

# The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

## 2009

JANUARY — MARCH

### SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

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#### JANUARY

Sunday	4	Snowshoeing ~ Robinson State Park, <i>Agawam</i>
Saturday	10	An Evening with Naturalists, <i>Hampden</i>
Sunday	11	Bird House Clinic, <i>Westfield</i>
Sunday	11	Astronomy Walk Series: Chinese Sky Myths & Legends, <i>Easthampton</i>
Saturday	17	Alander Mt. Trail, <i>Mt. Washington</i>
Wednesday	21	January Meeting: Nature in Art: A Natural View Through Tiffany Stained Glass
Thursday	22	Happy New Year ~ Let's Walk! <i>Longmeadow</i>
Saturday	24	What Do I Do With My Digital Pictures?
Sunday	25	Snowshoeing ~ Chester-Blandford State Forest, <i>Chester</i>
Saturday	31	Observing Winter Wildlife at Quabbin, <i>Ware</i>

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#### FEBRUARY

Sunday	8	Snowshoeing ~ October Mountain State Forest, <i>Lee</i>
Sunday	8	A Winter Hike: Animal Tracking and Reading the Signs of Nature, <i>Belchertown</i>
Thursday	19	Let's Walk! <i>Quabbin</i>
Saturday	21	Lilly Pond Wildlife Management Area, <i>Goshen</i>
Sunday	22	Let's Go Skiing, <i>West Granville</i>
Sunday	22	Astronomy Walk Series: Saturn and His Many Moons! <i>Easthampton</i>
Wednesday	25	February Meeting: Adventures Among the Stars
Saturday	28	Snowshoeing ~ A Winter-White Mystery Trip

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#### MARCH

Thursday	5	Stained Glass Training Class ~ Nature in Glass! <i>Westfield</i>
Saturday	14	Hubbard Brook in Granville State Forest, <i>Granville</i>
Sunday	15	Astronomy Walk Series: Variable Stars, <i>Easthampton</i>
Wednesday	18	March Meeting: Birds of Prey Rehabilitation
Thursday	19	Let's Walk! <i>Agawam</i>
Saturday	21	Vernal Pool Life ~ Spring Begins!! <i>Holyoke</i>
Sunday	29	How Sweet It Is! <i>West Granville</i>

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#### APRIL

Sunday	5	McLean Wildlife Refuge, <i>Granby, Conn.</i>
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*Please note February meeting date change to fourth Wednesday of the month!*

# NATURALIST'S CORNER

## WHAT GOOD IS A BLACK BEAR? ....



In the winter of 1997, I had the privilege of joining a dedicated group of researchers and wildlife managers in moving a black bear from its hibernaculum in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to its new home in Big South Fork National Recreation Area. It was a fascinating and sometimes grueling endeavor. We hiked over the snow, off-trail quite a ways, to an identified den where a radio-collared bear was sleeping. Quietly, a graduate student was sent up the huge tree to the hollowed den, probably 30 feet up, to dart the otherwise easily aroused bear so it would sleep during the ordeal. Then, somehow, a harness was secured around the bear, and she was hoisted out with ropes and webbing secured to a branch above the den. She was lowered onto a highly insulated litter, covered over, strapped in, and then my part began ~ hauling her out of the forest and along the rough trails to the waiting vehicle. Hilly grades, uneven trails, slippery snow and narrow passages made for a strenuous day for all of us on litter duty, but we got her to the vehicle in good shape. The bear was then taken to a new, previously identified den in her new territory, to wake up in the spring with the inevitable question of "Where am I and how in the world did I get here?"

Questions, too, resounded through my head as I hefted, struggled and hiked. This was only one of eight female bears moved in this way. It must be pretty important to go through all this trouble to re-establish the black bear population in a place where they have been hunted out. Why all the fuss? What's the big deal about black bears anyway?

Well, they ARE a big deal, in many ways. Have you ever been bedridden or forced to relinquish use of your muscles for a week or more? If so, you've no doubt felt weak and required a period of exercise to recover your strength. In humans, too little use of our musculoskeletal system, as well as increasing age, causes emigration of minerals from our bones and weakness of our muscles. Doctors recommend weight-bearing exercises to prevent this loss so that we'll stay strong. Yet black bears don't suffer from this ailment, not even in their old age. Depending on where they live, black bears spend between two and five months curled up and fairly motionless in a den for the winter. This scenario would make a human downright decrepit. Yet when spring comes, a stretch and a yawn, and a bear is out and about, scrounging for food, none the worse for wear. Bones and muscles have not atrophied. This physiological marvel has given rise to hope that bear research will eventually help curb osteoporosis and other ailments in humans.

