



# FRIENDS OF PATUXENT

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April-May-June 2017




## Volunteers Help with Savannah Restoration

Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager



**O**n February 26, 15 volunteers from nearby Fort George G. Meade assisted with our savannah restoration project on the North Tract of the refuge, supervised by Refuge Biologist John Bourne and Volunteer Coordinator Diana Ogilvie. They helped cut and remove Virginia pine saplings that are invading where the refuge is reestablishing 130 acres of oak pine savannah to support rare darkling and tiger beetles, upland chorus frogs, and a variety of pollinators. Large sweet gum trees, previously cut down, were also hauled away to reduce the fuel for periodic prescribed burns through the habitat. Three large dump truck loads of trunks and limbs will now serve as firewood at the refuge's two

nearby scout camps. The leader of the volunteer group said they hope to come back to help with additional projects in the coming months! 

### CHAIR'S COMMENTS - Changing Lives

Jeanne Latham, Chair of the Friends of Patuxent



I was reminded recently that the one of the key reasons people support an organization or entity of any kind is because the organization either saves lives or changes lives. That's pretty profound. And that probably is the over-riding factor for us as volunteers and Friends and staff too, don't you agree?

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# Ceremony Designates Refuge's South Tract as the Daniel M. Ashe Division of Patuxent Research Refuge

Jennifer Chin, Recreation Assistant, Conference & Outreach Coordinator

**O**n January 9, Patuxent Research Refuge hosted a ceremony officially designating the refuge's South Tract as the Daniel M. Ashe Division of Patuxent Research Refuge. There were 85 attendees, including Dan and his family, NWRS Chief Cynthia Martinez, FWS Deputy Director Jim Kurth, several other members of the Directorate, USGS Director Suzette Kimball, and Senator Ben Cardin. The Friends of Patuxent hosted a reception afterwards where we had a chance to mingle with Dan one last time before he departs his office on January 20. Patuxent was highly honored to be chosen in this way to memorialize Dan's contributions to the FWS and the world's natural resources. But why Patuxent and why specifically the South Tract? There were multiple reasons: 1) Dan's commitment to sound science and wildlife research was a cornerstone of his time in FWS. With Patuxent being the nation's only refuge with a specific pur-



(l-r)Wendi Weber, Northeast Regional Director of USFWS; Daniel M. Ashe and Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager

pose to support wildlife research, there was a very strong link to Dan's efforts to promote using the best science available to make conservation decisions, 2) The South Tract is engaged in all of the "Big Six" wildlife dependent recreation activities from the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997, which Dan

was instrumental in getting passed and 3) Dan was also an ardent supporter of the Urban Refuge Initiative, which Patuxent participates in on a daily basis. Dan has been a strong leader for our agency for more than 20 years, and a mentor to many of our Service staff. He will be greatly missed! 🦋

*Friends of Patuxent* is published quarterly and can be read online or mailed to our Friends upon request.

Many of the newsletter contributors and other assistants are volunteers. There are regular contributors, however, we welcome and encourage all volunteers and Friends to submit items for the newsletter by sending or bringing them to:

**Editor, Friends of Patuxent Newsletter**  
**ATTN: Ross Feldner**  
 11811 Ivanhoe Street  
 Wheaton, MD 20902

Or email to [ross.feldner@verizon.net](mailto:ross.feldner@verizon.net)

All articles submitted to the Friends of Patuxent Newsletter will be reviewed by newsletter staff prior to their publication. We reserve the right to not publish submissions based on length, content or suitability.

Article submission deadlines:

Issue			Issue		
No.	Months	Deadline	No.	Months	Deadline
1	Jan-Mar	December 1	2	Apr-Jun	March 1
3	Jul-Sept	June 1	4	Oct-Dec	September 1

To become a member of the Friends of Patuxent or send a donation, please see "Membership Application" on page 19.

**Start Your Engines**  
**The John Hollingsworth Gallery**  
**Will Host A Volunteer Art Exhibit**  
**December 2017**  
**More information in next newsletter**

# Do You Feed Birds?

Lowell Adams, Board Member, Friends of Patuxent

**D**o you feed birds in your backyard? Millions of people do and the birdseed industry is thriving. If you are a bird feeder, what kinds of seed do you feed? These days the small oil sunflower seed is widely used either along or in combination with other seeds. Until the 1970s, the small oil sunflower seed was grown as an agricultural crop to process into sunflower oil. It was not packaged and marketed as birdseed. A Patuxent Wildlife Research Center researcher was instrumental in changing that. In the 1970s, Dr. Aelred Geis, an urban wildlife specialist at Patuxent, focused research efforts on the seeds birds liked to eat and, thus, the most efficient way for people to feed birds.



**Dr. Aelred D. Geis was an urban wildlife specialist at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.**

From 1977 to 1979, volunteers recorded more than 179,000 bird visits to experimental feeders near their homes and kept track of the kind of seed taken by birds. Dr. Geis found that the small, oil sunflower seed and white proso millet were preferred by birds under Maryland conditions. The large, black-striped sunflower seed, at the time the traditionally



**One of Dr. Geis's bird-feeding stations where birdseed was tested, Howard County, Maryland, 1980.**

used sunflower seed for feeding birds, also was reported to be preferred.

Many seeds in wild bird mixes sold on the market, including wheat, milo, peanut hearts, hulled oats, and rice, however, were generally unattractive to birds. Feeding preferences differed by species. Nevertheless, on the basis of Dr. Geis's work, oil sunflower and white proso millet became widely popular seeds for feeding birds. Dr. Geis's work created public demand, and he played a role in convincing the seed industry to make oil sunflower seeds available

as birdseed. So now, when you see the small oil sunflower seed packaged as birdseed in grocery stores, garden supply stores, and other outlets, you can say "a Patuxent researcher helped to bring that about."

