

Oregon Ridge Nature Center Council
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Sights at Honey Harvest 2010



Photos by Jocelyn Curtis

TRAILBLAZER

Nov/Dec 2010
 Jan 2011



Supporting Oregon Ridge Park
 and Nature Center for 28 years

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL SPEAKER SERIES

A MARYLAND HERPETOLOGY ATLAS: Counting on Reptiles and Amphibians

Dr. Don C. Forester
 Monday, November 15, 7:30 PM

Right now, somewhere in Maryland, a small band of volunteers is playing a strange game of hide and seek with some of the 95 species and sub-species of amphibians and reptiles inhabiting our state. Perhaps a spotted salamander, a king snake, and a box turtle are using their best camouflage techniques to remain undetected, while these nature snoops painstakingly seek them out. Once uncovered, they are counted and notes are taken about their physical attributes, location and habitat. Throughout the year, this discovery game has been taking place between various groups of snoops and herps in natural areas all across Maryland, including right here in Oregon Ridge Park.

These volunteer snoops are part of The Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas (MARA) project, an ambitious 5-year program to systematically catalogue the amphibian and reptile fauna within the geopolitical boundaries of Maryland. Dr. Don C. Forester, professor emeritus in the Department of Biological Sciences at Towson University, will summarize some of the research that he and his students have conducted within Oregon Ridge Park while explaining how you and your family may become participants in this worthwhile project.



Dr. Forester received his B.A. and M.S. from Texas Tech University and his Ph.D. from North Carolina State University. His credentials, professional achievements, and published works are too vast to list here. Presently he is the P. I. of Towson University's nationally funded REU program in Molecular Ecology and Director of the University Field Station. He is the past recipient of the Towson University Student Government Distinguished Teaching Award, The College of Science and Mathematics Excellence in Scholarship Award, and a two-time winner of the Fisher College Outstanding Faculty Award, most recently in 2008.

If you are a snoop at heart and like a little intrigue, you will enjoy Dr. Forester's MARA presentation.

(Speaker Series continued on page 2)

(Speaker Series continued)

THE HEALING PROPERTIES OF HONEY AND HONEYBEE PRODUCTS

Jeanne Deignan-Kosmides
Monday, January 17, 7:30 PM

It seems paradoxical that something as sweet and delicious as honey could actually be good for us. However, doctors, acupuncturists, herbalists, naturopaths and many other health practitioners recommend honey for healing many ailments. Raw honey contains natural antibiotics, which help kill microbes directly. Jeanne Deignan-Kosmides will talk about the amazing healing benefits of honey and other products made by the honeybee, including the many other uses for honey, propolis, beeswax, royal jelly and pollen. She will even talk briefly about bee venom therapy and using honey in cooking.



Jeanne Deignan-Kosmides holds a B.A. in special education and is the owner of Breath of Joy Healthy Living, LLC. She is an advanced 500-hour Kripalu yoga and meditation teacher and runs training programs in Maryland and along the east coast. Jeanne is a Phoenix Rising Yoga therapist and is currently in the Pastoral Counseling Masters Program at Loyola University, Baltimore. Jeanne also has her certification in Organic Biodynamic Farming and Beekeeping and has been keeping bees for over 6 years. With over 30 years experience in yoga, teaching, meditation, nutrition and alternative healing, Jeanne brings a broad and unique quality of experience, knowledge and nurturing support to her workshops, classes and lectures. You can learn more about Jeanne at: www.breathofjoy.com.

MAKING MERRY AT OREGON RIDGE

Help us decorate the Nature Center for the holidays and PAR-R-R-TY at the same time. There will be plenty of greens, pinecones, teasel, and other natural materials to make ornaments to decorate our trees and to take home for your own holiday decorations. Festivities are free. All we ask is that you bring your favorite holiday treat to share.

Merrymaking begins on Monday evening, December 13th at 7:30 PM. Sing carols, string popcorn and cranberries, and feast on cookies and other delectables. It is a family affair, so bring the children, neighbors and anyone else who needs some holiday cheer. Make it a real celebration!



HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

We are busy collecting greens and other natural materials for you to create your own holiday decorations. Please call 410-887-1815 for reservations. Please send payment for all programs in advance:

Holiday Wreath Making: December 4 & 5, 2 to 4 PM. Welcome the holidays with a fresh evergreen wreath. \$8/wreath. Bring clippers and gloves. (Holiday movies will play in the auditorium for children)

Night Out at the Ridge: December 10, 7 to 9 PM. Learn to make hand-dipped candles and a beautiful evergreen centerpiece. Bring your old candles to recycle if you wish. \$3/person. Must be 16+.