Research has shown that although bears do experience bone loss during hibernation, bone regeneration counteracts it. During their winter sleep, black bears become a closed system: They don't drink or eat, nor do they defecate or urinate. Stored fat is their only source of energy for metabolic processes. Heart rate and breathing rate slow, but a bear is able to respond fairly quickly to a disturbance. Most bone lost during inactivity is recirculated and formed into new bone. When a bear resumes activity, regeneration of any bone deficit is speedily accomplished. The explanation may lie in a hormone ~ the parathyroid hormone.<sup>1</sup> Current studies center around this hormone.

Researchers have also discovered that bear plasma contains some sort of substance that inhibits deterioration of muscles during inactivity. In humans, and many other animals, both bone loss and muscle atrophy are dangers of immobility. Not so for black bears. Research is aimed at identifying this substance found in bear's blood, with hopes it will alleviate muscle deterioration caused by diseases like malnutrition, AIDS, and cancer.<sup>2</sup>

The value of a creature can be gauged in many different ways. Ecology-oriented individuals, like the wildlife managers I worked with, often recognize the value of a given creature in terms of its niche or role in the balance of nature. I know there are the hard-core or the uninitiated who see merit in a creature only in its possible benefit to the human population. Others, myself included, are firm advocates of the merit of a living creature simply because it exists. I have heard kids ask, of bugs, "What good is it?" Yet I hope that through my facilitation of their discoveries, these kids come to realize it is not our place to ask such a question but rather to accept a creature's very existence as its license to survive. Black bears deserve to be put back to suitable habitat where humans have eliminated it. No matter where you sit along the spectrum of respect for wild things, the black bear is undeniably a fantastic, necessary and amazing creature, most assuredly so, whether or not it helps cure our ailments.

~ Nancy Condon

<sup>1</sup>Penn State. "Hibernating Black Bears Shed Light On Treatments For Osteoporosis." *ScienceDaily* 5 March 2003. <<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2003/03/030305080921.htm>>.

<sup>2</sup>University of Chicago Press Journals. "Hibernating Bears Conserve More Muscle Strength Than Humans On Bed Rest Do." *ScienceDaily* 25 April 2007. <<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/04/070424121841.htm>>.

**Snowshoeing, *Robinson State Park, Agawam***

Sunday, January 4, from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Meeting Place:** Home Depot parking lot in Westfield (Rt. 20/Rt. 187 intersection). Look for my green Nissan X-Terra when entering lot.

Hopefully, Mother Nature will grace us with a good dusting of snow to get us started! This will be an easy snowshoe hike (two to four miles) with very nice natural views along the Westfield River, to get us some early season practice. We'll shoe for awhile and then stop for lunch before finishing off the day. Deer have been seen here, as have pileated woodpeckers and many other natural subjects, so plan on tuning into nature's winter life for the day! Please bring your own snowshoe gear and dress appropriately for the winter conditions. Pack lunch, water, and snacks and come join me for a great time!! If new to snowshoeing, please contact me ASAP, and I'll help get you started. If no snow, we'll hike.

**An Evening with Naturalists, *Hampden***

Saturday, January 10, at 7 p.m.

**Hostess:** Sonya Vickers

**Registration:** Please call for directions (413-566-3406).

Join us for this winter evening gathering for conversation, food and drink, and the warmth of friendship around the fireplace. There will be desserts and refreshments to share ~ please let us know if you would like to bring something along. Also, if you would like, bring an object, story, or picture from the natural world that you would like to share with others. Directions will be provided when you call to register. Extreme weather cancels.

**Bird House Clinic, *Westfield***

Sunday, January 11, from 1 to 4 p.m.

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

**Registration:** Please call to register. Workshop is limited to 12 people, due to supplies.

**Meeting Place:** Westfield State College; Natural History Museum, in Wilson Hall

Don your carpenter's belt and come on over to build a birdhouse you can take home with you. Pre-cut pieces, as well as hardware and glue will be supplied. If you have any of the following tools, bring them along; otherwise, limited numbers of these tools will be provided: hammer, Phillips head screwdriver, power drill, coping saw, compass, pencil and ruler. You decide which bird species you will attract to your house by the size of the entrance hole you cut. Expert carpenters as well as "all thumbs" carpenters welcome. Minimal fee of \$5 for materials.

