

SANCTUARY

Newsletter of the
White Memorial
Conservation Center
Vol. XXX No. 4
Fall 2012

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



The North American Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*)
Photo credit: Gerri Griswold

How Can I See Porcupines in the Wild?

by Dr. Uldis Roze, Professor Emeritus, Queens College, City University of New York

With the abandonment of farms and resurgence of the forest in northwest Connecticut, porcupines have returned to the state. But because porcupines live in forests and porcupine females maintain large and exclusive home ranges, seeing one of the animals retains an element of unpredictability and adventure.

To see live porcupines in the wild, you have to spend time in the wild: hiking in unbroken woods and looking up in the trees. In the summer, a porcupine high up in a tree is essentially invisible. Even if you know that a porcupine is up a specific tree, you may have to spend a quarter hour carefully circling the tree and scanning it with binoculars before you spot the animal.

Porcupines are more easily seen in spring, before leaf-break, and in the fall, after leaves have fallen. Their dark bodies stand out in the canopy, though in a giant maple or beech a porcupine pressed against the trunk may look just like a knot in the wood. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1: Porcupine in a beech tree, early spring.

Ordinary walks in the woods will bring random sightings, but the odds of seeing a porcupine under such conditions are low. Porcupines are solitary and have large nonwinter home ranges (a 50-acre minimum for females). To increase such odds, you should imagine the world of the animal you want to observe. The Chilean biologist Ricardo Martinez recounts a meeting as a student with the distinguished mammalogist Oliver Pearson at an ecology course that Pearson was teaching in Chile.

The students had been up much of the night, setting out 400 Sherman live traps for small mammals. In the morning they checked their traps and found just a single catch, a small bird—a success rate of a mere 0.25 percent. Martinez asked Pearson if he could accompany him, and the two walked about as Pearson set out some traps of his own. When they came to a bamboo, Pearson pulled out a small folding museum live trap from one pocket, baited it with oats pulled from another pocket, and walked on. On reaching a grassy area, Pearson stopped and searched with his hands, then parted the grass and showed the student a mouse “runway,” in which he set another trap. At the end of the walk, Pearson had set just eight traps. But when he and the student checked them later in the day, they found five mice of three species in the traps, for a success rate of 62.5 percent. Pearson had been “thinking like a mouse.”

Similarly, you can enhance the odds

of seeing a porcupine by “thinking like a porcupine.” Porcupines are often hard to find in the winter because they are deep in their dens and out of sight. But on sunny days, porcupines may emerge and sun themselves in nearby trees. To come across those trees, you must locate the dens of the animals.



Fig. 2: Porcupine snow track. The porcupine traveled to the hemlock tree along left-hand path, climbed the tree to feed, and returned along right-hand path. A bit of urine in the return path marks the feeding tree for future use.

Porcupines prefer denning in hilly areas with exposed rock faces. The dens are located in natural crevices that reach deep into the ground. (North American porcupines do not excavate their own dens.) Active dens will be signaled by debarked trees and saplings in the den vicinity. How can you determine whether the den is active? Check the entrance for fresh porcupine tracks in the snow.

(continued on page 2)

Porcupine tracks are unmistakable, easily distinguished from the tracks of other animals by their large footpads and very short footsteps. (Fig. 2)

In late winter and early spring, when temperatures are rising but snow remains on the ground and tree buds have not begun to swell, porcupines are often found in hemlock groves, which offer them both food and shelter. To find a porcupine in a hemlock grove, look for porcupine snow tracks and follow the

(continued from page 1)

tracks to their terminus at a hemlock tree. Further signs of occupancy will come from porcupine droppings under the tree and branch fragments cut by the porcupine.

In the summer, porcupines are hard to see in high treetops. But it helps to know they often feed in aspens and lindens, rare species in a forest. Check the ground below these trees for feeding signs in the form of nip twigs—twig tips

cut from a main branch, with leaf blades removed but petioles intact. If the nip twigs are fresh (not brown or wilted), look in the tree carefully; the porcupine may still be present. Fresh nip twigs in the summer are one of the few “hot” clues to porcupine presence. By thinking like a porcupine, you will encounter them where they live and raise their young. (Fig. 3)

(continued on page 11)

Make a Difference

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

As I sit here writing this piece, the newspaper and television ads are filled with back to school promotions: paper, pencils, backpacks, notebooks. Hey, wait a minute that’s a good topic-notebooks!