Movie and Craft: December 11 & 12, 1 to 4 PM. Create your own elf hat and make a sundae. Then watch the movie *Elf* in the auditorium. \$2/person.

Natural Ornaments: December 18 & 19, 2 to 4 PM. Bring the kids to make your own unique ornaments with pine cones, nuts, teasel, and other natural materials. \$2/person.

MIGRATION: IT'S NOT JUST FOR THE BIRDS!

By Courtney Peed

Autumn has come and gone with its glorious colors. As winter slowly sets in, everyone starts to notice what's missing and who has left for the season. The number of birds has dropped significantly. Oh, we still see our regulars like Cardinals, Nuthatches and Downy Woodpeckers, but the thrushes and hummingbirds have left for warmer climates. The woods are silent, and the air bites at your skin. Ah yes, it is winter.

Besides the absence of songs and many birds, insects have disappeared as well. Some may pine for the sounds of crickets and cicadas that lull us to sleep, but it's the big flying insects that we really miss this time of year. Most people know about the migration of the Monarch Butterfly and our tagging program here at the Ridge. But did you know that dragonflies migrate, too? One of the most colorful and beautiful species known for its migration south when the weather gets chilly is the Common Green Darner (*Anax junius*).

These photos reveal something of the beauty of these dragonflies. The head and thorax of these three-inch long insects are bright green, hence the name Green Darner. Males have a bright blue abdomen, while females sport a rusty-brown to purple abdomen. The wings are clear and can get up to three-inches long. While this is only one of about a dozen species of dragonflies that migrate, it is the largest dragonfly at Oregon Ridge, and certainly one of the most colorful.



Green Darners start their lives as nymphs and live underwater in streams, ponds and marshes. Sometimes you will see adult dragonflies touching the water with their long tails as they fly around a pond or stream. Every time they touch the water, they lay an egg. The egg sinks to the bottom and eventually hatches into a nymph. The nymphs are carnivorous and eat mostly aquatic insects. Since Green Darners can over-

winter and live as nymphs for up to three years, they can become large! When they reach their final year as a nymph, they are usually large enough to eat small fish and crustaceans.

Nymphs grow by shedding a layer of exoskeleton every so often. When it is time for their last shed, they crawl out of the water onto a plant or nearby stick that is in the sun. The exoskeleton splits revealing wings and a colorful body. After blood is pumped into the wings and they are thoroughly dry, they fly away and begin to eat hundreds of pesky flying insects, like annoying mosquitoes. Adult dragonflies eat on the wing and are great pest controls. Their appetites are insatiable and they eat dozens of flying insects each night.



In late September the adult Green Darners will migrate south with eagles and hawks. They ride the same air currents through mountain valleys as these birds and swarms have been reported riding the currents ahead of a storm. In April, survivors and new adult dragonflies will migrate north to lay more eggs. New nymphs will also crawl out of their watery homes to become adults in the park and migrate like their parents did in the fall. While not much is known about the migration patterns or destinations, it is still incredible to see a swarm of migrating dragonflies. Perhaps next year you will be lucky enough to observe a newly formed darner spread its wings for the first time or witness their marvelous fall migration.

TRAILBLAZER STAFF

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Articles for the Feb/March issue are due December 17.

EXERCISING YOUR IMAGINATION AT OREGON RIDGE

They are over there! yelled the children while pointing excitedly. Dressed as fairies or elves and with their wands and fairy dust in hand, the children set out to find the mysterious creatures spotted by their friends. One disappointed child came back and stated that she did not see a fairy, but then happily continued to build her fairy house in hopes of providing shelter for one of the fairy folk. There is now a nice little village of fairy houses in the woods at Oregon Ridge, and if we are lucky, we may spot some wood sprites enjoying the wonderfully designed and beautiful abodes built by the boys and girls that attended the new *Fairy and Elves* program last August.

This program like many of the new programs at ORNC requires a sense of wonder, creativeness, and imagination. Join us for some of our programs that meet monthly such as the Woolly Bear Preschool, Home School Nature Day, and Night Out at the Ridge, or attend one of our new weekend programs like Elfie movie and craft, Geo Caching, Harry Potter Halloween, Our Darling Starling, or the Corn Husks Crafts and Candle Making program. Combining a little imagination and creativeness with nature is always fun!



