

SANCTUARY

Newsletter of the
White Memorial
Conservation Center

Vol. XXVII No. 1
Winter 2008

Museum Hours:

Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.

For Information

Phone: 860-567-0857
E-Mail: info@whitememorialcc.org
Website: www.whitememorialcc.org



Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley

Photo Credit: Wilson Bentley Digital Archives
of the Jericho Historical Society / snowflakebentley.com

Snowflakes

by Thomas Alena, Meteorologist, *Talcott Mountain Science Center, Avon, Connecticut*

As the autumn colors retreat and the cold nights advance, one of nature's hidden treasures begins to make its appearance in the air around us. To the delight of winter weather fans in New England, snow brings many different pleasures. Some think of their soon-to-be skiing adventure down the slopes. To others, the season of warm drinks by cozy fires is ushered in by the snowflake. Still others think of sledding and snowball fights. However, there is a breed of "snow lover" that bundles up and ventures outside with magnifying glass in hand ready to inspect the beautiful natural creations that fall from the sky on their coats or velvet pads. They enter a world of hexagonal symmetry, of carefully-crafted geometry, of crystalline arrangements. These snow crystals are fleeting and they don't always appear with each storm. Some storms produce a heavy coat of rime on the crystals, camouflaging their delicate shapes. Other storms never offer the individual crystals, only cluttered bunches. It seems the snow watcher is forever looking for a unique specimen to claim as the most beautiful, the biggest, or the most complex.

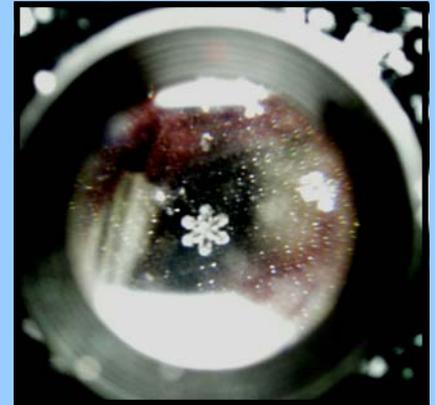
These snow observers have a fine lineage of scientific and not-so-scientific enthusiasts through the ages. One of the most illustrious was a Vermont resident by the name of Wilson Bentley. From his boyhood, Bentley was fascinated with the structure and beauty of the snow crystals that fell on his parent's farm in Jericho. Born on February 9, 1865, he entered the world at a time when the camera was a new invention. Having found one with a microscope attachment, he

experimented with the bulky apparatus until he perfected his technique of capturing the image of snow crystals onto glass plates. Thus he became the first person to capture the shape of individual snow crystals with a camera.

But he did not stop there. His fascination with snow led him on a life-long journey of collecting and photographing new crystals. By the time he published his now famous book, "Snow Crystals" in 1931, he had photographed thousands of unique snow crystals representing the whole range of habit and shape that nature can dish out. The book itself is still in publication, offering new generations of adults and children the opportunity to marvel at these most beautiful winter wonders. It has inspired a new breed of photographer, such as Patricia Rasmussen and Kenneth Libbrecht, who uses modern equipment to capture such incredible detail of the snow crystal that some of their photographs have found their way onto postage stamps.

Becoming a snow gazer is easy. Just go outside during a snowstorm and watch the crystals that fall on your coat sleeve. If you want to get fancier, place a piece of black velvet fabric onto a small board or dish and let the snowflakes fall onto them. Use a magnifier (10X to 16X works the best) and inspect your collection. A Lupe works well if you wish to photograph your crystal. To make a photograph, find a good specimen and bring an ordinary digital camera right up to the eyepiece of the Lupe. Turn the flash feature off and let the auto focus zoom. A little bit of experimenting will yield some decent photos.

As you observe you'll see crystals in the



Above photo shows crystal with a 10X Lupe
Photo Credit: Thomas Alena

shapes of thin needles, or slightly fatter columns that look like tiny clear pencil stubs. Others appear as small hexagonal plates, while others take on the classic six-sided stellar shapes.