**Astronomy Walk Series**

**Chinese Sky Myths & Legends, *Easthampton***

Sunday, January 11, from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, amateur astronomer (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz, phone: 413 562-4740)

**Fee:** \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others (fee covers auditorium use)

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon), Main Building

Come learn about the beauty and wonder of the universe around us! The Chinese civilization has been around since at least 7000 BC, with a written history predating 1500 BC, making it one of the longest active civilizations on Earth. So the Chinese have been pondering and interpreting the majesty of the nighttime sky for a very, very, very long time! This head start, combined with their very expressive and art-inspired history, means they were prime candidates for creating exquisite myths and legends about our glistening nighttime stars.

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program, with a presentation given in the Arcadia auditorium each month followed by outside sky observing with eyes and binoculars (weather permitting). No need to attend all sessions. Topics are continually reviewed, to help keep everyone up to speed, so please join us whenever you are available. Please dress appropriately, bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to take a walk through the universe! Please contact me if you have any questions.

*Please see page 10 of the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information about the Astronomy Walk Series.*

**Alander Mt. Trail, *Mt. Washington***

Saturday, January 17, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

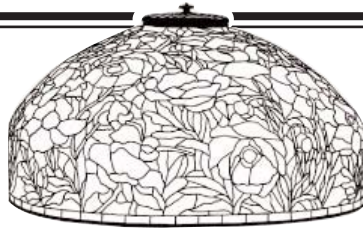
**Leader:** Bill Fontaine

**Registration:** Call Bill (413-533-2153)

**Meeting Place:** Friendly's parking lot, Great Barrington, Mass., on Route 7 just north of the Route 23 intersection.

The views from the summit of Alander Mountain are well worth the effort it takes to get there. This area has been described as one of the most beautiful and ecologically significant regions in the Northeast. The Nature Conservancy has called it one of the nation's "Last Great Places."

On this strenuous 5.5 mile round trip hike, we'll climb to the summit of Alander Mt. on the western escarpment of the Taconic Range to enjoy views overlooking the Harlem Valley and Catskills to the west, Mt. Everett to the north, and Mt. Frissell and Bear Mountain to the east and south. Our journey will take us through a red oak-northern hardwood forest and along a hemlock ravine that channels Ashley Brook, one of the tributaries that feeds Bash Bish Falls. This remote area is home to bear, coyotes and bobcat. Dress in layers and bring sturdy footwear and something to eat and drink.



## JANUARY MEETING

### NATURE IN ART: A NATURAL VIEW THROUGH TIFFANY STAINED GLASS

Wednesday, January 21, at 7:30 p.m.  
Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum  
Speaker: Chris Lyons

Are the monotone views of winter already getting you itching for the color and vibrancy of the natural beauty of spring? If so, please plan on attending the January club meeting where Chris Lyons will be presenting a great program on Louis Comfort Tiffany and the natural grandeur of his stained glass creations. Tiffany and his staff were very active naturalists who combined a love of nature with their artistic talents to create some of our most praised art forms. We'll discuss Tiffany's role in glass history, review some of his best natural subjects, and take a photographic peek at some of his most beautiful works. Chris will also have several Tiffany-style stained glass items on display, including panels and lamps, so you can get a close-up look at how beautifully natural subjects can be captured in glass. This will be a fun, entertaining session to get you over the hassle of the holidays and help give your eyes a much needed taste of the colorful beauty of the warmer seasons!

Naturalists' Club members have become acquainted with Chris Lyons over the past year as he's generously shared his remarkably varied background and experience set, taking a leadership role not only in our club but as well for Mass Audubon and the museums in Springfield. Whereas Chris earned an Electrical Engineering degree from Cornell and has worked a couple decades in industry, we have met him in outdoor venues as he's led kayaking adventures and letterboxing and snowshoe hikes as well as a series inspired by astronomical phenomena observable in the night skies above. Tonight Chris will reveal another aspect of his multifaceted interests, that of designing stained glass creations, taking artistic lead from Tiffany's legacy and with natural subjects his focus.

**Happy New Year ~ Let's Walk!** *Longmeadow*  
Thursday, January 22, from 10 a.m. until noon  
**Leader:** Colette Potter (413-786-1805)  
**Meeting Place:** Fannie Stebbins.

