your life.

Put up a rain barrel and collect the rain to water plants and save on your electric and water bills. Make trash free lunches and save on the amount of trash that goes to the landfill. Make fabric bags for gifts and save on paper, which saves trees and also saves on the processing used by making those trees into paper. All pretty simple ideas, actually, and all fairly easy to achieve. Recycle. Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without. Need versus want.

I've been reading a lot of historical

fiction this summer. Most of the books were from used book sales or lends from friends or from the library. It struck me how many parallel topics there were in what I was reading and the similar things I had written about. During the various wars fought throughout our history, there were financial hardships for those folks left at home. Financial hardships and lack of goods force people to look within and live closer to the earth. They didn't necessarily start out to save money, or save the earth; they were trying to survive. However, along the way they DID save money and in turn, helped the environment. There were fewer things to buy and they based buying on need.

So, what new idea do I have this time? I guess it is "think". Think before you buy. Think before you travel. Think before you throw something away.

Make a list of your errands and stop and do some of them when you are picking the kids up from practice. Leave home twenty minutes early and do an errand on the way to work. Plan your route according to

where you have to go and what you have to do. The car is already running, take advantage. Make a master grocery shopping list and have EVERYONE circle what needs to be bought so that you don't run out for toothpaste or milk. That way you don't already purchase something that you have three of at home.

When you are doing laundry, it is so easy to have a bag right there in which you put clothing that is too small or you're just plain tired of. Wash, dry and put it in the bag. When the bag is full, drop it off at one of those dozens of little sheds where used clothing is donated.

As a close friend used to say, "It's not brain surgery, people". She is right. Just think before you act and you will surely **make a difference**.



RESEARCH FORUM

Hawk Watching

By Dave Rosgen, Wildlife Biologist

Birding (or bird watching) has become an extremely popular pastime. In 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated that 46 million people engaged in this form of outdoor recreation. Besides being fun, this activity can be very helpful to wildlife conservation. "Citizen Scientists", as they are usually called, can contribute a sizeable amount of volunteer manpower to wildlife research and management efforts. One of the many long-term projects that involve volunteers is the monitoring of hawk populations in North America. It is coordinated by the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). While this effort would involve a huge amount of work during the winter, spring, and summer, when hawk populations are often widely distributed and harder to find, it is comparatively easy during the fall. Many hawks migrate south in the fall, riding northerly winds and thermal updrafts in order to keep their energy expenditure to a minimum. They frequently follow ridgelines, where they find these favorable winds. They also have an aversion to crossing water, so they often "pile-up" at coastal points, while they mill around deciding whether to go across the water or follow Connecticut's coastline south or west. These types of places afford excellent hawk watching and counting opportunities when the winds are favorable.

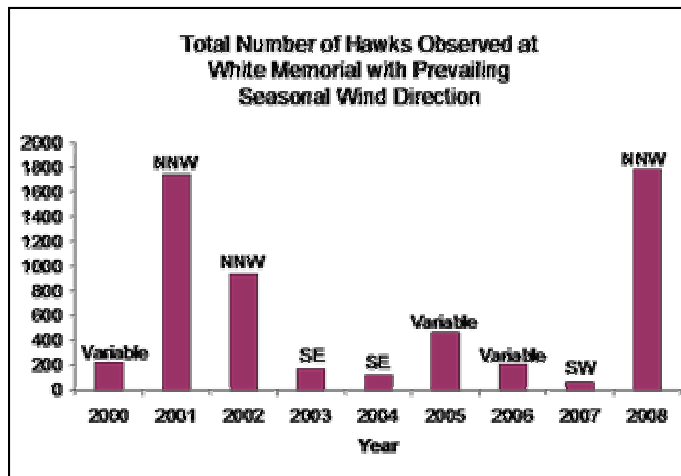
Learning to identify migrating hawks in Connecticut is relatively easy because there are only 16 species, including Turkey and Black Vultures (which are more closely related to storks, not hawks). Most field guides show pictures and illustrations of hawks in flight, and a few books have been devoted entirely to this subject. There is no substitute to learning