Each crystal is a tiny emissary of the atmosphere above which created it. They form directly from the water vapor in the air, not from the freezing of water. Temperature plays a primary role in determining the habit, whether they look like needles and columns or plates and stellars. Moisture and the flow of air around the growing crystal play significant roles in determining the final detail of the crystal.

Don't let this winter pass you by without enjoying the marvels of the snow crystal. A walk through the White Memorial woods on a snowy afternoon is a perfect setting to witness these creations in the full glory of the season.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)



Plate (left), Column (center), and Stellar (right) Snowflakes

Photo Credit: Wilson Bentley Digital Archives of the Jericho Historical Society / snowflakebentley.com

References:

- 1) W.A. Bentley and W.J. Humphreys, *Snow Crystals*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1962.
- 2) Martin, Jacqueline Briggs, *Snowflake Bentley* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1998.
- 3) Kenneth Libbrecht and Patricia Rasmussen, *The Snowflake, Winter's Secret Beauty*, Voyageur Press Inc. Stillwater, MN, 2003

Editors Note: White Memorial Conservation Center thanks the Jericho Historical Society for their generous and important contributions to this edition of Sanctuary.

www.snowflakebentley.org



Snowflake Workshop with Tom Alena

January 10, 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Learn about the science and art of the snow crystal. Start with methods of catching, observing and photographing individual snow crystals. You'll then learn to produce room-temperature replicas of crystals that can be viewed through a slide projector. We'll create paper models of actual snow crystals that have been photographed by Wilson Bentley and other photographers with the aid of a sophisticated computer program. Bring your camera!

Call 567-0857 to Pre-register



Anyone can enjoy the thrill of snow observing!

Photo Credit: Thomas Alena

Make a Difference

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

It's That Time Again.

As the seasons begin to change, once again our thoughts turn toward home. We think of cozy fires and candlelight and soup and warm bread. We think of family and being together and giving. Giving? Wait a minute. That means gifts! Yikes! Is it that time again already?

Christmas, Hanukkah, birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day...the list goes on and on, seemingly without end. We have so many loved ones to give to, so many gifts to buy, so much to do. There has *got* to be a better way. Maybe we can give gifts this year that won't be put out with the trash in the spring. Maybe we can give gifts that keep on giving.

There are many ways of achieving this goal. Among the plethora of catalogues that seem to reproduce in my mailbox, I found many items that keep on giving. I found many organizations that give back as much as they get. I thought maybe this year we could approach gift giving in a totally new way. Maybe this year we would give ONLY things that were used up in a timely manner or made a difference in some other way.

Our electric company has a program that allows one to donate money, be it a dollar a month or a more sizeable check, to help keep people warm during the winter. My elderly aunt does not like to be cold. What better way

to honor her than to give a holiday donation in her name to this program? What she really loves, anyway, is a visit. I could go and spend a joyful couple of hours and tell her what I am "giving" her.

How about giving a living gift to nieces and nephews - a gift that would grow along with them? How about a tree? How about reforesting part of the rainforest in their names? How about donating money to a group that gives livestock as a means for families to make a living? You could give a flock of chickens to them and a stuffed chicken to your young niece.

The more I sat and thought, the more the ideas kept piling up. I could shop local thrift stores for gently used clothing or household items. Many churches are now holding rummage sales and Holiday Bazaars, a traditional place for no end of goodies.

How about if I got busy and made things or shopped for local things? A box of fudge for my Dad with the sweet tooth; locally grown yarn for my knitting daughter-in-law; a promise of a filled cookie jar all year for hubby?

My friend, Jane, gave me a pattern for making felted slippers. The more we talked, the more we realized that we could improve on the idea. Why not buy wool sweaters from the thrift store, felt them (i.e. wash in water

and let shrink) and use the resulting felt for the slippers? Go online and type in directions for felted slippers- you'll be amazed.