This make a difference piece is going to be vastly different from anything else I have done to date. It is about making a difference for your *family* and it is about notebooks.

First a little background information: My husband and I are both middle aged, working, nearing retirement, but not quite there yet. Both of my parents are gone as well as his father. Hubby is executor for his mother’s estate as well as a childless aunt. His uncle recently passed away and we are caring for the aunt.

We have been watching from the sidelines as several of our contemporaries down size and move to smaller quarters. Some are swapping houses with children, some are going into assisted living, and some are moving south. All of them, however, have at least one thing in common- what to do with “stuff” and how to do *more* with *less* - less space, less time, fewer resources. What do you do with Great Aunt Suzie’s ugly vase? What do you do with the more personal items that you love but no longer have room to keep? What do you do when no one else in the family wants them? These things were precious at one time, to someone.

Think of this downsizing as a gift, actually a really lovely, loving gift to your family. Only *you* know the story of a lot of things that you come in contact with; only *you* can pass that information on to your loved ones.

Think of it as *you* being able to make the decisions of “less is more”. Think of it as *you* being in control. Rent a dumpster, because you will come across a bunch of stuff that should have been thrown away *years* ago...really. Figure out where to house the castoffs that you are going to tag sale, donate and put aside for family and friends to go through.

The things that are just too precious to get rid of, but no one can take? Take a photo and when you look at it, you will be flooded with all the memories. That’s what stuff does for us anyway. It’s all about the memories. After you have taken a picture, write down as much information as you can about the item. If the people are still living who owned it, so much the better. Ask them the stories. I am deeply grateful that when Hubby’s uncle gave him a toy sail boat years ago, we had presence of mind to ask the story. The story is now more than just a “who’s who” of the boat, it is a snapshot of a little boy who played with it more than 80 years ago. When that uncle died in February, the story would have been lost forever.

Getting the story also makes the items much more valuable. The story is where the value is, at least with most stuff. The table that the aunt and uncle were given as a wedding gift, is nice, but the fact that her parents saved pennies and nickels and made cakes and pies to sell to pay for the table can be even more special.

When said aunt was a new widow, I had the privilege of spending a lot of time with her. You can only dispense so many tissues and give only so many hugs before you begin to go a

bit bonkers. That’s when and where the stories come in. Just sit in a room and ask questions. Have a pad of paper nearby so you can take notes. Ask about the crewel work on the wall. Where did that chest come from? Tell me about those candle sticks. You will find out all kinds of things that you never knew about the person’s life... stories about events that you were never privy to before. The change in the aunt was remarkable, too. Gone, for a little while, was the intense grief- replaced by stories of trips and saving up for the couch when they were first married.

When you are finished gathering the stories, write them up and then put them into a notebook. A two inch notebook takes up just that much space-two inches. Much less than the six foot couch. Keep only those things which you cannot live without. Replace some of your own worn things with the new found ones. Just remember to make a difference for the world, too. Recycle anything that you can, just remember to shred personal papers first. Donate furniture, clothing, household goods to Goodwill or Salvation Army or a church tag sale. Toss only what cannot be made into something else and has lost all of its usefulness. Look at things in a different way. Old torn and soiled quilts can become pillows or table runners. Old linens can become curtains. Old dining tables can be cut down to become new coffee tables. Old dressers can house bathroom sinks.

Make a difference to the world and to your family too.



Thanks to Mark Moorman
of
Sprain Brook Apiary, Woodbury
for.....

Reinstalling and overseeing our
Honey Bee Observation Hive
again this summer!



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

www.whitememorialcc.org

WHITE MEMORIAL THANKS

The Connecticut Community
Foundation

Northwest Community Bank

Litchfield Bancorp

Krummi Travel LLC

and

An Anonymous Donor

for making our
31st Annual
Family Nature Day
possible.



woodland in full
color is awesome as
a forest fire, in
magnitude at least,
but a single tree is
like a dancing
tongue of flame to
warm the heart.

~Hal Borland



AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS: THE GREAT OUTDOORS

For Grades 3 and 4: Tuesdays in October (Oct. 2, 9, 16, & 23)

For Grades 1 and 2: Wednesdays in October (Oct. 3, 10, 17, & 24)

All Classes 3:45 - 5:15 P.M.