from an experienced person, which is why I and most of my colleagues manning hawk watch sites welcome beginners and novices to join us. At White Memorial Foundation we are parked on one or more of the open areas around the Museum area every nice day from early September through early October. In general, we man our site from mid-morning through mid-afternoon, which is when most hawks are migrating overhead. A few clouds in the sky make it easier to pick out hawks than completely blue skies. About half of all hawks passing over a site are seen with

manning them is highly variable. White Memorial Foundation's site was manned on 8 days last fall, and we put-in a total of 23 hours. The number of hawks observed varies widely from one year to the next at WMF (See Figure). We have learned by analyzing observations found on the HMANA network that migrating hawks are at the mercy of the weather, especially the prevailing wind direction. Southern and easterly winds push the birds westward during which New England monitors observe fewer hawks; all the while the Midwestern states see many hawks during these seasons.

Conversely, New England saw 2 days with strong northwest winds last year which explains the high number of hawks passing overhead. At WMF, we counted a total of 1778 hawks; 1189 of them on September 18th, alone. It just goes to show that, as with all other aspects of birding, you never can be sure what you will encounter. At least with hawk watching you can be pretty sure that if the weather is reasonably clear and the winds are coming out of the

north in September, hawks will be migrating through Connecticut's skies. So, look up! The sight can be spectacular!



unaided eyes; the rest have to be found with binoculars. That's why good eyesight is important and it is really helpful to have multiple observers.

White Memorial has been monitoring hawk migration every year since 1999. We joined HMANA in 2006, which networks us with over 200 hawk watches throughout North and Central America. We send our reports to them hourly via their hawkcount.org website so that everyone on the network receives timely reports of hawk migration activity from throughout the continent. There are usually 20 sites manned by hawk watchers every fall in CT. The number of days that they are manned and the number of people



Immature Broad-winged Hawk
Photo Credit: Jim Zipp



AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS: THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Grades 1 & 2 : Wednesdays in October 3:30 - 5:00 P.M.

Grades 3 & 4 : Tuesdays in October 3:30 - 5:00 P.M.

Dates and details available in mid-September. Call 860-567-0857

www.whitememorialcc.org

THE WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER
PRESENTS THE 28TH ANNUAL

FAMILY NATURE DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2008 11AM - 5PM

ADMISSION \$5.00 CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE
CENTER MEMBERS FREE

FEATURING

WING MASTERS

SPONSORED BY NORTHWEST COMMUNITY BANK

MORTAL BEASTS AND DEITIES

SPONSORED BY LITCHFIELD BANCORP

WILDMAN STEVE BRILL

RIVERSIDE REPTILES

TODD STOUGHTON & THE STILL HILLBILLIES

CRAFTS FOR CHILDREN + GUIDED WALKS + HAYRIDES
DEMONSTRATIONS + BOOTHS & EXHIBITS + FOOD
LOCAL ARTISANS + SILENT AUCTION + USED BOOK SALE
BAKE SALE + MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE + KAYAK RAFFLE

80 WHITEHALL ROAD LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT
LOCATED OFF ROUTE 202 BETWEEN LITCHFIELD AND BANTAM
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

860-567-0857 WWW.WHITEMEMORIALCC.ORG



First National Bank of Litchfield Sponsors Robin McCahill's "Snow Queen" for a Second Year! (Santa and Mrs. Claus Pack Bags)

Last year, two hundred guests attended Robin McCahill's charming performance of "The Snow Queen". The first time event was sponsored by *The First National Bank of Litchfield* whose generosity afforded all attending free admission. Tummies purred filled to the top with sugary mountains of home made confections. Cups of thick velvety hot chocolate topped with whipped cream warmed spirits on a cold but sunny December day. Santa and Mrs. Claus, accompanied by one of the elves, arrived in style by horse drawn wagon and carried revelers to the Mott-Van Winkle classroom where boys and girls presented their Christmas wish lists. Outside the classroom, a bonfire roared taking the nip out of impending Old Man Winter.