Join me for a walk at Fannie Stebbins. A nice brisk walk on a bright, sunny winter day ~ a great way to start a new year. Call to register. Bad weather cancels.

**What Do I Do With My Digital Pictures?** *Hampden*  
Saturday, January 24, starting at 10 a.m.  
**Leader:** Sonya Vickers (413-566-3406)  
**Registration:** Please call Sonya for directions.

Did you take digital pictures over the holidays but they remain in the camera? Would you like to make a CD of vacation pictures you could play on your computer, or a DVD with music that you could show on your TV? How about editing and printing your pictures? How could you put together a naturalist's journal of photographs you've taken? Your digital camera is probably capable of close-up nature photography, but do you know how to get the best results?

We will have an indoor digital workshop with tips on making a nature journal with photographs. Bring your camera and a laptop if you have one. When you call to register, a specific list

of what to bring along with directions will be given. Since this is indoors, only extremely bad weather will cancel.

**Do you have some wildflower pictures?** Nancy and Tom are putting together a wildflower guide and are seeking good quality digital wildflower pictures. Seeds, leaves, blossoms, fruits and whole-plant pictures are needed. If you would like to get your pictures published and contribute to the guide, please contact Nancy or Tom Condon at 413-564-0895.

**Snowshoeing — Chester-Blandford State Forest, Chester**  
Sunday, January 25, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Meeting Place:** CVS parking lot in downtown Westfield (Rt 20/Rt 202). Look for my green Nissan X-Terra when entering lot. Carpooling is encouraged!

This is a great area for winter exploration and it's very close by! Sanderson Brook is a beautiful water feature that runs through the forest, and there are a fabulous set of waterfalls that are breathtaking in the winter. Wildlife is always on view here, so keep your eyes wide open as we snowshoe our way around the many paths and trails (3-6 miles). This trip will be a bit more challenging than Robinson State Park, but not too difficult.

Please bring your own snowshoe gear and dress appropriately for the winter conditions. Pack lunch, water, and snacks and come join me for a cool time!! If new to snowshoeing, please contact me ASAP, and I'll help get you started.

**Observing Winter Wildlife at Quabbin, Ware**

Saturday, January 31, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Leaders:** Dave Gallup and Jack Megas

**Registration:** Call Dave (413-525-4697) or Jack (413-782-3962) for time and directions

**Meeting Place:** Follow Route 9 East from Belchertown center. Enter the second gate at Quabbin and meet at the Enfield Lookout parking area. Rain, ice, or snow cancels.

Quabbin's Enfield Lookout is an excellent vantage point from which to view eagles, deer, turkey, coyote, and other wildlife. We are offering this popular trip again this year to observe winter wildlife in a pristine setting. Dave will lead a short hike at 2 p.m.

Dress warmly and bring binoculars (and a spotting scope if you have one). Dave and Jack will have telescopes along for use by the group. Then join us for dinner at 3:30 p.m. at Apollo Pizza House, near the intersection of Routes 9 and 202.

**Snowshoeing — October Mountain State Forest, Lee**

Sunday, February 8, from 8:30a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Meeting Place:** Friendly's parking lot in Westfield (just off Exit 3, Mass Pike). Look for my green Nissan X-Terra when entering lot. Carpooling is encouraged!

October Mountain is named for the glorious colors it presents in Fall, but it is equally beautiful during the winter months. Being the largest state forest in Massachusetts, and having the Appalachian Trail running through its 2000-foot peaks, means there are plenty of snow-covered trail areas to explore! We'll spend the day snowshoeing (4-8 miles) and looking for signs of winter wildlife.

This trip will be more challenging. Please bring your own snowshoe gear and dress appropriately for the winter conditions. Pack lunch, water, and snacks and come take a walk in the winter wonderland!! If you haven't snowshoed with me yet this year and want to come, please contact me ASAP.

**February 18th meeting changed to February 25th**

The February 2009 Naturalists' Club meeting at the Springfield Science Museum will be shifted from the third Wednesday of the month (the 18th) to the fourth (the 25th), as the Science Museum will be hosting a special program for kids at Tolman Auditorium during school vacation week.

**A Winter Hike: Animal Tracks and Reading the Signs of Nature, Belchertown**

Sunday, February 8, starting at 10 a.m.

