

# The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter 2010

JANUARY — MARCH

## SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

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### JANUARY

Saturday	9	Snowshoeing and HC, <i>Russell</i>
Sunday	10	Astronomy for Kids: Stars, Constellations, & Story Telling ~The Winter Sky! <i>Easthampton</i>
Sunday	10	Astronomy Walk Series: The Northern Polar Sky ~ Eskimo Myths and Legends, <i>Easthampton</i>
Sunday	17	Observing Winter Wildlife at Quabbin, <i>Ware</i>
Wednesday	20	JANUARY MEETING: Giants of the North Woods
Thursday	21	A Winter's Walk in the Park, <i>Agawam</i>
Sunday	24	Reading the Ways of Animals, <i>Monson</i>
Saturday	30	Quabbin Reservation: Gate 30 ~ Rattlesnake Hill, <i>Orange</i>



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### FEBRUARY

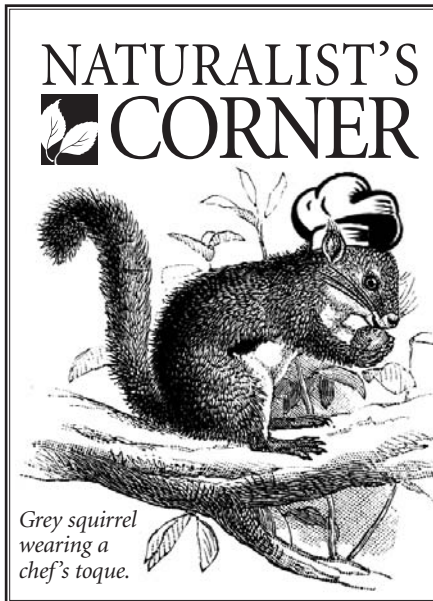
Sunday	7	Winter Tree Identification, <i>West Springfield</i>
Sunday	7	Astronomy Walk Series: Nebulas ~ Gaseous Signposts of the Night Sky, <i>Easthampton</i>
Wednesday	17	FEBRUARY MEETING: Let's Talk Snakes
Thursday	18	Sauntering Round the Reservoir, <i>Ludlow</i>
Sunday	21	Mammal Skulls and Scat, <i>Westfield</i>
Friday	26	Moonlight Cross Country Ski, <i>West Granville</i>
Saturday	27	Animal Robotics Class: Come Learn About the Animal World & LEGO Robotics! <i>Easthampton</i> (4 Saturdays)

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### MARCH

Saturday	13	Sanderson Brook Falls and the H. Newman Marsh Trail, <i>Chester</i>
Wednesday	17	MARCH MEETING: The Exceptional Forests of Massachusetts
Thursday	18	On the Cusp of Spring, <i>Westfield</i>
Sunday	21	How Sweet It Is! Maple Sugaring Time in New England, <i>West Granville</i>
Sunday	21	Astronomy Walk Series: Space Robots, the Final Frontier?!?!? <i>Easthampton</i>
Saturday	27	Bus Trip ~ New York City's American Museum of Natural History

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## MAKING ACORN FLOUR

“Have you nothing better to do with your time?” remarked Dave Lovejoy. I’d told him I was setting out to make flour from my myriad of acorns in the yard. I knew he, as a botanist, would appreciate the endeavor at least on some level. I’m familiar with many plant uses, but my first-hand experience hadn’t covered this endeavor. And now, after having undertaken to learn it, I’ll share the process, which can be done in bits and pieces in between a busy schedule.

*Extracting the meat from the shell* ~ After collecting acorns, of course, the first thing to do is extract the meat from the shell. I took Tom up on his offer to do this first step. We sat in front of the TV, hammer in hand, a hard, sturdy table in front of us, and a couple of bowls. Not exactly how the native Americans went about it, I’m sure. The shell is not as hard as a walnut, by any means. Just a light wallop to form a crack in the shell is best. Then pry the shell open and pick out the nutmeat. Too hard of a smash will make it more difficult to extract the good stuff.

*Leaching* ~ My oaks are northern red oaks. These acorns stay on the tree for 2 years. By the time they fall, they are pretty rich in tannin ~ a bitter substance that the trees use as

an insect deterrent. Not at all good to eat, leaching it out is necessary. White oak acorns have less tannin as they are only on the tree for 1 year, and would no doubt be a better choice for making flour, but I went with what I have. I filled the bowlful of acorn meats with hot tap water. I let it sit for a half hour, after which I saw the water richly tea-colored. I drained that water off and replaced it again with hot water. My acorns probably experienced 6 or 7 changes of water over the course of several days. There cannot be too much leaching. I stirred and replaced until the water no longer turned color.