On December 12, 2009 McCahill returns to the Carriage House at White Memorial for one performance of the Hans Christian Anderson tale of friends lost and found, visits to distant lands, travels through changing seasons, and encounters with strange and exotic characters. The story is told by McCahill's whimsical troupe of hand felted



Robin McCahill at last year's performance.

marionettes. For the second year in a row The First National Bank of Litchfield is sponsoring the program. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be visiting from noon until 2:00 P.M. and will escort guests to the Mott-Van Winkle classroom in their horse drawn wagon. While Santa receives guests in the classroom, Mrs. Claus will lead a carol sing around the bonfire.

The day promises to be a memorable one for children of all ages. The Conservation Center is deeply grateful to The First National Bank of Litchfield for embodying the spirit of the holiday season.



Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in style

The First National Bank of Litchfield
Presents
Robin McCahill
The Snow Queen
Saturday, December 12, 2009
2:00 P.M.

Visit Santa and Mrs. Claus
from Noon until 2:00P.M.

No Reservations.

Admission is Free

***Please bring a non perishable food item for the Torrington Soup Kitchen**

Call 860-567-0857
for more information



HOLIDAY NATURE CRAFTS

FOR GRADES 1 & 2 - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1
FOR GRADES 3, 4, 5, & 6 - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2 & 9
3:30 - 5:00 P.M.
DETAILS AVAILABLE IN EARLY NOVEMBER 860-567-0857

WWW.WHITEMEMORIALCC.ORG



"Youth is like spring, an over-praised season
more remarkable for biting winds than genial breezes.
Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers
we more than gain in fruits."

Samuel Butler

Fall Calendar of Events

For more information on any of our programs, please call us at 860-567-0857

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 26th
28th ANNUAL
FAMILY NATURE DAY
Wing Masters,
Riverside Reptiles,
Wildman Steve Brill,
Mortal Beasts and Deities
Todd Stoughton &
The Still Hillbillies
11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.



28-Oct. 4 Museum Kids Free Week *
 Courtesy of Joan and Jack Benham
 honoring Wesley D. Parcell

OCTOBER

3 May & Me: Story Walk Up Apple Hill
 Take a stroll to the top of Apple Hill, stir in the incredible story of the Whites. When you reach the top, savor the moment and taste your reward. 2:00 P.M.. Meet in the Museum parking lot.
 Pre registration required.



10 Sparrows & Other Autumn Migrants
 Mid October is peak migration time for sparrows and other land birds. Expect to see a wide variety. Wildlife Biologist Dave Rosgen leads the way. Meet in the Museum parking lot. 2:00 P.M.

12 COLUMBUS DAY
Museum Closed



14 Take a Walk Series
Fall Plants and General Nature Walk
with WMCC Education Director,
Jeff Greenwood
See page 10 for details
and registration form



17 Autumn Tree Identification Walk
 with WMF Forest Superintendent, Lukas Hyder, 10:00 A.M., Meet in museum parking lot.

24 Vampire Folk Belief in Historic New England
 State Archaeologist Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni informs, educates, & entertains...BOO!
See page 7 for details



31 Adult Workshop
Feather Identification
of
North American Birds
with David Scott and
Casey McFarland
see page 7 for details



NOVEMBER

7 Loving Haight: Exploring the Haight Parcel with Lunch & Wine Tasting
 Wander along the Bantam River through woods and vineyards. Reward yourself with lunch and a wine tasting!
See page 7 for details

9 - 15 Museum Kids Free Week*
 in honor of Louise W. Willson.