You can learn more about Dr. Geis's work and that of other Patuxent biologists from *The History of Patuxent: America's Wildlife Research Story*. The report was published by the U.S. Geological Survey as Circular 1422 and is available online at <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/cir1422>. 🐦



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<https://www.facebook.com/PatuxentResearchRefuge>

<https://twitter.com/USFWSNortheast/status/78546358377783296>

# Jim Fowler - Friend of Patuxent

by Matthew C. Perry, USGS Emeritus Scientist and Friends of Patuxent Board Member

During the 1960s, nature shows on television were not as numerous and available as they are now. For those of us that love nature, the program "Wild Kingdom" was a must see on a weekly basis every Sunday night from 1963 to 1971. The show was sponsored by Mutual of Omaha and starred Dr. Marlin Perkins, Director of the Saint Louis (Missouri) Zoological Park, and his affable sidekick, Jim Fowler. Dr. Perkins usually had a suit on as he narrated the show, but Fowler looked like he had just returned from an African safari with very stylish field clothes. If there was a large snake or an alligator to capture Jim was quick to go into action, while Dr. Perkins stayed out of the fray, but with confidence that Jim would be successful in any capture of any critter. It became a common joke of the show with Dr. Perkins stating, "I'll wait here...."

My first involvement with Jim Fowler was in 1981, when he agreed to give some biologists from Patuxent a personal tour of the wildlife areas of Wild World on Central Avenue (now Six Flags). We loaded into a hay wagon pulled by a tractor with Jim having a good time as guide. At that time Wild World had many large animals including African lions, African elephants, and other exciting exotic wildlife for the visitors. These animals were moved from the park when new management put more emphasis on amusement rides and water slides, with less emphasis unfortunately on wildlife viewing and conservation.

Jim Fowler had a close connection with Patuxent Research Refuge and was especially friendly with Patuxent

assistant biologist and self-made naturalist, Lennie Jones. Lennie remembers that "Fowler was a fun person to be around. He was a genuine wildlife guy, and one who had done credible research on raptors in the Beltsville, Maryland, area." Fowler was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1932, but grew up in the Falls Church Virginia area.



**Jim Fowler leading tour at Wild World for wildlife biologists in 1981.**

When we were planning the Fiftieth Anniversary of Patuxent in 1989, we also were in the midst of planning for the National Wildlife Visitor Center. We had plans to feature three species of mega fauna (bald eagle, whooping crane, and gray wolf) on the grounds of the Visitor Center property on the South Tract of the refuge. Fowler had a personal pack of wolves in Georgia and was willing to advise us on the

best way to display them in a wild environment, unlike a zoo. Unfortunately, we did not get approval to have live animals at the Visitor Center, although we temporarily had some young wolf pups we were raising for the purpose.

We invited Fowler to join us for our Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration and he and Lennie Jones conducted a short nature walk for the young folks and their parents. Lennie had a collection of captive reptiles and strategically placed some of them under logs and other natural materials so that she and Jim could find them for the kid's. These were unexpected and exciting finds.

That night we had a large banquet and of course Jim Fowler was our after-dinner speaker. Lennie's fondest funny memory of Fowler was at the dinner presentation when they shared the podium during Lennie's introduction of Jim. Lennie had a little surprise that Jim and Lennie had not rehearsed or totally discussed. Jim had asked Lennie to bring an attractive "herp" (reptile or amphibian) as a prop for discussion. Lennie stated later, "being Marlins' critter-catchin' guy all over the globe, I assumed he was real familiar with snake species. Wrong. With no prior prep, I removed a gentle

Sinaloan milk snake from a bag and placed it in his hand. It immediately headed up the long trek of his sport coat sleeve. He absolutely panicked! He hid his fear from the crowd, but bent down and whispered in my ear, "Lennie, are you kidding!?!? A tame coral snake?!!" I quickly and quietly identified the beautiful critter as the very similar but harmless milk snake, and we resumed the discussion with the excited audience.

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# Random Hearts at Patuxent

by Matthew C. Perry, USGS Emeritus Scientist and Friends of Patuxent Board Member

In the spring of 1998, the Patuxent Research Refuge received a unique telephone call. The call was from the Columbia Pictures movie production company that wanted to film part of a movie at Patuxent. After more details were discussed, Refuge Manager Ms. Susan McMahon invited them to visit Patuxent. The movie producers made it clear that their interest was in renting the log cabin, an historic refuge building prominently located on a hill along route #197. After viewing the site, they decided it was not appropriate, but they were still interested in locating the filming at the refuge. They then began an exhaustive tour of the 13,000-acre refuge until they came upon the area on the North Tract used by the boy scouts as a camp site that overlooks the Little Patuxent River. The producers thought it was perfect. There was one problem, however, as there was no log cabin. This was no problem for Hollywood. They would just build a log cabin and remove it after filming. Thus began the negotiation for filming on Patuxent property the movie "Random Hearts" directed by Sydney Pollack and starring Harrison Ford and Kristin Scott Thomas.

Ms. McMahon made it clear that approval for filming would need to be authorized by the regional office in Massachusetts. The administrators for the region were not supportive of doing the film on a refuge. After all, the proposed movie was not about wildlife, but an "R-Rated" love story with a unique mystery plot. However, they agreed to let Patuxent refuge staff make the final decision. The refuge staff thought there might be some benefits, like a possible donation to the Friends of Patuxent and a Public Service Announcement about Patuxent by Harrison Ford. The refuge also thought they might end up with a new building along the river for environmental education purposes. After more negotiation concerning se-



**Harrison Ford and Kristin Scott Thomas at the cabin along the Little Patuxent River**



**Harrison Ford on borrowed motorcycle with borrowed Fish and Wildlife hat for picture with John Sauer.**

curity and other bureaucratic details, the producer received permission to film. The producer said all of the scenes proposed to be at the log cabin would be filmed at Patuxent with the exception of the inside love scenes! These scenes were allegedly filmed elsewhere, but the recreated setting was clearly the log cabin. The scene with the stars walking in the woods was actually filmed 10 miles south of the cabin at Patuxent River Park, where the river is much wider.