*Drying* ~ Now my waterlogged acorn meats needed to dry out. I spread them out on a screen I’ve used for drying fruit over my woodstove. Getting a bit of heat from the stove spurred the process along. After a day they felt crisp and dry, and when I broke a large piece it snapped smartly apart, whereas before drying, my nail could be plunged into the meat before it reluctantly separated into two pieces. The sun could also have played a part in the drying process, had it made an appearance when I needed it. Any way you dry them would probably work.

*Chaff* ~ After drying, I found a lot of the chaffy membrane around the nutmeat had separated. I thought it best to get rid of this. Being brown, it probably contains tannin, unlike the whiter meat, and it would not provide any substantive value and might in fact detract from the final product. I could have tossed my acorns up in the wind, catching the heavier meat in a basket and letting the lightweight chaff fly off. Women have practiced this method for thousands of years in processing grains. I chose a more modern approach as it was a calm and rainy day. Besides, I had a novel idea: My dust buster exhaust port provided just the right gentle blowing power I needed. Back on the drying rack, I could blow the light chaff off and away while the heavier nutmeat stayed put. Worked like a charm.

*Grinding* ~ Now that my acorn meat was all dry and chaff-free I could grind. Wanting to try the traditional method, I ground some of the meat with a mortar and pestle. Grinding away a little at a time produced small pieces from larger, for sure, but it was proving to be tedious. The small pieces didn’t end up grinding down to even a coarse-grade flour. Perhaps I wasn’t persistent enough, but I was at it for a good 15 minutes. I acquiesced to another suggestion from Tom that took me yet further afield from traditional preparation methods ~ the food processor. “Grind” button pushed, I had a batch of coarse acorn flour within 30 seconds.

*Making Pancakes* ~ Mixing eggs, milk, a touch of baking soda, and a dash of salt together with the flour made for a fairly heavy batter that separated a bit when left to sit. I fried up a pancake of pure acorn flour, then decided to add a touch of all-purpose flour to see if I could homogenize the batter a bit more. It was helpful. I just stirred the batter before scooping some up for the frying pan.

If you want fluffy pancakes, this is not the recipe. These cakes were heavy and hearty. I served Tom a short stack and he couldn’t finish them. I should have served one at a time. The nutty flavor definitely came through, which was really

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delightful. They tasted of their true natural origins. I'd been afraid of a bitterness the remaining tannin could impart, but I must have leached enough because this was not too much of a problem.

Despite the time and effort, which stretched out to about a week, I would make flour again. I found making something useful from nature to be completely satisfying. The whole idea just puts a smile on my face. If you'd like to see the whole process, complete with illustrations, you're welcome to visit my blog at [www.naturepods.com/blog](http://www.naturepods.com/blog)

~ Nancy Condon ~

### **Snowshoeing and HC, Russell**

Saturday, January 9, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

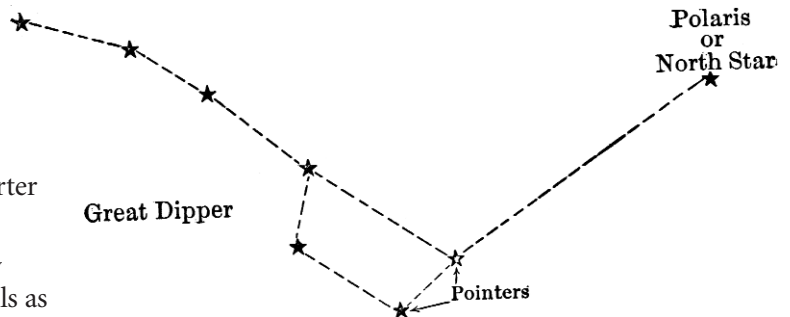
**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon

**Registration:** Please call 413-564-0895 to register.

**Meeting Place:** Noble View parking lot on South Quarter Road

Join us for a day of winter fun at the AMC Noble View property. We'll snowshoe some of the well-marked trails as we wind our way from the parking lot to the cabins, which offer an exceptional view into the Westfield River valley. Then it's just down the road to Tom and Nancy's home for some hot chocolate, snacks, and conversation to warm heart and toes.