11 School Vacation Day Programs
Call Museum in October for details!

11 Take a Walk Series
Autumn Birds
with Wildlife Biologist
Dave Rosgen
See page 10 for details
and registration form



14 Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful: Turkey Vultures & Other Raptors
 Audubon Sharon flies into WMCC with an exciting variety of live birds of prey including the charismatic Turkey Vulture, Norabo!
 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room

21 Autumn Bird Tour of Bantam Lake
 Wildlife Biologist, Dave Rosgen. Meet in Museum Lobby, 10:00 A.M.

21 You Want to Go Where?
How to get Someone to Pay
for the Trip of Your Dreams
 In his new book, author and adventurer Jeff Blumenfeld takes you behind the scenes of some fascinating expeditions but will also tell you how YOU can fund and arrange your own trip. Whether you are a serious traveler or live vicariously through others, this program will entertain and inform.
 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room



26/27 THANKSGIVING
Museum Closed



28 Deck the Halls! Wreath Decorating with Natural Materials
 Artist and floral designer Bonnie Pedersen inspires & helps you decorate beautiful holiday wreaths for your home
See page 7 for details



DECEMBER

5 A Gathering of Exceptional Poets Reading from Their Books
 Cortney Davis, Jim Kelleher, Norah Pollard, David Leff, Cheryl Della Pelle, and Jean Sands read and discuss the process of writing their poems. Plus a book signing! Food and beverages will be available for purchase. 2:00 P.M. Carriage House

9 Take a Walk Series
Mammals & Their Mysteries
with
Research Director
James Fischer
See page 10 for details
and registration form



12 The First National Bank of Litchfield
presents
THE SNOW QUEEN
See page 5 for details



19 The Leather Man: Mysterious Wanderer
 Local historian and story teller Shirley Sutton shares in depth knowledge about the fascinating character who walked around parts of Westchester County, New York and Connecticut in the 1800's.
See page 7 for details

20 Litchfield Hills Audubon Christmas Bird Count. To volunteer, email Dave Rosgen: dave@whitememorialacc.org

21-27 Museum Kids Free Week *
 Courtesy of Tara and Arthur Diedrick
 In honor of Adele and Joseph d'Assen.

25 CHRISTMAS
Museum Closed



26 California Condor
Narrated by Robert Redford
 Film about one of our rarest birds
 2:00 P.M., A. B. Ceder Room.

29-31 School Vacation Programs
Call Museum in November for details

JANUARY

1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Museum Closed

* Free admission to Children ages 12 and under when accompanied by an adult

Adult Nature Study Workshops and Saturday Workshops: Fall 2009



Vampire Folk Belief in Historic New England
October 24, 2009, 2:00 P.M., Carriage House, Ages 10 and up
Registration Fee: Members: \$5.00 Non-Members: \$10.00

Connecticut State Archaeologist, **Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni** arrives just in time for Halloween with a timely presentation which will certainly get you into the holiday "spirit". Dr. Bellantoni's engaging manner has made him a very popular speaker. His experiences investigating some of the State's most intriguing historical mysteries should not be missed!



Feather Identification of North American Birds
October 31, 2009, 10:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M., Carriage House
Registration Fee: Members: \$90.00 Non Members: \$105.00, Optional Textbook: "Bird Tracks and Sign" \$35.00

David Scott and Casey McFarland are authors of the soon-to-be-published definitive guide, "Bird Feathers: A Guide to North American Species" (Stackpole Books 2010). Workshop incorporates feathers from their collection. Learn about morphology, flight dynamics, pigment, structure, wing design, specialized feathers, and more. Designed for all skill levels. **Lunch is included! DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS SEPTEMBER 30!**



Loving Haight: Exploring the Haight Parcel with Lunch and Wine Tasting
November 7, 2009, 11:00 A.M.—2:00 P.M., Meet in the parking lot at Haight Vineyard
Registration Fee: \$25.00 includes a \$5.00 donation to The White Memorial Conservation Center

Hike the lesser known and extremely lovely Haight Parcel with **Gerri Griswold** wandering along the Bantam River and through the woods and vineyards. After the walk, enjoy a delicious lunch and wine tasting at the vineyard



Deck the Halls! Wreath Decorating with Natural Materials
November 28, 2009 10:00 A.M.—1:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room
Registration Fee: Members: \$15.00 Non Members: \$20.00 All materials included

Artist and floral designer **Bonnie Pedersen** helps to make the season bright by sharing her beautiful ideas with you. Decorate two evergreen wreaths with elements from nature including eggs, feathers, seed pods and more and/or bring your own baubles for a more personal touch. Grapevine wreaths will also be available. This popular workshop will fill up quickly. Register early! For ages 16 and up.