**Leader:** Dave Gallup (413-525-4697)

**Meeting Place:** Crystal Springs Plaza, Belchertown (at intersection of Rtes 9 and 202)

Did you ever wonder which animal made those tracks in your backyard? Join us on a winter hike, searching for animal tracks. If conditions are right, we should see coyote, deer, fisher, turkey and many other tracks!! Dave will lead this hike exploring the winter forest. You will learn to identify tracks so the next time you see them in the snow, you will amaze your friends with your knowledge!

The hike is approximately a one and a half mile round trip. Bring a snack and warm beverage, if you wish, and dress for the weather. Hope we have snow!

**Let's Walk! Quabbin**

Thursday, February 19, from 10 a.m. to early afternoon

**Leader:** Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

A midwinter walk, and if there is snow on the ground we might see animal tracks. We'll look for winter birds and just enjoy the wonderful world of winter. Quabbin is pretty in all seasons. Call to register. Bad weather cancels.

**Lilly Pond Wildlife Management Area, Goshen**

Saturday, February 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Leader:** Bill Fontaine

**Registration:** Call Bill (413-533-2153)

**Meeting Place:** Town parking area, Goshen, Mass.

Come visit the remarkable Lilly Pond Wildlife Management Area in winter! This woods walk over mostly level terrain will take us to a 30-acre high-quality acidic bog that has been recognized by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program as a priority natural community for protection. The bog itself contains a 20-acre dwarf shrub mat surrounded by an open water moat that separates the bog from the upland woods. The forest surrounding the bog consists of hemlock, red maple, yellow birch, and red oak. To the south, the bog transitions to a spruce-fir forest and to the east to a red maple swamp. This remote area is home to moose, bear, coyotes, fishers, otters and beavers, and great blue herons and other waterfowl nest here.

We'll meet in the town parking area on Route 9 in Goshen for the short drive to the bog. Dress warmly, bring sturdy footwear, and something to drink.

### February Orchid Show

The Amherst Orchid Society's annual display of prize-winning orchids is open to the public Saturday and Sunday, February 21st and 22nd, at Smith Vocational School in Northampton, 10am to 4pm. Judging begins about 9:30 on Friday. People interested in observing the judging will be welcome guests, so they say!

### Let's Go Skiing, West Granville

Sunday, February 22, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

**Registration:** Please call to register so if bad weather forces cancellation we can contact you.

**Meeting Place:** Maple Corner Farm, 794 Beech Hill Road in West Granville, Mass.

Join us for some cross-country skiing on the extensive trail system at Maple Corner Farm. Bring your own skis or rent them there. This trip is for all ability levels. Ski as a group or split off and ski the trails of your choice and ability level. Lessons are available at 11 a.m. for an additional charge. Bring a lunch or buy something to eat at the farm's snack bar. Treacherous travel conditions may cancel. A trail fee (roughly \$10 to \$15) and equipment rental apply.

### Astronomy Walk Series

#### Saturn and His Many Moons, Easthampton

Sunday, February 22, from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Amateur Astronomer (e-mail Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Fee:** \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others (fee covers auditorium use)

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon), Main Building

Come learn about the beauty and wonder of the universe around us! Saturn, the mighty ringed world of the solar system, inspires awe and wonder in all who view her! We are alive at a great point in history, with a front row seat for the many exploratory missions undertaken to learn more about Saturn and her spectacular set of moons. Please join me for a detailed look at Saturn, its moons, and the amazing things we've learned about her over the past 30 years.

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program, with a presentation given in the Arcadia auditorium each month followed by outside sky observing with eyes and binoculars (weather permitting). No need to attend all sessions. Topics are continually reviewed, to help keep everyone up to speed, so please join us whenever you are available. Please dress appropriately, bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to take a walk through the universe! Please contact me if you have any questions.

*Please see page 10 of the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information about the Astronomy Walk Series.*

## FEBRUARY MEETING ADVENTURES AMONG THE STARS

Wednesday, February 25, at 7:30 p.m.  
Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum  
Speaker: Richard Sanderson

Beginning with the total lunar eclipse of Good Friday 1968, club member Rich Sanderson has witnessed a wide variety of spectacular cosmic events. Rich will describe some of these amazing displays, discussing both his own personal observations and the science behind the events. Many of his stories will be illustrated by his own astronomical photographs.