Dress warmly for the weather and expect to snowshoe about 2 to 3 miles. We have some snowshoes to loan for those who do not own a pair, so call ahead and reserve yours early. Bring water and a snack to share if you wish.



### **Astronomy for Kids:**

#### **Stars, Constellations, & Storytelling ~ The WINTER Sky!**

Easthampton

Sunday, January 10, from 1 to 3 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Astronomy Educator

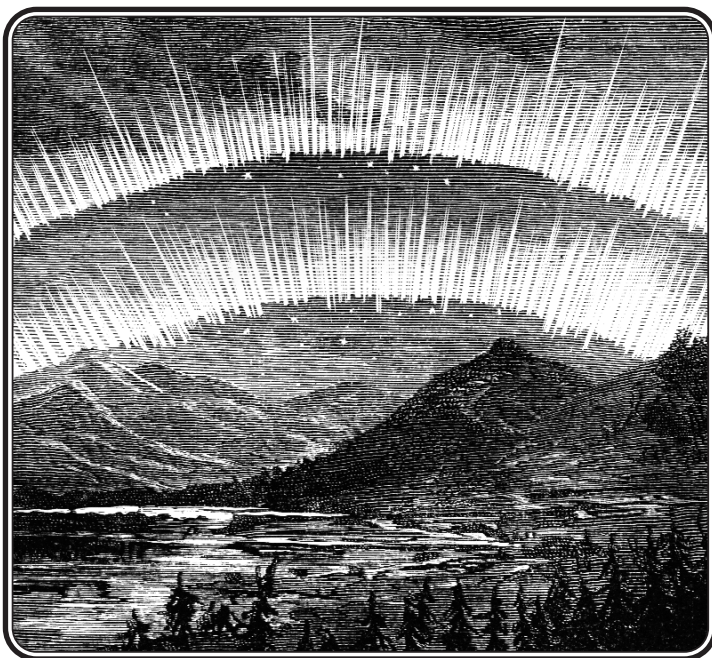
(E-mail: [Programs@GlassVisions.biz](mailto:Programs@GlassVisions.biz); phone: 413-562-4740)

**Fee:** \$2 Mass Audubon members, \$3 non-members.

**Registration:** REQUIRED Please visit [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org) or call 413-584-3009.

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon) Main Building, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton

Children are so attuned to the world around us, and whenever they look to the stars their hearts and minds are filled with *wonder* and *amazement*! Join astronomy educator Chris Lyons for a fun-filled look at the beauty and grandeur of the WINTER night sky. We'll talk about stars and constellations from a kid's perspective and consider some of the many stories our ancestors applied to the "dots in the sky." This will be a fun program, educational for both kids and parents! Open to families with children 12 and under.



*Aurora Borealis*



**Astronomy Walk Series: The Northern Polar Sky ~ Eskimo Myths and Legends, Easthampton**

Sunday, January 10, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Astronomy Educator (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

The northern polar sky provides many interesting views that most of us don't even consider! Can you imagine having the *North Star* right up overhead and the *Big Dipper* easily visible above your head at any time of the year? How about months of sunlight or darkness? And what about the mesmerizing color waves of the fabulous *Aurora Borealis*! These are just some of the marvelous wonders of the polar sky we'll take a look at during this program. The Eskimos have a very unique sky history. We'll take a peek at some of their myths and legends about the stars. Please join astronomy educator Chris Lyons as he places you at the *top of the world* and helps you understand many of the interesting astronomical sights from that vantage point!

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program for adults (16 and up), with a presentation given each month in the Arcadia auditorium, 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 Chris 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.'*

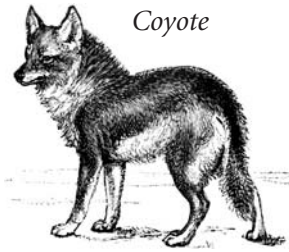
**Observing Winter Wildlife at Quabbin, Ware**

Sunday, January 17, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Leaders:** Dave Gallup and Jack Megas

**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.

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



Coyote

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.

**A Winter's Walk in the Park, Agawam**

Thursday, January 21, at 9 a.m.

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

**Place:** Robinson State Park

Let's hope for a bright sunny winter's day, a wonderful time for a walk in the crisp air ~ a day to enjoy nature. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Please call to register and for meeting place. Bad weather cancels.