The Leather Man: Mysterious Wanderer
December 19, 2009, 2:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room
Registration Fee: Members: \$7.00 Non Members: \$10.00

Local historian and story teller, **Shirley Sutton**, shares in depth knowledge about the fascinating character who hiked Westchester County, New York, and parts of Connecticut in the 1800's. Speaking very little, the Leather Man communicated his needs with hand gestures. Dressed in his leather suit he was both a curious and fearful sight. Town residents grew to expect his appearances accommodating his simple requests and often giving him leather scraps, tobacco, and sometimes money.

Clip & Mail

____ **Vampire Folklore in New England**.....Member: \$5.00 Non Member: \$10.00
 ____ **Feather ID Workshop**.....Member: \$ 90.00 Non Member: \$105.00 Opt. Text: \$35.00
 ____ **Loving Haight: Walk & Wine**.....Member: \$25.00
 ____ **Deck the Halls! Wreath Decorating**.....Member: \$15.00 Non Member: \$20.00
 ____ **Leather Man**.....Member: \$7.00 Non Member: \$10.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Please circle one: member non-member

Payment enclosed: Program fee: \$ _____ Membership fee: \$ _____ Total \$ _____

Make check payable to White Memorial Conservation Center and mail to:
 White Memorial, P.O. Box 368, Litchfield CT 06759

Become a member of the White Memorial Conservation Center and take advantage of the member discount, along with free admission to the Nature Museum, a discount in the Gift Shop, and receipt of the quarterly newsletter and calendar of events. Your tax-deductible fee will help sponsor programs like these. A family membership is \$45.00 per year and individual is \$30.00.

CEU's available



For more information call 860-567-0857



Community Service at White Memorial

by Lukas Hyder, WMF Forest Superintendent

Late spring and early summer of this year proved to be a busy time around White Memorial, with many volunteer groups as well as individuals continuing the trend started earlier this year.

On May 14th a group from the Litchfield High School's AP Science Class led by Dean Birdsall came to do some non-native invasive plant removal, and then replanting native shrubs in their place.

The following Saturday morning, May 16th, a large group of Yale University Alumni came to do trail work around the Ongley Pond Trail. They added a section of boardwalk to a problem area, built some stone steps on the southeast side, filled in holes, added gravel to muddy areas, repaired an eroded bank and removed many non-native invasive plants.

On two mornings in late May four seniors and their teacher, from the Marvelwood School in Kent, came and helped Jamie Fischer with a research project, which involved hauling several pick-up truck loads of slabs into the woods.

A student from Litchfield and his mother, Joseph Schiffer and Michelle Crow spent a morning picking up garbage from various trailheads and roadsides in the Litchfield area.

During June and July we had a dedicated high school student, Will Campbell of Woodbury, volunteer many hours. He came for three to four afternoons a week and spent his time doing trail maintenance, water bar repair, replacing the check dams on the White Pine Trail, pruning of trail edges, as well as helping with research projects and our Purple Loosestrife biocontrol program.

We extend many thanks to all the individuals who gave of their time to improve White Memorial. You can see their handiwork on the trails and grounds as you hike around the property.



Amazon.com
donates to
WMCC
each time you shop
through our website.

www.whitememorialcc.org

Volunteer Spotlight: Frank Errico

Story and photo by Gerri Griswold

Frank Errico may very well define attention deficit disorder! This Bethlehem resident is a forester, engineer, amateur archaeologist, plumber, fruit and vegetable judge, surveyor, mason, collector of almost anything, and the former Director of the Bethlehem Land Trust where he sat for 20 years. Errico's resume reads like the Oxford English Dictionary!