Harrison flew his personal helicopter to the refuge each day from Washington, DC, and landed near the North Tract Contact Station at a meadow site that had been mowed very low to reduce

the chance of a grass fire. Refuge biologist, Mr. Holliday (Holly) Obrecht, selected the site, which once had been part of a meadow management study. Holly stated that several eye witness accounts from staff members described Harrison Ford's landings as "a bit rocky," as he was new to flying helicopters at that time.

Holly remembers that some of the staff members were invited to visit the stage set after hours or during lunch time breaks. He visited the movie set one day at lunch and met Harrison Ford and director Sydney Pollack. Holly mentioned that he was a pilot and they both, Ford and Pollack, stopped what they were doing and traded flying stories with Holly for about a half an hour. Sydney Pollock was also a pilot, and they talked about other Hollywood pilots such as Tom Cruise, who had just acquired a World War II P-51 Mustang. Holly cherishes the memories and remembers that Harrison was very soft spoken and low keyed.

Sue McMahon also remembers that Harrison was very friendly, and signed autographs and took pictures with the staff. His costar Kristin Scott Thomas was more reserved, but Sue was able to give her a pamphlet about Patuxent and talk about the mission of the refuge. Harrison also prepared a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about Patuxent and the National Wildlife Refuge System. Public Affairs Officer, Nell Baldacchino, and Sue worked on the script. Nell recalls one problem with the PSA was that Harrison was used to a teleprompter. Nell had to write the text on paper or cardboard and hold it in front of him. He was very nice about doing it, but they had to work it in between filming scenes and it resulted in a rushed job. Unfortunately, the PSA was never finalized and is marked "Draft Copy Only - Not For Release."

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# Amphibian Research on the Patuxent Research Refuge

By Andrew Dietrich, Biological Science Technician, Amphibian Research & Monitoring Initiative (ARMI)

**T**he Northeast Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative (NEARMI) is part of a national program which provides research on amphibian ecology and threats to amphibian populations ranging from Virginia north to Maine. NEARMI is based at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, and a number of our projects involve field studies here on the refuge. Our work at Patuxent comprises research on wetland-breeding amphibians and terrestrial salamanders.

Our research here at the Patuxent Research Refuge is part of a larger effort to survey lentic (or wetland-associated) amphibians throughout the region. Patuxent is one of 17 National Parks and Wildlife Refuges throughout the northeast included in a long-term research program to understand the dynamics of amphibian populations breeding in temporary wetlands. Here at Patuxent, we catalogue all amphibians encountered at 79 wetlands spread amongst the north, central and south tracts. Our surveys involve three Visual Encounter Surveys (VES) from March to early May to detect breeding amphibians and two Dipnet surveys from late May through July to detect successful recruitment. We are also interested in studying the dynamics of amphibian diseases here at the refuge and collect dermal swabs and tail clippings to non-lethally test for diseases such as Ranavirus and Bd (chytrid fungus: *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*), and more recently to conduct surveillance for the newly emerging salamander chytrid fungus, Bsal (*Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*). We have surveyed wood frogs (*Lithobates sylvatica*) and spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*) for diseases at 30 randomly selected wetlands in Patuxent since 2004. This year, as part



**Wood Frog**

of a nationwide effort by the ARMI program, we surveyed eastern newts here on the refuge for Bsal, an emerging disease threat that has impacted salamander populations in Europe. Thankfully, we have not detected Bsal here or on any of the 1700 newts sampled elsewhere in the northeast.

In addition to our wetland surveys, we also conduct surveys on the red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*) at 6 cover-board plots located on the central tract of Patuxent. First established in 2010, and then modified in 2013 for our current project, each plot consists of 50 cover-boards arranged in a 5x10 grid. Plots are surveyed three



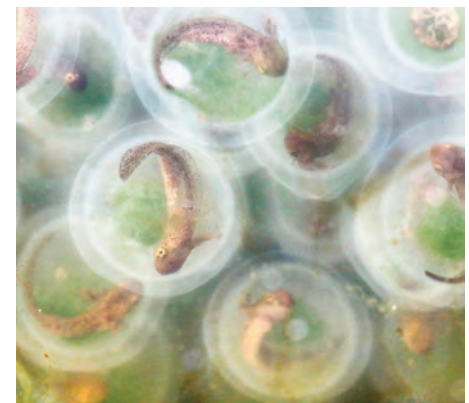
**Spotted Salamander**



**Checking cover boards**

times each spring and three times each fall. During each visit, all red-backed salamanders found under cover-boards are collected, counted, measured, sexed and given a unique code with visual implant elastomer (VIE) so that individuals may be identified and tracked from season to season. Captured salamanders are returned to the cover-board they were originally found under.

Our cover-board plots are part of a larger network of red-backed salamander plots and surveys within the newly established SPARCnet (Salamander



**Spotted Salamander larva**



**Cover board plot**

Population Adaptation Collaboration Network) research initiative. This network is a regional collaborative network designed for both scientific and educational objectives related to understanding the effects of climate change and land use on salamander populations. There are currently 23 sites with established or soon to be established cover-board arrays, each with varying levels of involvement (e.g. educators teaching small children may only catch, count and measure salamanders, while those at Universities may mark and sex salamanders). At Patuxent, we are part of a subset of sites that removes snow cover from half of our plots to simulate a predicted loss of insulating snow cover under future climate change. By marking and tracking individual salamanders, we hope to understand the effect of increased soil freezing events on overwintering salamander populations, and along with our network of collaborators, to effectively communicate this research to students at all levels.