Food is always a good idea. Everybody needs it. Why not make a basket of special foods that you know your sister loves, but can't afford very often? How about a basket of snack food for the teenagers in your life? Or make your own sundaes: toppings and nuts and marshmallow and cherries and candies. Or movie night- a DVD and popcorn and chips and candies. How about breakfast: coffee, cocoa, bread, canned fruit, scone mix? You get the idea.

Whatever you decide, pay attention to where it is coming from. Read the labels. Buy local products and reduce your carbon footprint. Watch out for over packaging, too. You don't want to throw away multiple layers of packaging just to get to the gift.

This holiday season, think outside the box. Be creative. Try giving something that gives back.

***Make a difference.
It's easier than you think.***



STRATEGIES WILDLIFE USE TO SURVIVE THE WINTER SEASON

BY JAMES FISCHER, RESEARCH DIRECTOR

People often connect the presence of snow with severe winters. Although the presence of snow can hinder certain species from freely moving around or by covering food, animals have adapted several unique strategies for surviving the winter season, when food and shelter are limited.

- Some store fat on their bodies and use it for energy through the winter.
- Others utilize specialized fat reserves that not only store energy but also generates heat when the energy is metabolized (brown adipose tissue)
- Others store food for later, in caches dispersed in secret locations.
- Some molt their summer jacket (whether it is fur or feather) and grow a winter coat that insulates and/or camouflages them into their immediate environment.
- Other animals have adapted specialized appendages such as large feet or long legs so that they can maneuver on a landscape dominated by deep, slippery, heavy snow.
- Many animals move long distances, so they can take advantage of food or shelter that is not available during the winter in their summer habitat.
- Others find secluded places for themselves or their eggs, sleep through the winter, and emerge/hatch when their environment is just right.

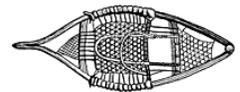
•Some simply slow down their activity and metabolism, so they will not need as much food during a season when food is limited.

•Many will huddle in groups during some of the coldest times to share body heat.

One strategy that is usually not recognized is that small mammals use an ephemeral micro-habitat. Every autumn the leaves and needles fall, creating a thick blanket that carpets the forests and fields. The leaves break down slowly. First, most of the carbon is leached out by the sun heating the leaves and rain pulling available nutrients into the soil. The days get shorter and the temperature drops, this new layer of decaying leaves freezes. This stratum is the “roof” of this new environment. The snow falls, which produces another blanket, and as more snow falls it compacts. The snow blanket functions like a true blanket. The air temperature can swing widely between -10°F and 40°F within the same day, while the temperature under these layers of snow and frozen leaf mold will remain a stable 0°F. Although living at 0°F may not seem like the most desirable conditions, the wide variability of the ambient air temperatures is unpredictable and intolerable to small mammals. This micro-habitat is referred to as the

subnivian (below snow) space and is where many small mammals live during the winter. The subnivian habitat is also a great place to hide from predators.

So what happens to the small mammals when there is little to no snow during the winter months? Long-term small mammal population monitoring (25 years) in southwestern Pennsylvania at Powdermill Biological Station demonstrates that small mammal population survival is lower during winter seasons with little snow. So, some individuals do succumb when exposed to the elements, but many will survive because they use multiple strategies to compensate for the lack of a subnivian micro-habitat. These strategies will probably be relied upon more in the future, to survive during winters with a warmer climate and presumably less snow cover. Some small mammals populations may be more susceptible to changes in an environment with less snow. Rapid changes in the environment could change small mammal communities. This may change the kind of food available for predators or parasitic hosts that feed on small mammals and transmit diseases which affect people.



WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER ANNOUNCES ANNUAL YEAR-END APPEAL

The holidays, the economy, the cost of fuel...2008 has been an overwhelming year for us all. WMCC's Annual Bird Seed Sale was canceled because the cost of seed skyrocketed. Many of you responded to our plea by sending an extra donation to help defray this \$1200 unforeseen expense.