Moose

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**JANUARY MEETING**

**GIANTS OF THE NORTH WOODS**

Wednesday, January 20, at 7:30 p.m.

Springfield Science Museum, Science Workshop Room (Second Floor)

Speaker: Marc Picard

Please join us in welcoming renowned local wildlife photographer Mark Picard. In a personal and narrative presentation he will provide a glimpse into the secretive and elusive life of one of North America's largest mammals ~ the moose. Set your sites on moose photographed in every season, in all weather conditions, exhibiting a diversity of behaviors in their natural environment. Individuals portrayed will range from a fragile newborn calf to an enormous adult bull moose weighing in excess of 1200 lbs. and standing 7 feet tall at the shoulder.

Mark Picard is a self-taught wildlife and nature photographer noted for creativity out in the field not only in composition and lighting but also in use of equipment, of blinds, as well as his knowledge of animal behavior. His images have appeared in numerous national and international publications, books, and calendars. Mark's passion for photographing moose goes back to 1980. Now, 29 years later, still in awe of this magnificent creature's grace and beauty, he will share with the audience many personal and rewarding experiences gleaned from photographing moose over the past three decades.

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**Reading the Ways of Animals, Monson**

Sunday, January 24, from 1 to 3 p.m.

**Leader:** Kevin Kopchynski (413-267-4757)

**Registration:** Contact Kevin for meeting place.

Animals leave many signs of their wanderings in the landscape. Snowcover allows us to see their every footstep yet obscures a myriad of other sign. Either way, we'll take advantage of the open winter landscape to read the stories they leave for us.

This walk takes place at the Miller tract of the Peaked Mountain Reservation, on Butler Road in Monson. Contact Kevin for more information and to be informed if the walk is cancelled due to weather. Rain or poor driving conditions will cancel.

**Quabbin Reservation: Gate 30 ~ Rattlesnake Hill**

Orange

Saturday, January 30, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Leader:** Bill Fontaine

**Meeting Place:** Florence Savings Bank parking lot at the Stop & Shop Plaza on Route 9 in Belchertown

**Registration:** Please call Bill to register (413-533-2153)

This winter walk will take us along a gated, level paved road through a variety of habitats on the northern end of Quabbin Reservoir, an area featuring abandoned fields and orchards, a hand-laid keystone arch bridge, and home to a variety of wildlife. We'll make our way toward the shore of the reservoir some 2.5 miles away. Bring appropriate footwear, hiking poles if you have them, and something to eat and drink.

**Astronomy Walk Series: Nebulas ~ Gaseous Signposts of the Night Sky, Easthampton**

Sunday, February 7, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Astronomy Educator (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

Nebulas are "cloudy" regions of space providing remarkable views from our Earthly vantage point. These regions are formed due to dust, gas, and excitation from gaseous outbursts of dying stars that obscure, or in some cases highlight, visibility of brighter objects surrounding the areas. Many of these regions could be viewed as giant ink-blot tests, as reflected in names like Crab, Eagle, California, Horsehead, Rosette, Tarantula, North America and Coalsack, based on how they may be perceived by the human mind. Although only a subset is visible with eyes and binoculars, if you know where and how to look for them, nebulas always present very intriguing views. Join astronomy educator Chris Lyons for an interesting discussion about nebulas and where to find some in the winter sky.

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program for adults (16 and up), 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 Chris if you have any questions.

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**Winter Tree Identification**

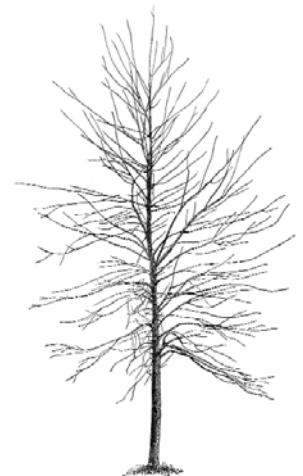
West Springfield

Sunday, February 7, at 2 p.m.

**Leader:** Dave Lovejoy

**Meeting Place:** At the kiosk at the entrance to Mittineague Park. Extreme weather cancels

This outing will be a walk in the woods on some of the trails at Mittineague. Dave will focus on winter identification of trees and shrubs, but there may be other aspects of natural history to observe as well, such as birds and animal tracks (perhaps depending on the expertise of those in the group). Use your judgment about footwear; snowshoes will probably not be needed at this site, but time will tell.