If you have any questions or are interested in learning more about NEARMI, amphibian ecology, salamander chytrid or other diseases, or the red-backed salamander network (SPARCnet), please visit our site (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/nearmi/>) or feel free to contact me (Andrew Dietrich - [adietrich@usgs.gov](mailto:adietrich@usgs.gov) or Evan Grant - [ehgrant@usgs.gov](mailto:ehgrant@usgs.gov)). 🐸

## Spring Exhibits in the Hollingsworth Gallery

By Faith Leahy-Thielke, Patuxent Volunteer

Spring was in the air even though it was only February, but the next three exhibitors (like William Gilbert's "flowers that bloom in the spring") breed promise of merry sunshine indoors as well as outdoors. William Deming of "Sunfleck Row" in April; Vernon Sears of Mount Rainier in May; and David Kepley of "Windflower Lane" in June, whose addresses sound perfect for nature enthusiasts, will be our artist/photographers.

**William Deming** was born in Nebraska, but lived in Panama during "most" of his early years. After a stint in the U.S. Army, he returned there to work for the Panama Canal Company. In 1977, he and his wife returned to Howard County, Maryland and took up residence in Columbia in 1978. Deming writes that he has always had a camera, but as with many of us, was absorbed for years with family and career. At a garage sale in 1998, he came across a used Nikon camera and began to "actively photograph sporting events" - usually ones in which his son was involved. After retirement in 2012, Deming was free to pursue his interest in nature and - most especially, "urban wildlife."

Deming describes himself as self-taught, and his photographs as the reward of "patience, perseverance and determination." He has traveled to state and national parks, and visited the Everglades when able, though capturing our wild neighbors has been a focus. Deming has had month-long exhibits at the Howard County Conservancy and the county's library system. He has participated in Howard's Greenfest and photo events on Google Plus. View his images on line as well as in the gallery. The close-ups of butterflies, for example, are fabulous. "Please

enjoy," he writes, "and help create an urban habitat."

**Vernon Sears** has been drawing since early childhood when he copied magazine illustrations and comic strip characters. His first "teachers" were Jon Gnagy and Dick Mansfield, both of whom had television shows in the forties and fifties, designed to teach drawing and illustrate stories. When he does cartooning, he says the influence of *Mad Magazine's* illustrators is obvious. In 1976, Sears went to New York City and attended the National Academy School of Fine Art. He writes that he "gleaned" some things there, but that visiting parks, playgrounds, museums and theaters with a sketch book in hand was far more profitable. Sears was born in D.C. and raised in Mt. Rainer where he lives and works today. His preferred media include oils, acrylics, and oil pastels. He is active in veterans' organizations and has done shows for the American Legion's Women's Auxiliary. One of his pieces exhibited at a creative arts show at the VA Hospital was selected for a national competition. For his last exhibit at Hollingsworth Sears promised oil pastels of birds and wildlife. Hopefully we'll see them again.

The child of a military family, **David Kepley** grew up in many different places in the United States - as he put it, from Arizona to Aberdeen! High school was on the North Jersey shore, and college in Gettysburg. His graduate degrees, also in history, are from the University of Maryland. His first summer jobs were with the parks and forest service, but his "day job" was a fascinating stint at the National Archives. However, Kepley's inspiration to take up photography

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# Trails & Tracks at Wildlife Images

By Pat Simons, Bookstore volunteer

As winter recedes and the weather turns warmer my thoughts eagerly turn to revisiting some of my favorite trails in DC, MD and VA while looking for new ones to explore. Yes, I'll continue my walks around both the North and South Tracts of Patuxent where I never fail to find something new or different, but I'll also look for other nearby hiking possibilities. And, we are fortunate here in Maryland that our region offers myriad trails that traverse a variety of terrains—from the wetlands of Blackwater Wildlife Refuge to the unique rocky meadows of Soldier's Delight and the sandy shoreline of Calvert Cliffs.

## Where to Hike

The Wildlife Images Bookstore, in the Refuge Visitor Center, stocks a number of books by the well-known trail guide writer, Alan Fisher. Two of my favorites for this area are *Country Walks Near Washington* which includes details about 38 hikes in the area and *Country Walks Near Baltimore*, which covers another 24 hiking areas (including both Patuxent's North and South Tracts). The books follow the same format with an introduction to the area that includes historical as well as topographical information; driving directions to the trailhead, notes about public transportation, a trail map, and then detailed walking instructions. These books are usually the first I reach for when I want to find a trail within a short driving distance from my home, and they have led me to any number of parks and trails that I might not have otherwise found.

A third book by Alan Fisher, *Day Trips in Delmarva*, visits 20 locations in southern Delaware and the eastern shore of Maryland and Virginia with excursions that include hiking trails, historical town walks, bicycling tips, and canoe or kayaking opportunities. National Wildlife Refuges in this book



include Chincoteague, Eastern Neck, Bombay Hook, Prime Hook, and Blackwater. The book also includes national seashores at Assateague and Chincoteague as well as a number of state parks, nature preserves, river landings, and islands such as Wye, Tangier, Tilghman, Deal, Hooper, and Smith.

## How & Why to Hike

If you or someone you know is new to hiking or perhaps thinking about expanding from short walks to more ambitious hikes, *The Hiking Companion* by Michael W. Robbins (with a forward by the writer and conservationist, Rick Bass) is a useful guide with a variety of tips on how to get the most from any walking experience. The author starts with a short introduction on “why” we hike, and what it can mean to shift your thinking from “walking” to “hiking.”

Citing experiences from New Mexico to Maryland, the author shares some of his experiences and thoughts about how hiking can open one to a world of possibilities and new experiences with nature; as well as opening the door to other interests such as birding or archeology.

Chapters in the book discuss everything from where and how to hike to hiking essentials and navigation. The Appendix provides a list of what the author calls “Great American Hikes,” a number of which are in Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, and would make a great checklist for a hiker's Bucket List.