A lifelong astronomy enthusiast, Rich has traveled around the world, to places like Africa, South America, and Mexico, to view the breathtaking spectacle of a total solar eclipse. He will talk about these eclipse experiences, as well as a strange annular eclipse seen from Vermont, during which the Sun was transformed into a blazing ring. He will discuss his sightings of a pair of brilliant comets that decorated the night sky, and then describe the memorable morning when the planet Venus crossed in front of the Sun. Rich also will recount the unforgettable night when the Earth swept through a cloud of cosmic debris and 5,000 falling stars and fireballs lit up the heavens.

Rich Sanderson is the Curator of Physical Science at the Springfield Science Museum, where he manages the Seymour Planetarium and the museum's observatory. He has written hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles about astronomy and in 2006, his first book, *The Illustrated Timeline of the Universe*, was published. Together with club members Jack Megaw and Dave Gallup, Rich organizes an annual astronomy convention called the Astronomers' Conjunction, and he is one of the founders of Astro-Education, an organization dedicated to bringing astronomy to the public.

***Please note February meeting date change to fourth Wednesday of the month!***

### **Snowshoeing — A Winter-White Mystery Trip**

*Massachusetts*

Saturday, February 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Meeting Place:** Barnes & Noble parking lot in Holyoke, Mass. Look for my green Nissan X-Terra when entering lot. Carpooling is encouraged!

Remember being a kid and having your parents load you into the car for places unknown? I used to love those trips! Well, here is the best surrogate I can provide. This trip will be in Massachusetts and not be any more difficult than October Mountain, and most likely a bit easier.

Please bring your own snowshoe gear and dress appropriately for the winter conditions. Pack lunch, water, and snacks and come explore the mysteries of winter!! If you haven't snowshoed with me yet this year and want to come, please contact me ASAP.

### **Stained Glass Training Class — Nature in Glass!**

*Westfield*

Four weeks - Thursdays: March 5, March 12, March 19, March 26, from 6 to 9 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Stained Glass Artist (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Fee:** \$60 (includes instruction & all materials to make a small nature-inspired panel)

**Registration:** REQUIRED BY 2/20/09. Please contact me directly. Class is limited to 5 students max. However, if more people are interested, I will open additional dates.

**Meeting Place:** Westfield Studio ~ 79 Hawks Circle in Westfield. (I'll provide directions on registration.)

Ever wanted to learn the art of stained glass? The colors, textures, and overall beauty of nature-inspired stained glass creations are simply awesome! And everything is much more beautiful and fulfilling when you do it yourself. This four-week class will show you everything you need to know, and you will build your own small stained glass project. You probably won't be challenging Tiffany at the end of this class, but you'll have all the necessary training to continue your artistic passions in glass.

**No experience necessary** and EVERYTHING IS INCLUDED in the price (i.e. instruction, class book, studio time, tool use, glass, foil, solder, etc.). Discount packages will also be available for those wanting their own stained glass tool set and glass & supplies for future projects. Come learn a great art form and have some fun in the process!!

### **Hubbard Brook Hike — Granville State Forest, Granville**

Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon (413-564-0895)

**Meeting Place:** Brooks Shopping Plaza in Southwick  
Carpooling is encouraged!

Join the club for a stroll along one of the prettiest little brooks in Western Massachusetts. Here the spring runoff cascades over numerous small falls, as the water tumbles down a heavily forested hillside. Along the trip, we'll stop and discuss the power of water to shape the watersheds in which we live. We'll also look for signs of an early (we hope) spring.

Dress appropriately for the weather, wear sturdy hiking shoes, and bring a small pack to stow your shed layers, a small lunch, and plenty of water.

### **Astronomy Walk Series**

#### **Variable Stars**

*Easthampton*

Sunday, March 15, from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Fee:** \$5 Naturalists' Club members, \$8 others (This fee is to cover use of the auditorium.)

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon), Main Building

Come learn about the beauty and wonder of the universe around us! Although, on quick glance, stars appear to be the same brightness all the time, in fact many have quite a bit of variability. In this program we'll be exploring the nature of variable stars, including the many different types of variability, theories on what actually makes this happen, and where in the sky you can actually make observations.

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program, with a presentation given in the Arcadia auditorium each month followed by outside sky observing with eyes & binoculars (weather permitting). No need to attend all sessions. Topics are continually reviewed, to help keep everyone up to speed, so please join us whenever you are available. Please dress appropriately, bring binoculars if you have them (several pair will be available if you don't), and be ready to take a walk through the universe! Please contact me if you have any questions.