Details available in mid-September. Call 860-567-0857

www.whitememorialcc.org

THE WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER
PRESENTS THE 31ST ANNUAL

FAMILY NATURE DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2012 11 AM - 5PM

ADMISSION \$6.00

CHILDREN UNDER 12 & CENTER MEMBERS FREE



FEATURING

SKYHUNTERS IN FLIGHT

ATKA THE WOLF:
NEW YORK WOLF CONSERVATION CENTER

RIVERSIDE REPTILES

PACER THE NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE

THE BAT LADY

MUSIC BY ANDES MANTA & JENNIFER MONCUSE

HORSE DRAWN WAGON RIDES + CRAFTS FOR KIDS

GUIDED WALKS + DEMONSTRATIONS

BOOTHS & EXHIBITS + FOOD

LOCAL ARTISANS + SILENT AUCTION

USED BOOK SALE + BAKE SALE

MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE

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

860-567-0857 WWW.WHITEMEMORIALCC.ORG



Emerald Ash Borer Update and Management Implications for White Memorial

by James Fischer, Research Director

Claire Rutledge, Entomologist at Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station, described in the Summer 2012 edition of *Sanctuary* the colonization of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the Northeastern United States. Claire went on to explain how White Memorial is using *Cerceris* Wasps to survey EAB on the property. White Memorial continues its support of EAB surveillance by allowing the purple prism traps on the property and strategic girdling of ash trees near the campgrounds. EAB is primarily spread by transporting infested firewood to naïve areas and we often observe campers bringing their own firewood with them to the campgrounds. Dying/stressed ash trees attract EAB like honey for flies! Therefore, if EAB was in our campgrounds the girdled ash trees would serve as bait and when we peel the bark from these trees this winter we might observe EAB or not.

Cerceris Wasps detected EAB in the towns of Prospect and Naugatuck, New Haven County, CT in July 2012. The purple prism traps in the area of the *Cerceris* colony provided more precise information about where EAB had spread throughout that locale. At this time, several new initiatives have been put into place to slow the spread of EAB and the mortality of ash trees in CT. The State of Connecticut has instituted a ban on moving many wood products out of New Haven County. All of the government agencies involved (USDA APHIS, US Forest Service, CT DEEP, CAES, & others) have concentrated their efforts in Prospect, Naugatuck, and the immediate vicinity. Professionals are moving amongst backyards, state forest land tracts, and local open spaces in search of all stressed ash trees. These ash trees are examined closely for evidence of EAB and are cut down so that the trees don't continue to serve as food. The work is methodical and time consuming.

Unfortunately, EAB is in the state and it will soon be at White Memorial and your neighborhood.

Following the state's lead, controlling the movement of wood products and continuing surveillance is White Memorial's emphasis for the EAB threat.



Standard Purple Prism-trap set in an ash tree
Photo credit: USDA, www.cerceris.info

White Memorial has instituted a ban on transporting firewood from any other county outside of Litchfield County, CT to our campgrounds. *Cerceris* Wasp surveillance continues at 4 colonies near the property. We are exploring the feasibility of deploying our own purple prism traps to insure casting a "fine-meshed net" throughout the property in addition to the traps deployed by the state agencies. We hope that by joining forces we will know the precise season when EAB colonizes our property. Once EAB arrives on the property our options are quite limited for controlling the spread and nearly impossible for eradicating this pest.

Strategic and adaptive management will insure that White Memorial's critical habitats are conserved for as long as possible. White Memorial is farther ahead than most other forest land owners in CT. We have a thorough forest inventory, which was completed by Lukas Hyder, Assistant Forest Superintendent in 2011. This effort tells

us where ash trees are growing on the property. Think about the implications of this! We know where to look for ash trees growing on over 4000 acres. This means we can prioritize any effort selected. Above all, White Memorial wants its visitors to consider the property as a safe place for enjoying and appreciating nature. Therefore, removing hazard trees is a high priority with any management scenario. Whatever management option is deemed most feasible, it will be based upon the most current scientific information that we can collect. This story does not end here, far from it. We need your help! *Cerceris* Wasps are most active in the month of July. Deployment of the purple prism traps is highly dependent upon external funding and grants. If we secure the funds, the traps will need to be checked approximately twice per month

from late May until the end of August. Every surveillance girdled ash tree will need to be stripped of bark from top to bottom searching for EAB larvae in the autumn/winter. As you can see, all of these projects require more hands, legs, and eyes! Unfortunately, our needs for more people are more than we currently have, so your help is vital. If you are interested in getting involved in these projects please contact James Fischer, WMCC Research Director, at james@whitememorialcc.org.