## Tracks on the Trail

While hiking, it's almost guaranteed that you will see animal or bird tracks along the way. Here are just a few guides to help you identify just about any animal sign you encounter.

*Animal Tracks, A Pocket Naturalist Guide* is a waterproof folding guide to the tracks, scat, and signs of familiar North American species. These guides are always among my favorites because they are easy to carry, and so this one joins the bird, flower and tree guides I carry in my pack.

*Peterson's Field Guide to Animal Tracks*, by Olaus J. Murie and Mark Elbroch, like all Peterson Guides is a comprehensive guide to the subject. The book includes color photos and drawings

along with measurements and other information for finding and identifying wildlife and their tracks.

Two other helpful guides are *Identifying Animal Tracks, Mammals, Birds & Other Animals of the Eastern United States*, by Richard Headstrom, which includes mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians; and *The Companion Guide*

*to Trackards for North American Mammals*, by David Brown.

## For Young Explorers

And for younger adventurers, as always, the bookstore has a number of







well written and wonderfully illustrated books in our children's collection.

*Wild Tracks*, is another beautifully illustrated book with fold-out pages and life size prints, by Jim Arnosky. Various sections in the book show the tracks for bears, deer, canines, felines, reptiles, and birds. In previous articles I've mentioned other books by Jim Arnosky and this is just one more inviting and informative book from this well-known author of nature literature for children.

*Tracks, Scats and Signs* by Leslie Dendy with illustrations by Linda Garrow, is a charmingly illustrated "Take-Along" Guide for children, that divides animals by their habit-forest, field, and pond. Each section includes a drawing of the animal, its track, and its scat as well as fun activities such as a "Visit a Rotten Log Hotel" and "Walk Like the Animals."

*Been There, Done That. Reading Animal Signs* by Jen Funk Weber, illustrated by Andrea Gabriel follows two children as they take a hike through the woods, discovering animal tracks and signs along the way. Additional information about the animals and signs they encounter is included in the back of the book along with activities such as a track-matching game and instructions on how to make a cast of a track.

## What to Take With You

And to round out your preparations for hiking, the store also stocks children's binoculars, magnifying glasses and compasses just right for young explorers, beautifully carved walking sticks (for adults and children), caps, all natural bug-repelling salve and soap, water bottles, and lip balm.

**So take a hike...but first drop by Wildlife Images!** 

## Spotlight on Volunteers Helping Friends

By Jeanne Latham, Chair of the Friends of Patuxent

### Spotlight on Newer Volunteers

**T**he Friends spotlight shines brightly on several newer volunteers, who have stepped

up to help the Friends and offer their expertise. **Tim Hudspeth**, volunteer, full-time employee with a family and part time job, recently agreed to videotape me as I introduced the Friends organization to a new group of Refuge vol-

unteers. Tim's side-line business is photography and videography. He coached me during my presentation and made me feel very comfortable during the videotaping. (I was a bit nervous being captured on tape, as you can imagine.) Now this videotape can be utilized at future Volunteer Orientations. Thank you Tim!

**Stephanie Kolar** is a former contractor for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii, and analyzed the use of social media for them. When I found out that Stephanie was a volunteer and had this background, I called upon her to meet with the Friends and Jen Chin, Park Ranger and Refuge Outreach Coordinator, to discuss improving the Friends use of social media. After some great discussion, Stephanie provided some suggestions and innovative ideas to increase the Friends reach to folks through Facebook. Thanks, Stephanie!

**Cathy Kuehne**, retired person and volunteer, likes to work with Excel and databases as well as problem solve and trouble-shoot. Cathy offered to help the Membership Committee, specifically Ken Lavish, update and improve our member-

ship database and ability to process memberships. This will make our work much more efficient and easier. Thank you Cathy!

### Spotlight on the "Regulars"

Did you realize that the bookstore volunteers give their time on a regular basis by coming in just about every week? The following Wildlife Images Bookstore volunteers deserve our

gratitude for their dedication: **Noah Bowman, Teri Day, Jan Hardy, Evelyn Kirby, Charlotte Melichar, Pat Simons, and Pam Waterworth**, plus one other person. Under the leadership of **Linda Shive**, Wildlife Images Bookstore manager, these folks staff the bookstore 6 days a week, day in and day out. Their work includes operating the register to complete sales, tagging merchandise, stocking shelves, refreshing the front of store display to interest shoppers, keeping track of what products are popular, as well as other tasks. From volunteers, staff, and visitors, we often get compliments on the wonderful items to buy, and which will remind them of their experience at Patuxent. Thanks to all of you for keeping our terrific bookstore open and inviting.

Another group of "regulars" are the folks on the Friends Newsletter Team, including **Ross Feldner**, editor; the proofers - **Diana Ogilvie, Evelyn Kirby, Mary Ann Harnett** and **Jeanne Latham**. Ross, who owns a graphic design company, donates his time and talent to lay out the articles, artwork and other components of the newsletter. Thanks to all of you who make our newsletter

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# 2016 Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Dinner Pictorial Essay

Diana Ogilvie, Volunteer Coordinator

Over 80 volunteers and family members overcame their **trepidation** and joined us for the **spooky-themed** Volunteer Appreciation and Awards dinner. Only the most **daring** accepted the challenge to come in costume.



Ed Grimes

Nancy Newman Pape pacified **ravenous** volunteers with pre-dinner music.



Neil Baldacchino

New volunteer Shannah Cumberbatch won the **weird** M&M challenge.



Neil Baldacchino



Neil Baldacchino

**Brave new wildlife faces** at Patuxent - recreation assistant Jen Chin, interns Kyra Neal, Chelsea Miller and Jan-Michael Archer and recreation assistant Kaitlyn Baligush.



Neil Baldacchino

Two generations of the Shoop family swooped in for a visit. Adorable!