BOW MAKING WITH KIRK DREIER

The always-popular Bow Making Course begins on January 6, 2011, and continues five Thursday evenings through February 3 (snow date on Feb. 4). Kirk Dreier, Director of Marshy Point Nature Center, will teach the course at Oregon Ridge from 6 to 9 PM. Kirk is an expert in this native skill and hunts regularly using a handcrafted Longbow. During this five-week course, Kirk will teach the fundamentals of bow construction to a small group of 10 adults, age 18+.



The \$30 fee is due in advance, covering the basic materials. Participants will also need to bring the following: Stanley surform #21-296 or #21-295, a pencil, and a Stanley wood scraper. Optional tools include: a drawknife, a spoke shave, and rasps.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

Trail Guide Training – For those who love nature, hiking, and sharing with children. February 1, 2, 3, and 4 from 10 AM to 1 PM. \$25/person in advance or on first day.

Maple Sugar Days – Learn how to tap maples for sweet sap and make even sweeter syrup on February 19, 20, 26 and 27, anytime between 10 AM and 4 PM. It's FREE. Then help us celebrate the end of Maple Sugar Days at our **Annual Pancake Breakfast** at the Oregon Ridge Lodge on March 5 and 6, between 8 AM and noon. Tickets can be purchased at the door - \$6/adults, \$3/children age 2-8.

WOODCRAFTERS CARPENTERS! THE NATURE CENTER WANTS YOU!

Are you looking to volunteer your skills at carpentry and wood crafting? Then Oregon Ridge Nature Center needs you to help build a portable Puppet Theater and help with some exhibit work. We will provide all tools and material. If you're willing, please call Courtney or Shannon at 410-887-1815.

FROM THE PRESIDENT Jim Curtis

First, I want to thank our past president, Jack Kerns, for a job well done over the past two years. Oregon Ridge Park, the Nature Center and the Council have benefited from Jack's expertise.

For those of you not familiar with me, let me give you a little personal background information. I grew up in Cockeysville and have always been interested in the outdoors and the environment. As a teenager I enjoyed hiking around Oregon Ridge before the Park was created. Later, I studied zoology at the University of Maryland, and upon graduating I took a job with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources as a biologist/inspector working in water pollution control. I eventually ended up at the Maryland Department of the Environment where I retired from State service in 2004.

After retiring, I wanted to remain active in the environmental field. So along with joining several environmental groups, I became a volunteer trail guide at Oregon Ridge. After a couple of years, I became a Board member and began managing the Council's web site. For the past two years, I have been the Vice President.

Now I find myself honored to be the new President, and I'm excited to step into this role. As I begin to think of the tasks ahead, I ask myself what I can do to improve the Nature Center, the Park, and all of the activities that the Council sponsors. Thankfully, I've learned over the past few years that the Council is a well-oiled machine when it comes to preparing and operating our events and activities. My first task will be to maintain this efficient operation. After that, I plan to pursue opportunities to enhance the public's experience in the Park and the Nature Center.

I'm also looking forward to working with the staff at Oregon Ridge to assist them with our common goals. One of my goals is to encourage Baltimore County's Department of Recreation and Parks to streamline their approval process for volunteer improvement projects within the Park. Several recent projects (Eagle scout projects and tree planting projects) around the Park have been delayed and nearly cancelled due to the unusually long approval process. Another of my goals is to increase our membership. More members means more volunteers, more concerned citizens, and a better chance to educate the public.

In regards to specific improvements at the Nature Center, my wish list includes new educational displays (possibly digital), repair of the existing wood stove, and acquiring some patio furniture for the deck area. Hopefully, by the time you are reading this, the major renovation of the Animal Room will have been completed.

Lastly, if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at curtisjim@comcast.net.

OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD 2010 - 2011

- President:** Jim Curtis
- Vice President:** Erin McCleary
- Secretary:** Ann Kerns
- Treasurer:** Anne Canoles
- Directors:** Michael Burns, Sherry Lyons, Jack Kerns



Photo by Jocelyn Curtis



SWARMS CAME TO HONEY HARVEST 2010



Folks swarmed to our Honey Harvest this year, enticed by beautiful 70° days and sunny skies. Over 1500 visitors came out on Saturday, and nearly that many on Sunday, to celebrate bees and their beneficial by-products. They tasted honey, bought beeswax candles, ornaments and cosmetics, and watched Amy Roden, the 2010 Honey Princess, extract honeycomb. Unfortunately people weren't the only ones swarming. Yellow jackets also loved the cider, sodas, honey and every other sweet thing there that day, living up to their pesky reputation at times.