Cerceris fumipennis with EAB
Photo credit: Philip Careless

Fall Calendar of Events

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

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 22nd

31st ANNUAL FAMILY NATURE DAY



Sky Hunters in Flight
Riverside Reptiles
Atka the Wolf, The Bat Lady
Pacer the Porcupine
Music by Jennifer Moncuse
and Andes Manta

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

6 Autumn Bird Walk with Fran Zygmunt
Expect warblers, sparrows, and waterfowl
on your walk to Little Pond. Co-sponsored
by Litchfield Hills Audubon Society. Meet
in the Museum parking lot. 7:00 A.M.

7 Families in the Great Outdoors:
A Few Things Every Parent Should Know
with Andy Dobos and Deneen Bernier
See page 7 for details

8 COLUMBUS DAY
Museum Closed



13 Autumn Nature Walk to Duck Pond and
Mallard Marsh with Marlow Shami
1:00 P.M. Meet at the A. B. Ceder Room.

19 Star Party
Astronomy program with star
gazing to follow, weather permitting.
7:00 P.M., A. B. Ceder Room



20 Ilvi Dulac presents:
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
PLUS Night Walk!
See page 7 for details.



27 The Wolves & Bears of Yellowstone
with Gary Melnysyn
See page 7 for details.

NOVEMBER

3 Geology of Five Ponds with Tom Alena
1:00 P.M. Meet in front of the
A. B. Ceder Room.
Limited to 20 participants!



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

4 Late Autumn Landscape in Watercolor
with Betsy Rogers-Knox
See page 7 for details.



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

10 A Stroll Along the Butternut Brook
Trail with Marlow Shami
10:00 A.M. Meet in front of the
A. B. Ceder Room.



10 Hoppin' Round the Bunny Trail
with James Fischer
Learn about cottontail habitat
management on Apple Hill.
2:00 P.M. Meet in the Museum parking lot.



12 School Vacation
Veterans Day Program
Call Museum in October for details!

14 Hoppin' Round the Bunny Trail
with James Fischer
Learn about cottontail habitat
management on Apple Hill. 10:00 A.M.
Meet in the Museum parking lot.



16 Star Party
Astronomy program. Star gazing will
follow, weather permitting.
7:00 P.M., A. B. Ceder Room



17 How Can I See Porcupines in the Wild?
Book signing, luncheon, and
lecture with Dr. Uldis Roze.
See page 7 for details.



22/23 THANKSGIVING
Museum Closed



23 Beatles Sing-Along with
Willie Niningger and Jan Scruggs
See page 7 for details.



24 Walking the Cranberry Pond Trail
with Gerri Griswold
2:00 P.M. Meet in the Museum.

DECEMBER

1 Taxidermy: Appreciation in Art & Science
James Fischer and Gerri Griswold
approach this fascinating subject
from two perspectives. 2:00 P.M.,
A.B. Ceder Room



8 Nowhere is a Place: Chilean Patagonia
Gerri Griswold takes you to a mystical
place. 2:00 P.M., A. B. Ceder Room

14 Museum Open House
Stroll through the Museum. Sip
Mulled Cider. Wrap up your holiday
shopping. Take 10% off all purchases!
6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.



15 Comfort and Joy
Readings from
A Christmas Carol
with Ilvi Dulac
See page 7 for details.



16 Litchfield Hills Audubon Christmas
Bird Count. To volunteer, email Ray
Belding: hoatzin1@optonline.net

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

22 The Nature of Icelandic Poetry
Readings, Photographs, and Dinner
See page 7 for details.



24/25 CHRISTMAS
Museum Closed



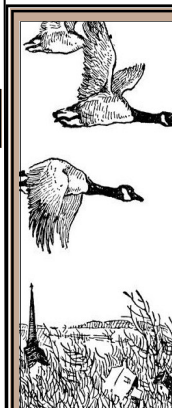
26 - 28 School Vacation Programs
Call the Museum in November for details.

29 Documentary: Christmas in Yellowstone
Breathtaking look at wintertime
deep within America's first
national park.
2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room.



JANUARY

January 1, 2013
HAPPY NEW YEAR! Museum Closed



All those golden autumn
days
the sky was full of wings.
Wings beating low over
the blue water
of Silver Lake,
wings beating high in the
blue air far above it...
bearing them all away
to the green fields in the
South.