Silver Maple



Obero Orchid

**February Orchid Show**

The Amherst Orchid Society's annual display of prize-winning orchids will be open to the public Saturday and Sunday, February 20-21 at the Smith Vo-Ag High School, Locust Street/Route 9, Northampton, Mass. For further information contact Leilani & Harold Norman (413) 267-5124.

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**FEBRUARY MEETING**

**LET'S TALK SNAKES**

Wednesday, February 17, at 7:30 p.m.  
Springfield Science Museum, Science Workshop  
Speakers: John and Karen Lemay



Grab the kids and join us during this February vacation for a live animal program. You will be able to see numerous species of reptiles and amphibians hailing from all over the world, including Borneo, Australia, and our own state of Massachusetts. Learn characteristics of reptiles, how they have evolved through the ages, adaptations for survival, and more. John and Karen will address fears people sometimes exhibit toward reptiles and will share with us some of the knowledge they have attained through many years of living with and studying reptiles.

Herpetoculturists John and Karen Lemay have been conducting live reptile programs for 9 years at schools, libraries, colleges and other arenas. With his knowledge of reptiles, John has worked with veterinarians and other reptile facilities. He also conducts research with the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, documenting populations, feeding habits, migration, and other facets in the lives of reptiles and amphibians in our state. So come see some fascinating creatures for what is sure to be a lively and entertaining program, great for the young and the rest of us.

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**Sauntering Round the Reservoir, Ludlow**

Thursday, February 18, at 9 a.m.

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

**Place:** Ludlow Reservoir

Come enjoy a pleasant, easy-going stroll together along the reservoir. This will be a level walk for a winter's day. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. Call to register and for meeting place. Bad weather cancels.

**Mammal Skulls and Scat, Westfield**

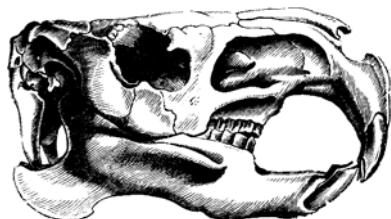
Sunday, February 21, at 2 p.m.

**Presenter:** Bob Kidd

**Meeting Place:** The Museum and Herbarium (Room 221) at Westfield State College

Bob Kidd is retired from a career of teaching high school biology in West Springfield and is now an adjunct professor at Westfield State. He has also been involved with the Boy Scouts, at the scout camp in Russell and elsewhere, for decades. He will utilize his personal collection of skulls and scat to discuss and exhibit these aspects of Massachusetts mammals, perhaps drawing on the collection at the college as well.

Participants should park in the large college lot just beyond the Congregational Church lot on Western Avenue and follow signs to Wilson Hall where the Museum/Herbarium room is located on the second floor.



*Beaver Skull*

**Moonlight Cross Country Ski, Granville**

Friday, February 26, from 7:30 p.m. until ?

Bad weather date: Saturday, February 27

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon

**Registration:** Please call 413-564-0895 by Friday, Feb. 19 to register.

**Meeting Place:** Maple Corner Farms, 794 Beech Hill Road, Granville

**Cost:** \$25/person with your own skis; \$30/person with rental

Ski by the light of the nearly full moon at this beautiful farmstead in Granville. (Full moon is Sunday, the 28th.) Maple Corner Farms is a working farm, with a sugaring operation in the spring (see write-up for March 21) and in the winter maintaining an extensive trail system for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Once per month in snow season they offer a special moonlight experience for those ready for a glorious outing.

As we ski in the darkness of evening, our path will be illuminated by moonlit snow, starry skies, and luminaries (candles in bags) lining parts of the trails. When in need of a warm-up, we'll go inside for snacks and a warm drink while sitting by the crackling fire, listening to musicians who will entertain us.

Unlike most Naturalist Club programs, there is a fee for participation, payable to Maple Corner Farms upon arrival. Notify Tom or Nancy of your participation by Friday, February 19th, as we will need to give a headcount to Maple Corners. Saturday the 27th is the alternate date if weather intervenes. Dress in plenty of layers, as evening will be colder than during a daytime ski. Come join us for a memorable winter evening experience!