He was born in Stratford where his love of nature was cultivated early on in the surrounding marshes. As a boy, Frank became an avid fisherman and trapper, muskrats being his main quarry. He attended local schools in Stratford. Upon graduation from high school, Errico worked as a mason but became the byproduct of a downsizing. With no clear direction, he and a friend packed some gear and roamed New England and New York, sleeping in tents and living off the land for several months. "I think we ate trout every day!", he said. One day, while traveling through the Adirondacks, Errico saw a sign along the road for Paul Smith College, a forestry school. He jumped off the exit and paid them a visit. "It was exactly what you'd think it would be: men in red plaid flannel shirts living in cabins." Although the upcoming class was full, he eventually enrolled.



Renaissance Man: Frank Errico

After completing his degree, Errico worked in the Maine wilderness as a wood preserver inspecting utility poles for bear damage.

Service to his country called and Frank joined the army where he served as a supply sergeant at Fort Dix in New Jersey and then Fort Polk in Louisiana.

After the army he married Joy, a USO Jersey girl. Two daughters joined the family. They settled in Bethlehem because Frank felt that the odds of it being developed were low. He worked as a lineman for SNET and then as an engineer. He retired in 1995.

When Frank and Joy discovered White Memorial they promised to hike all 35 miles of trails. Joy's failing health stopped her at 30 miles. Frank's beloved wife passed away in 2005. He carried on their mission not only completing the 35 miles but jumping off the paths to really dig into the stuff the Foundation is made of. Few people know White Memorial like Frank Errico. His field observations have been invaluable to Research Director James Fischer and Wildlife Biologist Dave Rosgen. He has participated in many of Fischer's research projects including vernal pool surveys, mammal tracking, and whitetail population census among others. Frank is just a curious fellow. His curiosity is nourished through education. We intend to keep Frank's plate full for years to come.



Wamogo Regional High School Future Farmers of America
Awards White Memorial Employees Honorary Degrees

WMCC Research Director James Fischer (right) and WMF Forest Superintendent Lukas Hyder (left) were honored by Wamogo High School's Future Farmers of America chapter for their work serving the FFA chapter's program. To date, the students have served White Memorial either as groups or as individuals with over 2000 service hours! The relationship between Wamogo High School and White Memorial is very special. James and Lukas would like to extend their thanks to the students and their teachers who have worked so hard with them on the property. We are looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship in the future. White Memorial would also like to extend congratulations to this year's graduating seniors and best wishes to the FFA chapter's new officers.



Lukas Hyder (L) and James Fischer display their FFA awards



A Planned Gift
can make a difference
in your future and ours.

www.whitememorialcc.org



Uh Oh!
Photo by Leo Kulinski

2009 BIRD SEED APPEAL

THE CONSERVATION CENTER ONCE AGAIN REACHES OUT TO YOU FOR HELP TO DEFRAY THE MONUMENTAL COST OF FEEDING THE BIRDS THIS WINTER. KEEPING OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS WELL FED IS AN ANNUAL EXPENSE OF \$1200. YOUR DONATION, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Yes! I'd like to help fill the bird feeders at the White Memorial Conservation Center with my gift of:

() \$5 () \$10 () \$20 () \$50 () \$100 () Other \$ _____

Name: _____ Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please make your check payable to WMCC, 80 Whitehall Road, P.O. Box 368, Litchfield, CT 06759

Forest, Feathers, and Fur This Fall Take a Walk Series

Your requests for more mid week walks have been granted! This fall, we have pulled out all the stops with three separate two hour strolls covering three separate facets of nature. Each program will be given by an expert in his field.