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Adult Nature Study Workshops and Saturday Programs: Fall 2012



Families in the Great Outdoors
October 7, 2012, 12:30 P.M. Meet in the Museum
Members: \$45.00 Non-Members: \$50.00

Andy Dobos and Deneen Bernier will give you and your child an understanding of common hazards that can be found in the woods or in your own backyard. Replace myths with true understanding! Cost is per child. Parents or guardians are free. Bring a snack and plenty of water.



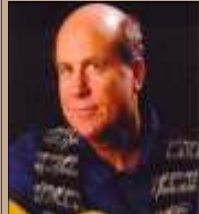
How Can I See Porcupines in the Wild?
November 17, 2012, 12:00 P.M., Museum
Members: \$20.00 Non-Members: \$30.00 LUNCH!

Dr. Uldis Roze is the world's foremost expert on all porcupine species. Join this amazing man as he signs his new book, "Porcupines: The Animal Answer Guide". Retire to the A. B. Cedar Room for a luncheon and lecture about world porcupines. Don't miss out on this extraordinary event. Space is limited!



Ilvi Dulac's Reader's Theater presents:
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow with Night Walk!
October 20, 2012, 7:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room
Members: \$10.00 Non-Members: \$15.00

ENCORE PRESENTATION! A candlelight reading of excerpts from the Washington Irving classic! Before the reading enjoy a night walk to get you in the spirit of things! Spooky treats will be served!



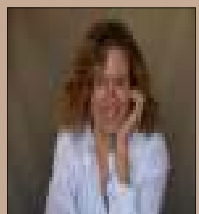
Beatles Sing-a-Long with Willie Nininger
November 23, 2012, 7:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room
Members: \$15.00 Non-Members: \$20.00 BYOB!

Get your family together to twist and shout with Willie Nininger! Willie was a mainstay of the Greenwich Village Folk scene in the 70's and 80's and is a mainstay in our hearts! You will LOVE him! Light refreshments will be available for purchase.



The Wolves and Bears of Yellowstone
October 27, 2012, 1:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room
Members: \$18.00 Non-Members: \$25.00 LUNCH!

Settle down to a lovely lunch and feast your eyes on a banquet of the most spectacular wildlife images imaginable! Gary Melnsyn is back with a whole new arsenal of bear and wolf images captured during his tenure as a park ranger at Yellowstone!



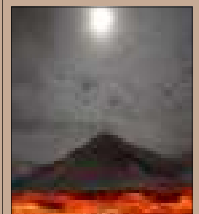
Comfort and Joy: A Christmas Carol
December 15, 2012, 6:00 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room
Members: \$20.00 Non-Members: \$30.00 DINNER!

Ilvi's Reader's Theater brings glad tidings as they breathe life into the characters of Ebenezer Scrooge, Jacob Marley, Bob Cratchit, and Tiny Tim! Enjoy a light dinner, some mulled cider, and exit into the chilly evening overflowing with holiday cheer!



Late Autumn Landscape in Watercolor
November 4, 2012, 1:30 P.M., A. B. Cedar Room
Members: \$30.00 Non-Members: \$40.00

Learn to paint a simple fall landscape with internationally celebrated botanical artist Betsy Rogers-Knox. Just in time for gift giving! All supplies included! All levels welcome! This class is suitable for ages 12 and up.



The Nature of Icelandic Poetry
December 22, 2012, 6:00 P.M., A.B. Cedar Room
Members: \$20.00 Non-Members: \$30.00 DINNER!

Icelandic poetry is tethered to nature. Join native Icelanders as they interpret their own literature in front of a backdrop of beautiful images of Iceland taken by Gerri Griswold. Feast upon a delicious Icelandic meal before the program. Meet the Icelandic Yule Lads afterwards!

Clip and Mail

| | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| _____ Families in the Great Outdoors..... | Member: \$45.00 | Non-Member: \$50.00 |
| _____ Sleepy Hollow..... | Member: \$10.00 | Non-Member: \$15.00 |
| _____ Wolves and Bears of Yellowstone..... | Member: \$18.00 | Non-Member: \$25.00 |
| _____ Late Autumn Landscape in Watercolor..... | Member: \$30.00 | Non-Member: \$40.00 |
| _____ Porcupines with Dr. Uldis Roze..... | Member: \$20.00 | Non-Member: \$30.00 |
| _____ Beatles Sing-Along with Willie Nininger..... | Member: \$15.00 | Non-Member: \$20.00 |
| _____ Comfort and Joy: A Christmas Carol..... | Member: \$20.00 | Non-Member: \$30.00 |
| _____ Nature of Icelandic Poetry..... | Member: \$20.00 | Non-Member: \$30.00 |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Please circle one: member non-member

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

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 \$50.00 per year and individual is \$35.00.