**Animal Robotics Class: Come Learn about the Animal World & LEGO Robotics!!!** *Easthampton*

4 Saturdays: February 27, March 6, March 13, and March 20, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Naturalist & Electrical Engineer (E-mail: Programs@GlassVisions.biz; phone: 413-562-4740)

**Fee:** \$70 Mass. Audubon members, \$85 nonmembers

**Registration:** REQUIRED. Please call 413-584-3009 or visit www.massaudubon.org

**Meeting Place:** Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary (Mass Audubon) Main Building, 127 Combs Road, Easthampton

Have you ever wanted to explore how you might *design* and *build* an *animal*? That's a pretty lofty goal for any class, but it is exactly what the lucky students will get a chance to do here!! This class will provide a great look at the structure and makeup of animals and how animal behavior can be given to student-built robotic creations.

We'll look at the basic characteristics and habitat of the seven basic animal groups: *fish*, *amphibians*, *mammals*, *reptiles*, *insects*, *birds*, and *crustaceans*. Students will use this knowledge to help them tackle the class design challenge:

***As science advisers to a movie studio, students must invent and model an imaginary but believable animal creature for a new adventure movie.*** Students will be introduced to basic robotics using the computer-based LEGO Robotic Invention System and will use LEGO components to build their creations.

**Kids, are you up for the challenge?** If so, please join us for this 4-week class and have some of the best fun you'll have all winter!! Everything is included in the price, and no prior experience is required. All you need to bring is your enthusiasm and your thinking cap!! This class is the first in a series of animal robotic classes that will be offered in the coming months, so come get started! **Class limited to 10 students MAX, so please register EARLY.**

**Sanderson Brook Falls and the H. Newman Marsh Trail** *Chester*

Saturday, March 13, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Leaders:** Tom and Nancy Condon

**Registration:** Please call 413-564-0895 to register.

**Meeting Place:** Sanderson Brook Falls parking lot, Route 20, Chester

The total distance for this hike is about 4 miles. We'll start by heading up the access road to Sanderson Brook Falls. If we've had a lot of snow this winter and the melt is early, the falls can be spectacular. If it's been a long winter, the frozen falls can be lovely too. The road heads past the falls, and a series of logging roads and trails will help us climb gradually to some outstanding views of the Westfield River watershed. We'll stop there for lunch and to enjoy the views before heading down the H. Newman Marsh Trail back to the start. This stretch of the trail can be steep, so come prepared. We'll take it slow and cautiously. Dress for the weather. Bring along a lunch and plenty of water. And don't forget your camera.



*Striped Maple leaf and twig*

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**MARCH MEETING**

**THE EXCEPTIONAL FORESTS OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Wednesday, March 17, at 7:30 p.m.

Springfield Science Museum, Science Workshop

Speaker: Bob Leverett

Bob Leverett, co-founder and executive director of the Eastern Native Tree Society (ENTS), invites you to come learn about his favorite woodland haunts. Massachusetts contains three million acres of forest. However, in the 1800s Massachusetts was between 70% and 80% cleared. Today most of this regrowth forest is privately owned, populated mainly by young to early mature trees. Yet, as Bob will show us, in Massachusetts, hidden spots remain on both public and private lands, sheltering trees three and four centuries old and looking much as forest lands did when the pilgrims came ashore. These ancient woodlands possess a power to inspire art, poetry, and music and to rouse our pride in the New England forestscape. Learn about our most exceptional forest sites and how they compare to the best our sister states have to offer.

Bob Leverett, also the cofounder and president of Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest, will introduce us to the Mohawk Trail "super forest" and the research being conducted there by ENTS. Watch for a follow-up field trip sometime in April!

Bob has authored or coauthored six books on trees and has another in the works on how to measure trees in the woods. For many years Bob has advocated for exceptional forests by conducting studies, taking surveys, writing articles, sitting on boards, organizing conferences, and instructing others. His expertise on old-growth forest has been recognized and acknowledged by numerous organizations and agencies. So come join us in learning what Wild Earth publication called the East's "premier old growth forest evangelist."

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### Spring Bulb Show Dates ~ A Breath of Spring

The Bulb Show at the Botanic Garden of Smith College in Northampton is a spring tradition dating back to the early 1900s. The 2010 show will run Saturday, March 6th to Sunday, March 21st. The exhibition is free and open to the public (although donations are always appreciated). It takes place at the Lyman Conservatory, whose various glasshouses date from 1895, 1901, 1952, and 1981, located at the back of campus on College Lane. (413) 585-2740

Make this a double outing by visiting another 2010 horticultural event showcasing hundreds of spring blooming bulbs and plants, also held March 6th through 21st, this one at the Talcott Greenhouse on the Mount Holyoke College campus in South Hadley. Free to the public and open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (413) 538-2116.