Ed Grimes

Volunteer Mike McCarthy helped the mysterious whooping crane select the first door-prize winner.



Ed Grimes

Friends of Patuxent Chair Jeanne Latham cast a friendly spell over the audience.



Ed Grimes

Brad's presentation about FWS initiatives and valuable partnerships was spellbinding.



Neil Baldacchino

Anne Sittauer, Refuge Supervisor - South Zone and Scott Kahan, Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System dropped in to observe the fun. Seen seated with Lewis Jiles, Hunter Safety Education Training Coordinator



Ed Grimes

Dennis recognized and thanked Environmental Education volunteers.

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# 2016 Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Dinner

Continued from page 11

## Finally! Time to present well-deserved Volunteer Awards.



Ed Grimes

25 hours - Gail Melson, Alicia Durand



Nell Baldacchino

50 hours - Matt Beziat, Rosa Kirk-Davidoff, Mark Cheater



Ed Grimes

100 hours - Cathy Kuehne, Sue Priftis, Nancy Newman Pape



Ed Grimes

250 hours - Janice Devine, Chang-Tzu Lew



Ed Grimes

300 hours - Alen Mosley



Ed Grimes

400 hours - Chelsea Miller and John McCarthy



Ed Grimes

500 hours - Frances Kent, Jeannine Dorothy, Sue Muller



Ed Grimes

750 hours - Debbie Phillips, Tom Mikell, Pat Simons, Ellen Bretz



Neill Baldacchino

1000 hours - Ann Coren, Stephanie Everett



Ed Grimes

1500 hours - Neill Baldacchino, Cheryl Sedlak-Seaver



Ed Grimes

2080 hours - Penny Wolkow



Ed Grimes

2500 hours - Pam Waterworth, MaryAnn Hartnett

Continued on page 14

# 2016 Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Dinner

Continued from page 13



Ed Grimes

3500 hours - Ann Vore, Barbara Buck



Ed Grimes

4000 hours - Gwen Robinette



Ed Grimes

5000 hours - Jay Pape, Jeanne Latham



Ed Grimes

7000 hours - Ken Lavish, Joe DiGiovanni



Ed Grimes

9000 hours - Claudia Papillo



Nell Baldacchino

10,000 hours - Lucy Grimes



Nell Baldacchino

*Stephanie Everett received the Innovation Award for Family Fun programs.*



Ed Grimes

*Unsung Hero South Tract - Claudia Papillo*



Nell Baldacchino

*Unsung Hero Award North Tract and Over 1,000 volunteer hours in one year, Joe DiGiovanni.*



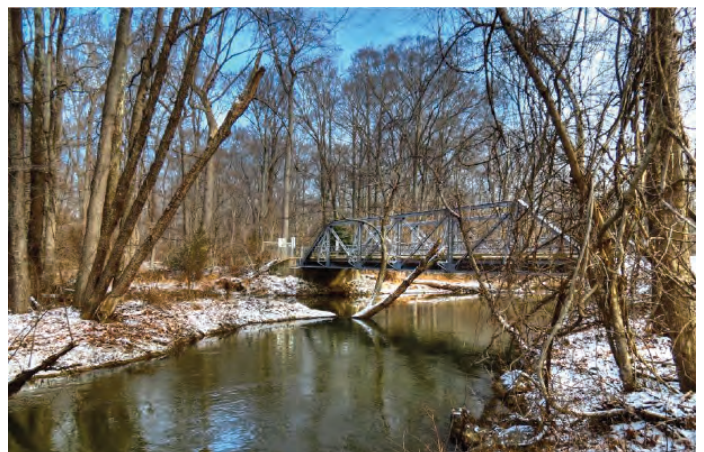
Nell Baldacchino

*Nancy Newman Pape's latest song, written in collaboration with the Beatles, was a crowd favorite!*



Ed Grimes

*The Volunteer of the Year 2016 is Ann Coren. Baldy presented the plaque.*



Bridgehunters

*For his outstanding efforts to promote both North and South tracts and "bridge the gap," the new Duvall Bridge award was given to Mike Goldberg.*

## 2016 Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Dinner

Continued from page 15



Nell Baldacchino

**Newly discovered endangered species *Gigantopithecus canadensis*, Big Foot, appeared at the dinner and was persuaded to participate in the entertainment.**

One final note about our awesome volunteers: In fiscal year 2016, 155 individuals volunteered many hours at Patuxent and 188 additional volunteers worked on group projects. Project categories included wildlife and habitat, wildlife-de-



Ed Grimes

**He sang "Where Patuxent Is!" and danced to the tune of Puttin' On the Ritz.**

pendent recreation, maintenance, cultural resources and other activities. Altogether, our volunteers donated more than 24,700 hours to the refuge.

Remember, always record your volunteer hours in the front desk log or by sending to [Diana\\_Ogilvie@fws.gov](mailto:Diana_Ogilvie@fws.gov). Your hours contribute to the statistics



Ed Grimes

**Feelin' blue? Go where wildlife lives. It's Where Patuxent Is!**

that are used to determine budget requests to DOI and Congress, document progress over time, provide information to the public and partner NGOs, answer data calls, and much more. 🐦

**Many Thanks to Our Dedicated Volunteers!**

## Another Night on the Wild Side

By Bobbie Deegan, Member of Friends

**R**emember last year's *A Night on the Wild Side* at the National Wildlife Visitor Center at Patuxent Research Refuge? The Friends of Patuxent Board of Directors had recognized that many of our original supporters had drifted away from the Center, while new folks in leadership positions were only vaguely aware of the refuge and all that it offers the community. So the Board of Directors "went out on a limb" and planned a major outreach effort to engage the business community, other civic and community leaders, and area politicians.