*Please see page 10 of the Spring 2008 Club Newsletter (also available online) for more information about the Astronomy Walk Series.*

### **March Bulb Shows ~ A Breath of Spring**

Mt. Holyoke and Smith Colleges each mount fragrant displays of spring bulbs blooming every March, open daily to the public, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. 2009 dates run March 7th thru 22nd at Smith College Botanic Garden (585-2740) and March 1st thru 15th at Talcott Greenhouse, Mt. Holyoke (538-2116). Can't you just envision yourself, on the far side of winter, surrounded by blooming colors, breathing deeply in the floral aire?

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**MARCH MEETING**

**BIRDS OF PREY REHABILITATION**

Wednesday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m.  
Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum  
Speaker: Tom Ricardi



We are happy to have our Naturalists' Club friend Tom Ricardi back this month to give us a great program on birds of prey. Tom will talk about these fascinating birds and will bring live hawks, owls, and maybe an eagle to present to us during his talk and slide presentation.

Tom established the Massachusetts Bird of Prey Rehabilitation facility over 35 years ago. It is a one-person operation that Tom runs at his home in Conway, Mass. Many birds such as hawks, owls, falcons, eagles, and vultures are brought to Tom, with all type of injuries. Most of these raptors are returned to the wild, while those that cannot be released are used for captive breeding and/or education. This has always been a fascinating program for adults and children. Hope to see you there!

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**Let's Walk, Agawam**

Thursday, March 19, from 10 a.m. until noon

**Leader:** Colette Potter (413-786-1805)

Spring begins tomorrow. Let's see if we can find any signs of it on our walk. We will be looking very hard for them. Come and join me. Call to register. Bad weather cancels.

**Vernal Pool Life — Spring Begins!! Holyoke**

Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons (e-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Meeting Place:** 10:00 a.m. at Whiting Reservoir parking area, off Rt. 141. (If coming from Holyoke, take first left after Wyckoff Country Club entrance). Look for my green Nissan X-Terra.

Vernal pools provide the carpet where nature first begins to wake up after the long frozen winter. Nature's breeding season begins here, and amphibians (i.e. frogs and salamanders) get the ball rolling early! The sights and sounds of vernal pools are simply awesome and it is something you will never forget. Join me for a hike among several pool areas that are just itching for the arrival of spring!

Plan on two to four miles of hiking at a leisurely pace. Bring your binoculars, camera, and lunch and please dress appropriately for this very early spring hike. Heavy rain cancels



**How Sweet It Is! Maple Sugaring Time in New England**

*West Granville*

Sunday, March 29, starting at 11:30 a.m.

**Leaders:** Dave and Suzy Gallup (413-525-4697)

**Meeting Place:** Westfield State College commuter parking lot

Join us for a pancake brunch, with freshly made maple syrup, at the Ripley's Maple Corner Farm in West Granville, a farm that has been run by the same family for over one hundred years! After brunch you will learn about the process and history of maple syrup production. Then we will hike to the maple forest (about a one-mile round trip) to see how the sap is harvested from the trees (conditions permitting). For ages 8 and up. Call to register as Maple Corners will need to know how many to expect.

**McLean Wildlife Refuge, Granby, Conn.**

Sunday, April 5, at 1:30 p.m.

**Leader:** Dave Lovejoy (413-572-5307)

**Meeting Place:** Refuge parking lot just off Route 10/202, on the west side of the highway a little south of Granby center.

Come along on an easy walk in the woods, focusing on the (early) spring flora. We'll see what is blooming in

addition to skunk cabbage and at least enjoy a walk through the various habitats the refuge provides. Reservations not necessary. Heavy rain cancels.





## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **DOROTHY ANNE WHEAT GRANT RECIPIENTS:**

**Springfield Science Museum.** In recent newsletters, announcements have been made of \$1000 grants from the Dorothy Anne Wheat Naturalists' Fund in keeping with the Club's mission. The Springfield Science Museum has been awarded \$1000 to provide significant support for the publication of Dave Lovejoy's *Vascular Flora of Springfield, Massachusetts*. This publication updates and expands a flora of the city published by Luman Andrews in 1924 and is based on seven years of field work in the city (2001-2007) and herbarium research primarily at the Science Museum, Harvard, the University of Massachusetts and Westfield State College. This new flora will be on sale in the Museum gift shop and a display copy will be available at the January meeting.