### On the Cusp of Spring, Westfield

Thursday, March 18, at 9 a.m.

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

**Place:** Stanley Park

At this point it's anyone's guess whether this mid-March morning will have the feel of a winter or a spring day, but either way, let's take the opportunity to go outside to catch glimpses of the seasonal transition. Call to register and for meeting place. Bad weather cancels.

### Astronomy Walk Series: Space Robots, the Final Frontier?!?! Easthampton

Sunday, March 21, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

**Leader:** Chris Lyons, Astronomy Educator  
(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

This month we'll look at the role *robots* play in our space programs. Now, real robots are not like R2D2 or your kids' favorite transformer character. They are best thought of as complex computer-controlled electromechanical machines designed and developed by humans for scientific exploration. (*Yeah, say that 10 times fast!!*)

We'll take a beginner's look at what this machinery is and how it is used in today's space missions (i.e., Spirit & Opportunity Mars Rovers, Mars Science Laboratory, Hubble Space Telescope, SOHO Solar Observatory, and many others) and how it has evolved over the past 20-30 years. What will the future bring? Will robotic machinery rather than human beings search the universe for life? We'll have an open discussion about the many possible options. Join astronomy educator Chris Lyons for a fascinating look at technology and the future of space exploration.

This is a fun active-learning indoor/outdoor program for adults (16 and up), with a presentation given each month in the Arcadia auditorium, 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 Chris 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.'*

### How Sweet It Is! Maple Sugaring Time in New England West Granville

Sunday, March 21, at 11:30 a.m.

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

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

**Registration:** Call Dave to register

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, conditions permitting, we will hike to the maple forest (about a one-mile round trip) to see how sap is harvested from the trees. For ages 8 and up. Please call Dave to register, as Maple Corners will need to know how many to expect.

### Greek Isle Trip ~ June 2010

How would you like to go island hopping in the Greek Isles? Sonya Vickers is leading a land and sea trip to Greece and the islands in the Mediterranean. We will explore Athens and the Parthenon, then travel to Delphi. We will board a ship for 5 days and cruise the Greek Islands, including Santorini, Rhodes, Mykonos and Crete. A trip to Turkey will include the ancient city of Ephesus. Back on land, we will explore Epidaurus, Mycenae, Argolida and Olympia. This 13-day trip will delight those who want to learn more about Greek ancient history and take in the natural history of this unique area. This is a student trip and so boasts a low price which includes airfare. We will be leaving in early June 2010. If this sounds interesting and you would like more details, call Sonya Vickers at 413-566-3406



**Bus Trip ~ New York City's American Museum of Natural History**

Saturday, March 27, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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