It worked! The excitement and enthusiasm that was generated that night made all the hard work worthwhile. So much so that the Board is planning our **2nd Annual Night on the Wild Side**, to be held at the Visitor Center on **Thursday, April 20, 2017, 5 pm - 8 pm**. Along with refreshments, we will offer

our guests a fun and interactive evening, including experiences such as conservation tram rides; a live "wild bird" exhibit; an informative overview of the Refuge and highlights of major research of the Research Center; an excursion to the wolf and Whooping Crane exhibits; a chance to talk with a master gardener; and much more.

Through these efforts, the Friends Board hopes to raise awareness of the refuge among those who may not realize what a local treasure and unique national resource we have in our own "back yard." We want to show local leaders what the Refuge has to offer, so they will be inspired not only to take advantage of the opportunities it offers, but to invite their associates, friends and families to experience the Refuge. We also hope to attract new members in the Friends of Patuxent and generate local good will and support.



As last year's event proved, pulling this off takes a lot of hands! We need volunteers to help address invitations, maintain the guest list, coordinate logistics, and stuff goodie bags before the event. We need volunteers to help welcome our guests, staff the exhibits and tables, and serve refreshments during the event. Would you be willing to pitch in and make the Friends of Patuxent's **2nd Annual Night on the Wild Side** another grand success? If so, please contact Friends Chairman Jeanne Latham, by email ([jelatham@verizon.net](mailto:jelatham@verizon.net)) or phone (410-798-1601), and let her know you are interested and want to help. Many hands make light work! 🐦



## Jim Fowler-Friend of Patuxent

Continued from page 4

In 1998, Patuxent received a beautiful bronze sculpture of a life-sized wolf pack that prominently was displayed at the entrance of the Visitor Center. Jim Fowler arranged through a friend in Florida to have live wolves at the Visitor Center for the dedication event. Fowler conducted three shows with the wolves that day and the event was so popular that the staff closed the gates to cars and many people walked in from Powder Mill Road. It remains the most popular one-day event for the Visitor Center thanks to live wolves and the presence of Jim Fowler. Some staff



Lynda Garrett and Lennie Jones holding snake, Fiftieth Anniversary, 1989.



Naturalist, Lennie Jones, with TV Celebrity, Jim Fowler, at Patuxent Research Refuge 50th anniversary in 1989.



Jim Fowler at podium with Lennie Jones and milk snake, Fiftieth Anniversary, 1989

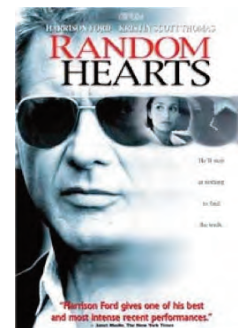
members still have tee shirts with a wolf design that was signed by Fowler.

Repeats of the Wild Kingdom show were aired in the 1970-80s and a few new ones were produced. When Marlin Perkins died in 1985, Jim Fowler became the host. Jim also was regularly seen on the Johnny Carson Show and the NBC Today Show. He invariably had an animal with him or his assistant would rapidly appear with one. There were many unexpected moments that Jim Fowler endured on television just like he did for our Fiftieth Anniversary celebration with a harmless milk snake. He is a great worldwide asset to wildlife. 🐉

## Random Hearts at Patuxent

Continued from page 5

The staging area according to Nell was kind of like a "circus." Nell, Sue, and I once visited the site under the BGE electric powerlines, which was just a short distance from the cabin. There were several house trailers parked there that were used for dressing and rest areas for the stars. I also remember that Harrison Ford obtained a motorcycle on loan from a local motorcycle company, but then had a spill with it and got it scratched from the gravel. The motorcycle is seen parked



Cover of DVD of movie Random Hearts

near the cabin in the movie. The movie crew was amazing with the detail they put into the temporary cabin and landscaping. They removed all traces of the cabin as it was not built to code, but left the native vegetation they had planted, which improved the appearance of the site and reduced soil erosion to the river.

A large group of refuge employees went to a theater in Bowie to view the film when it first came out in late 1999. One minor flaw according to biologist Holly Obrecht was that the production staff sound-tracked spring peepers singing near the cabin by the river, but the scene was actually filmed in the fall!! I recently tried to view the film from several rental online outlets, but failed. I finally purchased a copy from Amazon and enjoyed watching it as the memories of almost 20 years ago came back. If you like romance mixed with a mystery plot you might like this film. The film is 133 minutes long, but only about 15 minutes are filmed at Patuxent. Unfortunately, a copy of the film is hard to find, so why don't we arrange a film night at the Visitor Center. I'll provide the movie DVD, the PSA tape, and also the popcorn. 🍿

## Changing Lives

*Continued from page 1*

As volunteers and Friends, we give our time, talent, and effort to Patuxent Research Refuge and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, because in essence, they save the lives of wildlife, and they change lives - visitors, volunteers (us), partners and others. I can speak to that through my experience when I first started as a volunteer. I had retired from a government agency and decided that since I like birds and wildlife art (I had attended a few art shows at the Visitor Center), I would try volunteering at the refuge. What really hooked me was that as I learned to teach children interpretive programs, I realized that program leaders (including me) could change a person's life. For one program, I had to learn about spiders and had previously viewed them as yucky, and something to avoid. Once I found out how incredible spiders are I was a changed volunteer. I learned how spiders make beautiful webs that catch the early morning dew; spiders do help people and should be respected; and spiders have a place in nature. So now I could enthusiastically talk about spiders, show kids a live spider (which I had captured and would later release), read a story about a spider, and do a spider and spider web craft with the children. I saw eyes widened, attitudes changed and kids get excited



about a formerly scary and creepy spider! That's pretty cool in my opinion.

Each of our lives have been touched - or changed - by experiencing the refuge's plants, animals, and habitats. And I also think our lives have been influenced by the dedicated staff. As a result, we want to share our knowledge, our enthusiasm and our refuge with visitors, our families, friends and everyone!