On October 14, Education Director Jeff Greenwood will escort you across the autumn landscape with a fall plant and general nature walk. Autumn is a beautiful time to be outdoors. As much of the insect community diminishes, you can freely observe the fruits of the growing season in the form of nuts, seeds, seed pods, and remnant inflorescences. Other seasonal nature observations can be detected as well.

The Bird Man of White Memorial, Wildlife Biologist Dave Rosgen, searches for autumn migrants on November 11. With Bantam Lake so closely positioned as a magnet for migrating waterfowl and a rich mixture of habitats nearby, the stage is set for an excursion into the activities of avian migration. What birds can be seen? How long will they linger before moving on? Are there any winter visitors yet? Rosgen will help you take a peek into this fascinating phenomenon.

Research Director James Fischer will wind up the series on December 9 teaching you about your mammal neighbors. Mammals are often overlooked because they evade our detection. We sometimes encounter them by chance but they often elude us by being active at night or by detecting us first with their keen senses. The clues they leave provide an unfolding story as each piece of evidence is observed.

All walks leave from the Museum at 10:00 A.M.

Take a Walk Series

Wednesdays: October 14, November 11, December 9
10:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M.

___ 10/14 **Plants & Nature Walk**...Member: \$3...Non Member: \$5
___ 11/11 **Autumn Bird Walk**.....Member: \$3...Non Member: \$5
___ 12/9 **Mammal Walk**.....Member: \$3...Non Member: \$5

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please circle one: Member Non Member

Enclosed is my check for _____ payable to:

White Memorial Conservation Center
P.O. Box 368, Litchfield, CT 06759

Solar Panel Installation **Illuminates and Enlightens**

The new 11,040 watt photovoltaic system, which is installed on the Activity Shed and provides electricity for our Museum, has been online for over four and one-half months with great results. As of July 31 the system has produced 6,434 kilowatt hours of clean electricity, and coupled with improvements we have made to reduce our energy consumption, our electric bill has dropped by over \$1,200!

The solar panels have also become part of our education programming. There is a display both inside and outside the Activity Shed describing the installation and the future will include a new display in the Museum. A monitor has been installed so you can now view the performance of the panels over the internet at: <http://www.sunpowermonitor.com/residential/kiosk.aspx?id=998E52F8-5AFA-471C-929F-4C934DD5A32A&type=address>



Delicious autumn!
My very soul is wedded to it,
And if I were a bird
I would fly about the earth
seeking the successive autumns.

George Eliot

What's a Habitattler? ***Weekly E-mail Newsletter Now Available***

Our free weekly email newsletter, *The Habitattler*, was launched in February and has been receiving rave reviews from its subscribers. Subscriptions have swelled from a bit over five hundred to eight hundred.

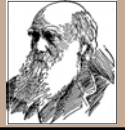
Every Monday at 7:00 A.M., a new edition arrives in your inbox chock full of valuable information including the upcoming *Calendar of Events* and top ten *Wildlife Observations*. A *Happy Picture of the Day* taken at White Memorial by our staff, members, or just a WMF devotee reminds us of just how fortunate we are. The newsletter concludes with *The Tail End*, a brief video clip of some natural wonder on our property. You will also find out what is new and exciting in the Gift Shop and access valuable additional information through our *Links*. Stunning photographs of our beautiful sanctuary and antique clip art make each issue sing!

If you or someone you know would like to receive *The Habitattler*, please call 860-567-0857 or email your request to: info@whitememorialcc.org.



Attention Must Be Paid*

By Gordon Loery



This has been an important anniversary year. It is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the eloquent President of the United States through the Civil War. At a more local level it is also the 150th anniversary of the founding of my home town, Morris, CT. Both events have been appropriately celebrated and rightfully so. But 2009 is also the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, the British naturalist who was born on the same day as Lincoln. And finally it is the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's best known work, The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection. Oh, where have all the celebrations for this second set of events been held?