Throughout the year, thousands have enjoyed our programs from adult workshops to our unique summer youth activities to a diverse array of Saturday events, many offered at little or no cost. This caliber of programming comes at a hefty price and we, once again, must call upon you for help.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a contribution card and envelope. Please remember that no donation is too small.

Did you know that White Memorial benefits each time you shop at **Amazon.com** from links on our website? Try it this holiday season!

Sterling Planet provides a clean energy option for your home, as part of your monthly utility bill. Sterling Planet combines energy generated from wind and hydro. A percentage of your electric bill benefits White Memorial when you use this supplier. Call us for more information.

Planned Giving ensures that our programs continue for generations to come. Contact WMCC for further information.

The Center Staff extends its gratitude to our members for their unwavering friendship and support. We wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year!

**JAY KAPLAN, DIRECTOR OF ROARING BROOK NATURE CENTER
RECEIVES 2008 WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AWARD
BY JEFF GREENWOOD, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

Jay Kaplan is the recipient of the 2008 Conservation Award. The award, a bronze rendering of a beaver, the White Memorial Foundation symbol, was created by Peggy Reventlow of Litchfield. The White Memorial Foundation established this award, in 1964, to honor an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to the environment. To date 14 organizations and 27 individuals have received this recognition.

In presenting the award to Jay Kaplan, White Memorial President Arthur Diedrick remarked on Jay's accomplishments in environmental education and conservation. The Director of Roaring Brook Nature Center since 1975, Jay has worked on behalf of the natural environment and introduced thousands of children and adults to nature for over 30 years. He has served as President of the Hartford Audubon Society and the Connecticut Ornithological Association and served on the Board of the Connecticut Outdoor and Environmental Education Association which also honored him with their Outdoor and Environmental Educator Award. In addition he serves on the Canton

Conservation Commission and is a member of The Nature Conservancy, the Connecticut Butterfly Association, and the Simsbury Land Trust. He has been and continues to be compiler for the Hartford Christmas Bird Count, the Farmington Valley Butterfly Count, and the Hartford Summer Bird Count.

Jay is also involved in several research projects. Starting in 1999 he began the Canton Box Turtle Study, in an attempt to gain baseline data on this State listed species of special concern. Another project focuses upon insects, taking the form of an informal survey of dragonflies and damselflies found throughout Connecticut.

Jay has traveled all over the Americas seeking birds and other wildlife and building a comprehensive appreciation of the diversity of life which exists on this part of the planet. He understands the need to work tirelessly for its preservation and how important it is to teach others to respect and appreciate nature. It is with great pleasure that we present this year's Conservation Award to Jay Kaplan.

BRaille TRAIL UPDATE!

We are a few steps closer to realizing the installation of a Braille Trail along our existing Trail of the Senses. Close to \$10,000 must be raised for the creation and installation of sixteen bronze Braille plaques which will echo the existing plaques already on the trail. The individual donor's name will appear in Braille and in English on their plaque. Each plaque costs \$425. WMCC is pleased to add the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society and the Litchfield Hills Road Race to their

list of existing donors which includes the New Hartford Lions Club, Watertown Lions Club, and Terryville Lions Club. We hope that other local individuals and organizations will see great merit in this most worthy project and show true community spirit by sponsoring a plaque! To learn more please contact Gerri Griswold at 860-567-0857.



**YOU CAN FOOL MOTHER NATURE
27TH ANNUAL FAMILY NATURE DAY DODGES DOWNPOURS!**

Close to six hundred intrepid guests braved threatening weather to attend the **27th Annual Family Nature Day** on Saturday, September 27. Legions of volunteers spearheaded by the Center's Education and Activities Committee mobilized to make the day a success. Audiences were treated to a banquet of programs from Riverside Reptiles to Wind Over Wings. Stilt Walkers Mortal Beasts and Deities hovered over the crowds dressed as Hawk and Doves. The music of Jenny Kate Lyon and Sirius Coyote filled the air. Local artisans, information booths, children's crafts, a spectacular hunting dog demonstration by the Henri Miles David Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, and Bunnell Farm's popular hayrides rounded out the day. Family Nature Day would not have been possible without the overwhelming generosity of **Northwest Community Bank, Litchfield Bancorp, Walmart, and American Eagle Outfitters**. Thanks so very much for making our annual celebration of nature sing!