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

For more information call 860-567-0857.

Volunteer Spotlight

The “A” Team: Karen Riggin, Piper O’Donnell, Peregrine Bourne

Story and photograph by Gerri Griswold

“The Riggins”, as they are called in these parts, are White Memorial volunteer royalty. They are hard-working, loyal, conscientious, and above all FUN! We always know when they visit that every ounce of work they execute will be top shelf!

KAREN RIGGIN

Karen Riggin hails from Philadelphia. She moved to Connecticut during high school when her father, a General Electric employee, was transferred. As a child, she was always interested in animals. As a home school teacher, she constantly looked for quality programs for her children. Here is where our love affair began! Riggin found White Memorial a treasure trove in programs run by Jeff Greenwood and Dave Rosgen. As her children grew older they looked for volunteer opportunities, “We are game for almost anything!” Their particular interest was with our raptors, snakes, and turtles. Karen also has a deep love of dogs. “I like herding dogs a whole lot!” In 2008, when Gerri Griswold hosted what has now become the annual Iceland Affair, Riggin called and offered to bring her Icelandic Sheep Dog to the Conservation Center. Her love of “Icys” has put her in contact with like-minded people all over the world. Karen is part of the National Icelandic Sheep Dog Rescue Alliance. “Thankfully we are very very quiet!” When she is not serving as *Teacher of the Year* to her children, Riggin enjoys photography, especially candid shots of people. “We thoroughly enjoy volunteering at White Memorial”, says Karen. “What amazes me most is how much personality the turtles have. They really are all characters!”

PIPER O’DONNELL

Piper O’Donnell, 14, was born in Albany, Oregon. She is most fond of biology and chemistry and is taught every day by “The Teacher of the Decade!”. She is also very interested in the arts, particularly drawing and felting, and has participated in many of Robin McCahill’s felting workshops at the Conservation Center. Archery is a sport which both Piper and her brother enjoy. When her mother mentioned an opportunity to take archery classes, O’Donnell said, “That sounds like fun! I like longbow much more than recurve.” Piper just received her Silver Award in Girl Scouts for work she has done on our soon to be installed Braille Trail. She became involved in the project because, “It sounded like a cool idea and would make a difference.” This young mover and shaker is also a member of the Litchfield County Happy Endings 4-H Dog Club where she is involved in training dogs for competitive obedience and showmanship. Her holy grail in this arena is to put an obedience trial championship on a dog. She currently handles a rescue Shetland Sheep Dog. Eventually Piper would like to work at a place like White Memorial and definitely with animals! We have every faith that this dynamic young woman will meet and exceed her goals.

PEREGRINE BOURNE

Peregrine Bourne arrived 17 years ago in Ann Arbor, Michigan. His humor is very fetching. When asked what he likes to study he quickly replies, “Nothing!”... followed by the sound of crickets... then to the meat of the matter. Bourne, although still a high school student, is taking classes at Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted with a goal towards working in electrical transmission! “Why?”, I asked him. “Because working on telephone poles and with live wires sounds like fun!”, he replies. He enjoys working at White Memorial as a volunteer and his great height makes him particularly handy when it comes to filling the feeders on the Museum deck or down at the bird blind. Peregrine participates in archery tournaments, particularly the northeast regionals of The United States Archery Association. He enjoys working with three types of bows: longbow, recurve, and his favorite, the compound bow (what most hunters use). He is also a member of the Litchfield County Happy Endings 4-H Dog Club. In his spare time, Peregrine enjoys playing popular games like *Magic the Gathering* and the role playing game *Dungeons and Dragons* because... “They’re fun!”



Family Affair: Peregrine Bourne (L), Karen Riggin (C), and Piper O’Donnell (R) with Rocky the Box Turtle

BEFORE THE WHITES - "THE FOLLY"

by Lee Swift, Assistant Curator of Archives and Library, Litchfield Historical Society

"In a legal Town Meeting holden in Litchfield on the 11th Day of March AD 1783, Abraham Bradley, Esq. chosen moderator. By unanimous vote granted permission for the Small Pox to be communicated & carried on by inoculation on Gillets Folly so called, it being a peninsula or neck of land belonging to Stephen Baldwin in the northern part of the Great Pond in Litchfield".