Despite the irritating little buzzers, a host of volunteers worked hard to insure that everyone had fun and learned something interesting. They sold hotdogs and cider, churned homemade ice cream, pressed apple cider, showcased raptors, demonstrated blacksmithing and wool spinning, led tours of the Peter Goff Museum, reenacted Civil War battles, put on puppet shows, painted faces, and played rousing music.

This is not usually a huge fundraiser, but this year we did make a profit of nearly \$1000. Next year we hope to see the return of the hayrides....and you, of course!

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Friends of ORNC:

- George/Karen Brauer
- Noot/Ann Canoles
- Jon Christiana
- Jeanne Cole
- Jim/Jocelyn Curtis
- Bill Diegel
- Jackie Devine
- Millie Dreier
- Zeke Eclarino
- Ellen Gavin
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- Gayl Meier
- Ginna Naylor
- Kevin O'Neill
- Dave Powers
- Ann Quinn
- Joe/Annette Salvaggio
- Marty/Paula Schugam
- John Smothers
- Paul Waldman
- Joe/Cas Warfield
- Gene/Linda Williamson
- June Woodward



Demonstrators and Participants:

- Linda Alman (Three Bees Skin Care)
- Richard Anderson (87th PA Corps.)
- Janet/Jerry Beaumont (Beaumont Pottery)
- Brian Brauer (4th N.C. Co.)
- Nancy Green (Free Range Lamb Products)
- Huselton Honey Products
- Lonesome Valley Mountaineers Band
- Walter Massey (Phoenix Wildlife Ctr.)
- Ted McNett (Blacksmith)
- Grace Patterson (Petting Zoo)
- Katherine Patterson (Spinner)
- Jim and Pat Roberts (Bees by the Bay)
- Amy Roden, Honey Princess 2010
- Snyders Apiary
- Joseph "Reb" Staub (Blacksmith)
- Carole Veihmeyer (Usborne Books)
- Kathy Woods (Phoenix Wildlife Ctr.)



Parking Volunteers Dulaney High Key Club Members:

- Patricia Bai
- Kushal Byoutal
- Sai Vedan
- Brian Lee
- Sumanth Neernmalla
- Henry Zhang
- Erica Shin
- Liz Pentikis
- Franny Brancati
- Cindy Paler
- Esther Cho
- Yilin Feng
- Chuck Clabaugh

ROBIN HUFFMAN The Singing Ridge Runner

Ninth grader Robyn Huffman joined the Ridge Runners in spring, 2010. She heard about it through her Mom's friend who happens to work at ORNC. Since Robyn loves animals and cares for many at home, she knew this was a place she wanted to volunteer. She enjoys feeding and caring for all the animals, but she says, *I like working with the chickens the most. They are so funny.*

Robyn has had lots of practice taking care of animals. She has a dog named Jonas and four cats — Reese, Blaze, Annabel, and Fiyero. She also has a fish named Belle and a hermit crab named Barman. She manages to walk, feed and clean them all, despite her many other interests. She is an avid reader and loves to write, so it is not surprising that her favorite subject at Dulaney High is English. She is a budding singer and actress and has been in school plays. When asked what she would like to do when she is out of school, she says, *I would really love to be a singer or an actress because those are the things that make me very happy, and I would like to be doing something I feel very strongly about.*

Robyn expresses herself in other ways, playing guitar and dancing, and she plays basketball at school ... *because I have a lot of fun doing that!* She loves all types of music but is especially fond of "pop."

When her school friends ask about Oregon Ridge, she says she tells them how much fun it is to be a Ridgie and she says she recommends it to anyone who loves animals as much as she does. We hope some of her friends will join her. And we hope Robyn stays around until she graduates. She is a cheerful addition to our Ridge Runner team, and with her theatrical talents, she will make a good puppeteer for our puppet shows.



JOIN OREGON RIDGE NATURE CENTER COUNCIL

MEMBERS RECEIVE:

- Bi-Monthly Newsletter
- Priority Mailing of Seasonal Calendar
- First Option for Camp Registration
- 10% off Gift Shop purchases \$30+
- Members Only Events



LOW, YEARLY DUES:

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