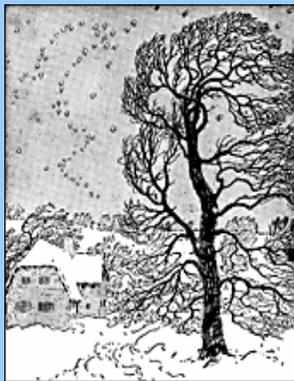


A Winning Smile! Linda Diesi of Torrington poses behind the kayak she won in our inaugural raffle!

Doe, A Deer in Diorama!

Photo by Gerri Griswold

Visitors to the Museum may notice a recent addition to one of the exhibits. Careful inspection will reveal that a second deer, a doe, has been added to the Bantam Lake Diorama. She joins the buck which was placed on display in 1997 when that area was renovated. Tim Sparks donated the doe which is somewhat hidden from view lying down on the right side. The taxidermy was performed by Mike Maston of Mountainside Taxidermy Studio in Torrington. While this placement required that a few things be moved and rearranged, the doe brings a new dynamic to the autumn scene which was absent previously. Our thanks go to Tim for setting the stage with his donation and making this change possible. On your next visit, check it out and see if you agree!



Out of the bosom of the
Air,
Out of the cloud-folds of
her garments shaken,
Over the woodlands brown
and bare,
Over the harvest-fields
forsaken,
Silent, and soft, and slow
Descends the snow.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

FAMILY ICE FISHING WORKSHOP

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Fisheries Division, will sponsor a FREE ice fishing workshop at White Memorial on January 17 from 1 PM until 4 PM. Families and individuals age nine and up are welcome to attend this unique event which is part of the DEP's **CARE (Connecticut Aquatic Resources Education)** program. The class is taught by state certified volunteer instructors. All fishing tackle and course materials are provided absolutely free! Students will receive official diplomas upon successful completion of the course. To learn more about the extraordinary CARE program log onto the CT DEP's website www.ct.gov/dep and type in CARE. Please call 860-567-0857 to pre-register for our workshop.



19th Annual Museum Sleep-In

Friday, April 24 5:00 P.M. to
Saturday, April 25, 12:00 Noon
Members \$45.00
Non-Members \$65.00

Call the Museum 860-567-0857 for a registration form
or visit our website www.whitememorialcc.org



Kozy Koffee Klatch Features Local Musicians!

Take a slab of cake, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, the sound of music, and the company of friends on a chilly winter day and you have the recipe for a good time. Place those ingredients into the Ceder Room and you have the first ever WMCC Coffee House Series!

On January 3 at 7 PM, Ken Adams will delight you with his bag piping prowess. Jae Wolf will shower the people with the music of James Taylor on February 14 at 2 PM. Todd Stoughton and his band will wrap up this first ever series on March 21 at 2 PM with music influenced by bluegrass, folk, jazz, and rock!

Seating is limited for each one hour concert. Pre-registration is strongly suggested by calling 860-567-0857. Admission to the concerts is free. Common Ground Café will supply a variety of treats and hot and cold beverages for purchase at each event.



Winter Calendar of Events

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

DECEMBER

25/26 **CHRISTMAS**
Museum Closed



27 **Owl Pellet Workshop** with Wildlife Biologist Dave Rosgen. Ages 10 and up. 10:00 A.M., A. B. Ceder Room

JANUARY

1 **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**
Museum Closed

2009!

3 **Megalithomania** with Gerri Griswold Visit Stone Circles from the Orkney Islands to the Salisbury Plain. The journey will leave you breathless! 10:00 A.M., A.B. Ceder Room.