*From the Litchfield Town Meeting minutes,
March 11, 1783.*

On December 15, 1730 Nathan Michell received the 8 acre point as part of his proprietor's share in the division of Litchfield land. Numerous owners followed including Ephraim Kirby, Moses Seymour, Jr., and Elisha Horton of Boston Tea Party fame, before "The Folly" was sold to Benjamin Bissell in 1830.

The Bantam Lake Refreshment House on Point Folly was advertised in the Litchfield Enquirer on December 11, 1845. "Thomas Addis, Jr. has put this House in good condition, and will furnish *Oysters, Hot Coffee, &c.* at shortest notice. *Fish* kept on hand for sale at all times." The property remained in the Bissell family until 1910 when it was sold as part of a 20 acre parcel. In 1911, "The Folly", part in Litchfield and part in

Morris, was conveyed to Alain C. and May W. White "for consideration of a valuable sum in dollars."

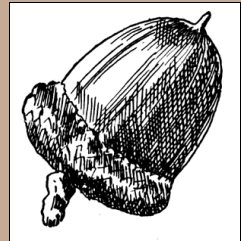
Today Point Folly is a favorite campground, walking destination, and bird observation area. The White Memorial Foundation's 4,000 acres are made up of many land parcels with varied and interesting stories to tell.



The Folly, Bantam Lake c. 1905
Photo: Courtesy of the Litchfield Historical Society

Autumn, the year's last, loveliest smile.

William Cullen Bryant



Uh Oh!

Photo by Leo Kulinski, Jr.

2012 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.

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A Variety of Brief Encounters

by Gordon Loery, Former WMCC Director of Research

“What follows is a series of memoirs. It is a collection of man – animal interactions as I remember them but not necessarily in the order in which they happened.”
- Gordon Loery

Animals Rescued

An Owl and a Car

One early afternoon a gentleman stopped by our house with a Saw-whet Owl in his hand. He had accidentally hit it with his car and thought we might be able to make use of it at our Museum. It was still warm but otherwise showed no sign of life. Its body was intact and we do not often receive specimens of this species. So I assured him we certainly could make use of it.

However, as I was preparing to put the body in the freezer at the Museum one of its eyes blinked. I immediately put the owl in a large flight cage and within half an hour it was flying around. I opened the cage door and it flew out without any trouble. A blinking eye had saved its life. I have since learned that if the recovery had not been as rapid as in this case it probably would not have been as complete.

Wood Ducks United

This second recovery began with a telephone call from the Center School located on West Street near the center of Litchfield. A class of students out on recess had found and surrounded a small flock of baby birds. Could I come over and rescue them? I went over to investigate and found the birds to be baby ducks. I was surprised. This was a strange place for ducks to be nesting. I got out my binoculars and quickly found an explanation. There was an adult female Wood Duck perched on a branch of a nearby tree watching what was going on. Wood ducks nest in cavities so we put up nesting boxes for them in and around our bodies of water. This pair must have found a hollow tree near the center of Litchfield and decided to use it instead.

I went over to see a nearby teacher

and suggested she should call back the students. I told her these ducklings were mature enough to be firmly imprinted on their parents and could not do well in captivity. Their best chance was to give the probable parent the opportunity to come down and lead them to water. She finally agreed and called the students back to the school building. The adult wood duck immediately flew down from the tree and led the ducklings down the hill away from the highway and in the direction of Little Pond. Later that afternoon I went to Little Pond and observed a female wood duck with a flock of ducklings on the water.



Seal with a kiss.
Photo credit: Gordon Loery

In both of the cases described above the native animals played a relatively passive role with a human being leading the way. They were reacting to what the people around them were doing. In other parts of the world with fewer human inhabitants there appear to be more wildlife species taking the initiative.

Animals Take the Initiative

A Curious Whale

One February I joined a boat trip sailing from San Diego, CA down the west coast of South America. At one of

the stops we boarded smaller boats to explore an under-sloped bay noted for its wintering whale populations. We soon noticed one of the whales was following our boat wherever we went. Eventually it came closer and surfaced right next to us. We could all reach out and pet it. Our public T.V. station recently played a documentary on whales that included just such a scene. I would not be surprised if it was photographed in the same bay we visited.

The whale was bigger than our small boat and could have easily dumped us all into the ocean if it so wished. But it was obviously just curious. I have seen whales off the coast of Massachusetts but only from a distance. It would be nice to have more areas where wild animals could be curious rather than afraid of us.