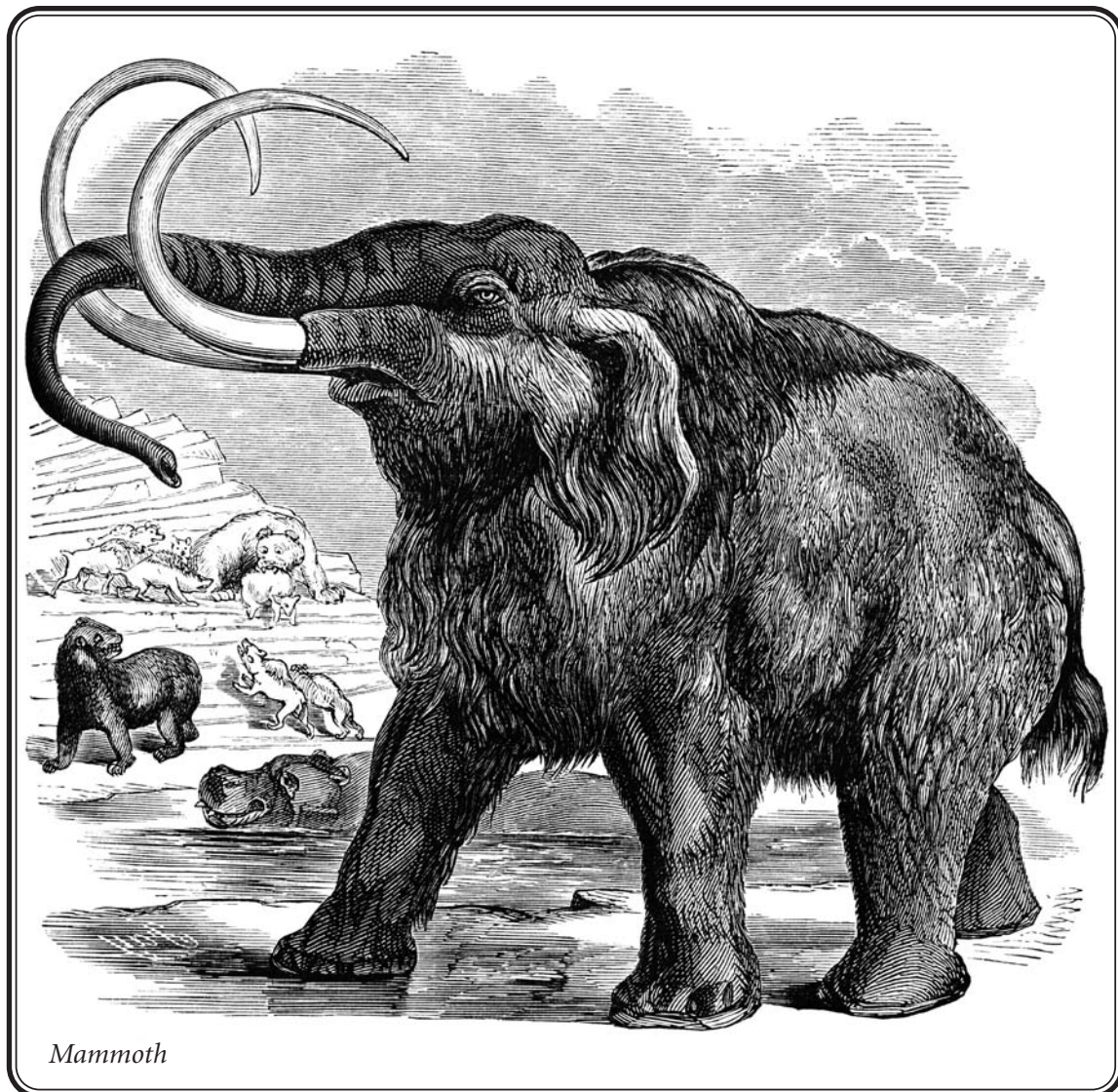
**Registration:** Send check payable to the Naturalists' Club to Dave Lovejoy, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086

**Meeting Place:** West end of the Eastfield Mall parking lot, by the Sears Auto Care Center, on Boston Road in Springfield. Please call Dave Gallup for detailed directions.

Join us on a bus trip to one of the finest museums in the world. Explore 40 different halls, containing 35 million items from the natural world. A spectacular dinosaur exhibit and gem and mineral specimens await you! See the real Star of India sapphire, a 1300-year-old sequoia tree, and much, much more! The museum also houses the Rose Center, a magnificent walkthrough exhibit of our solar system, and

many hands-on exhibits along the way. You can opt to view a high-tech planetarium show (separate admission). The Butterfly Conservatory is now open; there is an additional fee for this exhibit. Tickets may be purchased ahead online at a reduced cost.

The price of \$35 covers the round-trip bus ride but not admission to the museum. Most importantly, you must send Dave Lovejoy your check by March 6, by which time in order for this trip to run, we need at least 40 registrants so please contact Dave Lovejoy as soon as possible. The bus will leave promptly at 7 a.m. and arrive in New York City about 10:30, with a 30-minute rest/breakfast stop along the way. Departure from the museum is at 4:30 p.m., with a dinner stop on the trip back home and arrival back at the mall about 9 p.m.



*Mammoth*

**The NATURALISTS' CLUB**  
**2009-2010**

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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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*Grey squirrel*

## FROM THE TREASURER

Members with 09-10 or 10-11 on their newsletter label are paid for the current year. Otherwise, dues are owed for September 2009-August 2010. Please send a check, payable to The Naturalists' Club, to Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State College, Westfield MA 01086. Membership levels are indicated elsewhere on this page.

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



*Moose*

## 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**

# 2009-2010

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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





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

- carpool to destinations
- share costs with your driver

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

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

# The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

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The Naturalists' Club  
Department of Biology  
Westfield State College  
Westfield, MA 01086