We are an inspired workforce - we might be considered the grassroots of our refuge. (You didn't know you were in integral part of grass, did you?) Interesting to think about the backgrounds of us volunteers and Friends - bankers, government workers, telephone company employees, astrophysicists, professors, teachers, homemakers, and the list goes on. And as volunteers for Patuxent, we save lives - the wildlife - and we change lives. We are amazing! 🐦

## Spring Exhibits in the Hollingsworth Gallery

*Continued from page 7*

was a colleague from the U.S. Forest Service over 40 years ago. Who can be awed by the beauty of the great parks and not wish to keep that sense alive?

Kepley writes that visiting many of them in the American West "cemented" his love of nature photography. Self-described as a "passionate devotee of our national parks," Kepley and his wife visited 10 different ones during the 2016 centennial year. He writes that he captured literally thousands of images during that trip.

After retirement, Kepley has taken many different classes and workshops to perfect his craft. His photos have been both recognized and awarded: selected in Nature Visions Photo Expo, the Joseph Miller abstract photography exhibit, and his own photo club. He is the current vice president of the Vienna Photographic Society. In June, we can look forward to a virtual tour of those parks. He hopes his images will inspire us even as he has been inspired.

We look forward to all three exhibits. 🐦

## Spotlight on Volunteers Helping Friends

*Continued from page 9*

the model product that it is - and we do receive compliments all the time.

One more volunteer I'd like to put in the spotlight is **Brenda Stone**, former Friends Board member and current assistant treasurer. Brenda comes in every week to do the bookkeeping for the Friends. She receives the mail, retrieves the phone messages, records the memberships received, keeps track of sales and receives the income for the bookstore, records expenses and any income, like donations, as well as many other tasks. Until I sat down with Brenda to witness all of the work she processes routinely, I did not fully comprehend the amount of work she does. Thank you Brenda for your consistent and diligent work!

Thank you all for giving your time, energy and talent. The Friends appreciate this and all that you do!

For the next newsletter, the Friends will put the spotlight on other volunteers, including the Crane Café crew, folks who help out at Friends fundraisers and educational events and others.

We would like to recognize as many volunteers who contribute their time and effort as we can. Please contact me and share your "story." Or let us know your special talents that may benefit all of us through the Friends and we will connect to talk about that. Please contact me at [jelatham@verizon.net](mailto:jelatham@verizon.net) 🐦

**THANK YOU  
VOLUTEERS!**

## We invite you to join!

**Your membership/ contribution helps support the mission and programs at Patuxent.**

**You also receive the following benefits:**

- Quarterly newsletter (mailed on request or go to [www.friendsofpatuxent.org](http://www.friendsofpatuxent.org))
- 10% discount in our Wildlife Images bookstore and other area refuge bookstores
- Attendance at member functions
- Participation in on-site educational programs
- Sense of accomplishment in providing many opportunities for wildlife-related recreation, education and research



### FRIENDS OF PATUXENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016

- Jeanne Latham, Chair  
 Richard Dolesh, Vice-chair  
 Clarence "Sparky" Sparks, Secretary  
 Robert Schroeder, Secretary  
 Lowell Adams, Director • Charles Deegan, Director  
 Kenneth Lavish, Director • Dale Mangum, Director  
 Matthew Perry, Director • Barbara Richman, Director  
 Harlan Tucker, Director

#### LIAISONS

- Diana Ogilvie, Patuxent Research Refuge Liaison  
 Shannon Beliew, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Liaison  
 Douglas Meister, Esq., General Counsel

#### FRIEND OF PATUXENT BOARD MEETINGS

Friends Board Meetings will be held at 5 PM at the Visitor Center. The scheduled meetings remaining for this fiscal year are: Jan. 17; Feb. 21 (phone meeting, tentative); Mar. 21; April 18 (phone meeting, tentative); May 16; Jun. 20 (phone meeting, tentative). Rest of the year - to be determined.

## JOIN TODAY!

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*(E-mail address will not be sold or shared. It will be used for Friends and Refuge announcements only.)*

Phone: (opt.) \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renewal

- Individual (\$25/yr), gift: FOP bookmark (or other)       Family (\$35/yr), gift: FOP decal (or other)  
 Contributor (\$75/yr), gift: History of Patuxent DVD (or other)       Sponsor (\$250/yr), gift: FOP hat (or other)  
 Life (\$500), gift: FOP shirt (or other) Please ✓ size:  S  M  L  XL  XXL  XXXL  
 Life-65+ (\$300), gift: FOP shirt (or other) Please ✓ size:  S  M  L  XL  XXL  XXXL

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Make check to "Friends of Patuxent" and mail to address on reverse side of this page.*

- Check here if you prefer not to have a gift, and instead have your entire dues support Friends of Patuxent.  
 Check here if you would like save a tree by reading our quarterly newsletter online.





## Friends of Patuxent

National Wildlife Visitor Center  
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop  
Laurel MD, 20708-4011

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10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop  
Laurel MD, 20708-4011

Phone: 301-497-5789

[www.friendsopatuxent.org](http://www.friendsopatuxent.org)

# WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN!

**Friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge, Inc** is a designated Section 501(c)(3) public charity. It is a membership organization whose mission is to financially support the research of the PWRC and the environmental education, outreach and recreational missions at the PRR. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our Maryland Charitable Organization Registration-2348.

***Your membership/contribution helps support the mission and programs at Patuxent. You also receive the following benefits:***

- Quarterly newsletter (mailed on request or go to [www.friendsopatuxent.org](http://www.friendsopatuxent.org))
- 10% discount in our Wildlife Images bookstore and other area refuge bookstores
- Attendance at member functions
- Participation in on-site educational programs
- Sense of accomplishment in providing many opportunities for wildlife-related recreation, education and research

*(Application on reverse side)*