**Kestrel Trust.** The Naturalists' Club recently completed its 2007-2008 program of charitable giving with a \$1,000 donation to the Kestrel Trust. Founded in 1970, The Kestrel Trust is a regional land trust serving the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts, dedicated to the conservation of forests, fields, farms and rivers from the Mount Holyoke Range to Mount Toby and from the Connecticut River to the Quabbin Reservoir. During the Trust's history, it has collaborated with dozens of governmental and nongovernmental organizations and landowners to protect thousands of acres. The Trust is led by a board of conservation professionals and a small staff and has more than 1,000 active supporters. Most recently, The Kestrel Trust worked with five other conservation groups to protect over 100 acres in North Hadley, including both active farmland and sensitive natural areas. You can learn more about the Kestrel Trust at [www.kestritrust.org](http://www.kestritrust.org). The Trust welcomes inquiries from all who share their vision of conserving the best farms, forests, rivers and mountains of the Pioneer Valley. Contact Kristin De Boer, Executive Director, The Kestrel Trust, P.O. Box 1016, Amherst, MA 01004.



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## **SPRINGFIELD RV CAMPING AND OUTDOOR SHOW**

Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, Mass.  
February 13-16

This Outdoor Show is a huge, annual event put on by the Pioneer Valley Chapter 8 of the North American Family Campers Association (NAFCA). It is held at the Big E fairgrounds in West Springfield, where vendors will spread throughout three buildings. Everything from camping gear to luxurious RVs are on display. Campgrounds and camping organizations and clubs like us are also represented.

The Springfield Naturalists Club has once again been invited to participate, which we gladly accepted. We will host a booth for the duration of the show so we can let people know about our fantastic club. We'll have brochures and newsletters to hand out, biofacts on display, and a microscope for folks to examine some interesting things.

Volunteers are needed to staff the booth for 3-4 hour time slots. If you are able to donate some well-spent time to the club to staff the booth, Nancy Condon (413-564-0895) would be happy to hear from you. Also, if you have some interesting natural artifacts that you would like to put on display, let Nancy know. Call early to get your choice of time slots. We'll have two to three people at the booth at any given time so you will never be alone. It was a lot of fun these past two years, so come on join us and represent our club to some potential members.

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**The NATURALISTS' CLUB**  
**2008–2009**



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The NATURALISTS' CLUB was founded in 1969 for the purpose of actively promoting knowledge, appreciation, and preservation of our natural environment. It is an all-volunteer non-profit organization.

Education is a main focus of The NATURALISTS' CLUB.

Programming, with an emphasis on local natural history, is designed to create camaraderie among people of diverse interests through experiences deepening their appreciation of nature.

Activities are geared to acquaint the layperson with the natural world, mostly through field trips. Monthly meetings are held at the Science Museum at the Quadrangle in Springfield, Mass. Most field trips and programs are free.

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### FROM THE TREASURER:

Members with 08-09 or 09-10 on their newsletter label are paid for the current year. Otherwise, dues are owed for the current year (September 2008-August 2009). Membership levels are indicated elsewhere on this page. Please send a check, payable to The Naturalists' Club, to Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State College, Westfield MA 01086. \*\*Members who are renewing will have their address on file and do not need to fill out the membership form shown below.

*Please note: Dave Lovejoy maintains the Naturalists' Club mailing list. Direct special requests or changes to him.*

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

\$15 per year for Individual or Family Membership  
\$25 per year for Supporting Membership  
\$50 per year for Sustaining Membership  
\$300 for Lifetime Membership



**BECOME A CLUB MEMBER OR**  
**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR**  
**2008–2009**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

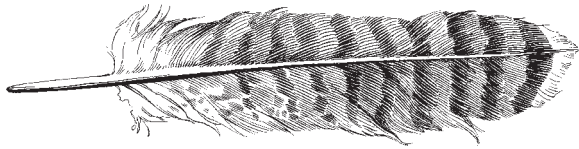
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Requests for programs/trips \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please send information per the above to Club Treasurer Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086*



~ Thank you ~ *Naturalists' Club Board of Directors*

- carpool to destinations
- share costs with your driver

If possible, please:  
Just a reminder... please be mindful of the environment.

Newsletter Office:  
Department of Biology  
Westfield State College  
Westfield, MA 01086



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# The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

Monthly meetings: Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, MA  
[www.naturalist-club.org](http://www.naturalist-club.org)