Winter Tracking Club

January 3, February 7, March 7

Primitive skills and nature awareness instructor, Andrew Dobos, leads you on a trek through forests and wetlands. Search for and learn to read tracks and signs of animal inhabitants. Meet in front of the Museum. 10:00 A.M.



3 **Bagpipe Coffee House** Celebrate Hogmanay with Ken Adams, owner of **Green Man Tattoo Studio** and an accomplished piper. Pre-registration suggested. Seating is limited. 7:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room



10 **Snowflake Workshop** with Meteorologist Tom Alena Bring your camera for this exciting venture into winter's most elaborate creation! See page 2 for details Pre-registration suggested 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room

11 **Cross Country Ski Tour** with Robyn Dinda. Follow trails to Litchfield Town Beach. Meet in the parking lot. 10:30 A.M. For more information call Robyn at 860-567-0738.

12 - 18 **Museum Kids Free Week***
Courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. John Morosani
In Memory of Remy Edmund Morosani

19 **Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
Museum Closed

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

17 **Family Ice Fishing Workshop** CT DEP Fisheries experts teach you everything about water, fish & fishing, how to think like a fish and have some safe fun! Pre-Registration required. 1:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. An outstanding opportunity to learn from the best! *Read more on page 5*



17 **Owl Prowl!** Dave Tripp and Fran Zygmunt from Litchfield Hills Audubon Society teach you how to search for owls using calls! Hot drinks and cookies to follow. Dress for the weather! 6:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room



24 **How Sweet It Is! Maple Syrup!** Harold and Delisse Cable from Brookview Sugarhouse in Morris share production history, stewardship and ..of course...a tasting of their delicious products. Ages 12 and up. 11:00 A.M., A.B. Ceder Room

31 **The Earth-Sun Connection: Exploring Auroras** with Jon Wallace. Learn why they occur, how they work, what they look like, and how they sound on a radio telescope. Weather permitting, observe the sun through a solar telescope. 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room



FEBRUARY

7 **Winter Forestry Walk** with Lukas Hyder WMF Forest Superintendent. Learn about forest management and visit a current logging operation. 1:00 P.M. Meet at the Beaver Pond Trail entrance at the junction of Routes 63/61.

14 **Valentine's Day Coffee House** Jae Wolf, Artist, Singer, Songwriter, handler of Bald Eagles, performs the work of James Taylor. Pre-registration suggested. Seating is limited. 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room

15 **Cross Country Ski Tour** with Robyn Dinda. Follow the Webster Road trails and along Bantam River. Meet in the parking lot. 10:00 A.M. For more information call Robyn at 860-567-0738.

16 **President's Day**
Museum Closed



16-22 **Museum Kids Free Week***
Courtesy of The Laurel Ridge Foundation in Memory of Francesca M. Thompson, M.D.

17-18 **School Vacation Day Programs**
Call the Museum in mid-January for details 860-567-0857

21 **Evolution of Dog Sledding** Sue and Mark Hamilton explain the transformation of mushing from 1,000 years ago to the present using footage of their own Artic adventures and antique equipment. 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room

28 **Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley: Snowflakes in Motion ...** a one hour DVD about the life of this extraordinary man. 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room



MARCH

2-8 **Museum Kids Free Week***
Courtesy of Arthur and Tara Stacom Diedrick in Honor of Claire and Matthew Stacom

7 **Winter Birds & Early Spring Migrants** with Wildlife Biologist Dave Rosgen. Meet in the Museum parking lot. 10:30 A.M.