What did Darwin accomplish to justify recognition? He and his contemporary, Alfred Russall Wallace, working independently of each other, collected data in the field which provided a solid foundation for what had previously been only a speculative theory – the theory of evolution. His theory of evolution by natural selection produced profound, revolutionary repercussions in many disciplines outside of biology. No longer could it be assumed that all living things were created as they exist today and have never changed. We now are challenged to live in a world in which new species are being created and old ones may become extinct. This is a new world of process and change in which all living organisms are related.

The theory of evolution by natural selection is not a complicated idea. It is based on two observable phenomenon.

There is always great variability in any successful population. No two individuals will be exactly alike. Human differences in height, skin color, athletic skills, mathematical skills etc. are obvious to all of us. But this great variability is not limited to humans. It is a universal

phenomenon. We now also know that these differences are passed on from one generation to the next. The principles of modern genetics were developed by Darwin's contemporary, Gregor Mendel, working with garden peas but unfortunately the latter was working outside of the scientific establishment. Darwin was not aware of his findings and science was not aware of their significance until 1900.

Successful populations produce more offspring than the environment can support. Darwin was unaware of Mendel but he did read Thomas Malthus' Essay on Population and was impressed by it. A very sophisticated statistical analysis of the Black-capped Chickadee capture – mark – recapture data collected at our White Memorial Foundation banding station over a 26 year period produced “strong evidence of lower survival rates in 1st year birds than in adults, but could not determine whether this was the result of higher mortality rates, higher emigration rates, or a combination of the two.”* In any case the chickadees appeared to be producing more offspring than the environment could support. This would be even more obvious in the case of those species that give little or no care to their new-born offspring and may not even be aware of their existence, e.g. aquatic species whose eggs are fertilized externally.

Assuming the above two pillars of natural selection are valid it follows that those individuals best adapted to their environment will have a better chance of surviving and passing on their genes to the next generation.

Why is Darwinism shunned? Why is it so difficult for people to accept it? Why does the new Connecticut Science Center in Hartford ignore evolution? For answers to these questions I think it is helpful to look back at history. When it was first proposed that the sun does not rotate around the earth but rather that the

earth is just one of a number of planets rotating around the sun, the powers that be rejected the idea and severely punished those who proposed it.

We like to think that our planet is special and that on it we ourselves are special. Darwin was thought to be a threat to this assumption. He left us with the difficult task of rethinking what our relationship to the great family tree of life and to the environment that supports all of us should be. I am sure that anyone who makes people uncomfortable by raising such serious questions deserves recognition.

From now on I will always think of February 12th as the Lincoln – Darwin birthday.

* Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

*Loery, G., K. H. Pollock, J. D. Nichols, and J. E. Hines. 1987 Age-specificity of Black-capped Chickadee Survival rates: analysis of capture-recapture date. *Ecology*. 68:4 1038 – 1044.

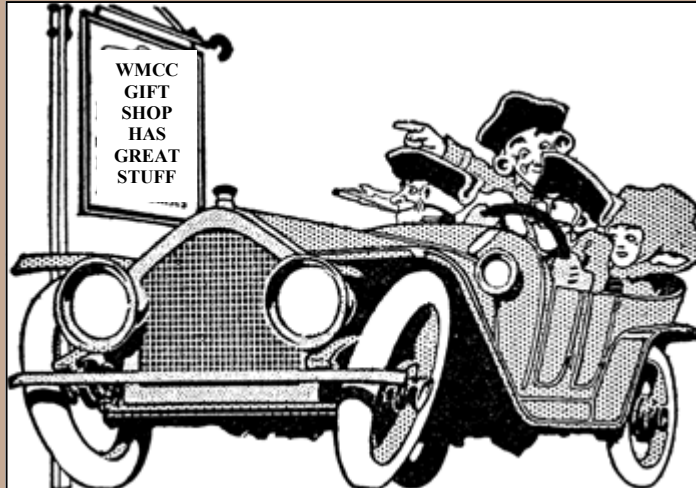


Around the Globe

Author Gordon Loery & Globe Thistles
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