A Lion in Africa

Not all of the animals we have encountered on our trips have been as friendly as the curious whale. On one African safari we camped out in tents and went to bed early. One night we were awakened by the roaring of an unhappy lion. When my wife and I looked out we saw he was sitting on our front porch expressing his displeasure with our invasion of his territory. We did not sleep very well that night. The next morning we all woke up early, had a quick breakfast, packed up all our belongings and moved on to our next camp site. The lion was not curious but was taking the initiative.

An Animal in Charge

On a trip to the Galapagos Islands I had a chance to borrow diving equipment from a crew member on our ship. Walking around underwater I was a little surprised at how little life I was seeing. Although the islands are located on the equator the water around them is not as warm as one might expect because of cold currents coming up from the South Seas. This may help explain the presence of a native penguin population as far north as the Galapagos Islands.

Then all of a sudden I saw a seal-like creature heading in my direction.

Continued on page 11

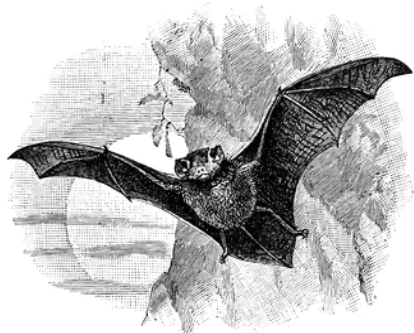


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A Variety of Brief Encounters *Continued from page 10*

For the first time in my life I felt seriously threatened by a wild animal. I had seen a similar animal at a beach on one of the islands and though he was bigger than I was he lacked mobility on land. I never lost the feeling of being in charge. Under water I was not any smaller but I lacked his mobility and I had nothing with which I could defend myself. He was in charge.

The only sensible thing I could do was not to do anything that might bring about his retaliation. So I remained motionless as he swam right up to me and began circling me close enough to touch me with his nose. He did not have hands so the only way he could explore was with his nose. He never showed any signs of aggression. Like the whale he was just curious, curious to see a human being under water. When he had satisfied his curiosity he swam away and I headed back to the boat thankful that he had not been a shark.

I hope there will always be places on this planet where animals can be in charge and not just survive and where human beings can safely acquire a little humility from them!



How Can I See Porcupine in the Wild? *Continued from page 2*



Fig. 3: Linden nip twig. Porcupines are too heavy to feed on leaves in outermost branches. To bring the leaves in reach, they cut the terminal branches, consume the leaf blades, and discard the branch with petioles and unripe fruit. Linden is a favorite porcupine summer food in the Northeast.

What if you travel to Central or South America and want to encounter a South American species? (There are 14 such species). The bar will be raised many notches. South American forests are seldom leafless, and South American porcupines all have a tropical distribution, precluding snow tracking. As a last-ditch effort, collectors have captured porcupines by pulling them out of their odoriferous hollow-tree dens.

One indirect method that has been used by South American hunters is to wait at night near a natural salt lick. Many herbivores come to ingest salt at night. Louise Emmons of the

Smithsonian Institution reports that the list includes South American porcupines. You may have to be satisfied with less. Many South American villages offer handicrafts incorporating quills of the local porcupine species. The necklace below comes from the Peruvian Amazon. It incorporates wild berries alternating with cut quills of the bicolor-spined porcupine (*Coendou bicolor*). The tooth comes from a river caiman. (Fig. 4)

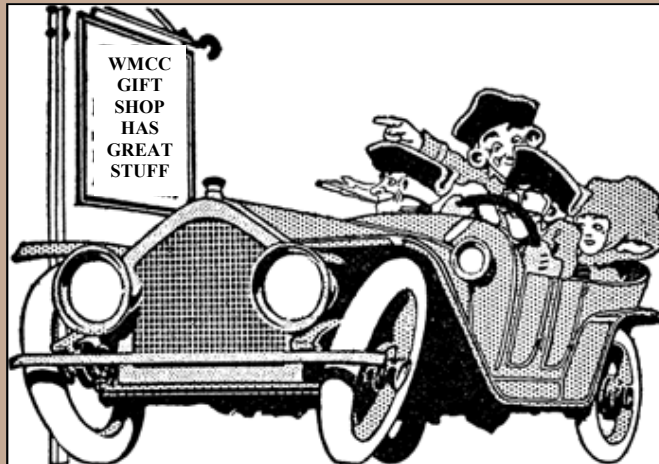


Fig. 4: Quill-berry-tooth necklace. The necklace, fashioned by Indians of the Peruvian Amazon, contains quills of the local porcupine species.



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