14 **Being Caribou** Join a Canadian filmmaker and biologist (husband and wife) on a five month journey as they follow the 120,000 strong Porcupine Caribou Herd from central Yukon to the herd's calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. 1 Hour DVD, 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room

21 **Todd Stoughton & His Band Coffee House** A fusion of folk, jazz, blues, & rock! Pre-registration suggested. Seating is limited. 2:00 P.M., A.B. Ceder Room



23-29 **Museum Kids Free Week***
In Memory of Louise W. Willson

25 **Take a Walk Series** Explore Camp Columbia, one of Connecticut's newer state forests in Morris with WMCC Education Director, Jeff Greenwood. This was the site of Columbia University's summer surveying school. Now abandoned, it features reverting farmland, regenerating forests, and some building ruins of an earlier time. Meet at the Museum. 9:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. Please pre-register by calling 860-567-0857. \$5.00 fee includes museum admission.

28 **Early Spring Weed & Wildflower Identification Walk** with Master Gardener Donna Katsuranis Meet in the Museum, 2:00 P.M.



Take a Hike Series Concludes

Photos by Gerri Griswold



Teresa LaBarbera (2nd human from left) from WFSB and Better Connecticut, with her dog Oreo, didn't let the threat of bad weather spoil her party!



Rachel Lutzker from Fox 61 and 105.9 The River (with her husky Simba, Fiance Dave (C), & Sam (L)) led a most memorable hike to Plunge Pool!

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Great Outdoors

Grades 1 & 2, Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18, & 25

Grades 3 & 4, Tuesdays, March 3, 10, 17, & 24
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Details available in mid-February,
Call the Museum for more information 860-567-0857
Or visit us at www.whitememorialcc.org



Volunteer Spotlight: John Eykelhoff

Photo and Story by Gerri Griswold, Director of Development

There would be fewer bluebird boxes and more broken birdfeeders around White Memorial without the contributions of Bantam's John Eykelhoff. The 5PM phone call searching for Dave Rosgen to discuss the day's birding list or to plot where to meet for some dusk birding would be missed as well. John's got it bad...and it's all good!

John's love of the natural world was undoubtedly cultivated at a very early age by his Dutch father, Dirk, a dashing sailor on a Dutch passenger freighter. John beamed as he shared stories about his father, who took every opportunity to go ashore, especially in Cote d'Ivoire (then Ivory Coast) where he was treated like royalty by a native tribe. Dirk created pastel drawings of plants (which he sold in the Netherlands) and was even given an orangutan as a pet. Eventually, Dirk arrived, orangutan and all, in New York City where he became a chef at the United Nations.

John was born in NYC near the George Washington Bridge. He moved to Connecticut during WWII because his mother couldn't tolerate the constant reminders of war: air raid sirens and searchlights. "It was unreal moving to Watertown and having woods", said Eykelhoff. He had many pets: crows, ducks, a flying squirrel. Here John took up the usual boyhood pursuits: catching frogs and snakes and going fishing. John ran the Marina at Bantam Lake for ten years. Art Ceder, WMF Superintendent, hired him for the job. When asked to describe what kind of man Art Ceder was, John replied in one word, "Good".

John always had an affinity for birds and they for him. It took him 15 years to really begin to identify birds correctly. Eykelhoff visited WMF on Saturdays to take walks with Dave Rosgen. "Dave is a tremendous birder", said Eykelhoff. "He puts a lot into it. It's hard to find somebody who works at it and plays at it and doesn't mind sharing." Taking walks with Dave spurred John into becoming more involved at White Memorial. When asked how many hours a week he spends birding John replied, "I don't know...not as bad as I used to be..I was REALLY bad before." Perhaps he'd like to keep that number a secret from Dolores, his wife of 53 years.



Flying Dutchman: John Eykelhoff shows off his handiwork.

HAVE A "WHITE" CHRISTMAS

THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP CARRIES UNIQUE HOLIDAY TRIFLES PRICED FROM TEN CENTS TO ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS!



THE CONNECTICUT CORNER

FEATURES GORGEOUS ITEMS FROM SOAPS TO SCARVES, HONEY, MAPLE SYRUP, BOOKS AND MUSIC, POTTERY, PENS, JEWELRY, ORNAMENTS AND MORE ALL HANDCRAFTED IN CONNECTICUT!

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