

OAK LEAF

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 37 • Issue 2

May - June 2013

A Celebration of Bird Song

A Blandy Public Program sponsored by Shenandoah Audubon

Saturday, July 13, 6:00 PM — 7:30 PM

Blandy Library

Travel through the seasons listening to Virginia's birds in this multi-media presentation by Wil and Donna Hershberger. During the program, we will learn how bird song is recorded and also get a glimpse of Wil's stunning photography.

- Prairie Warbler (right) and Black-and-White Warbler (below left) photos by Wil Hershberger.

Of his photos, Wil states, "I strive to achieve an image of a subject that conveys that being's essence and natural splendor. I use the camera as my net to capture that essence and the computer only to translate the captured image into a reflection of the reality that I experienced with the subject in the field. Over-manipulation of the captured image will only detract from the splendor that was originally there."



Wil started recording natural sounds as part of a project studying Loggerhead Shrikes for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. During this time, Wil attended the Natural Sounds Recording Workshop offered by Cornell's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds in California. A long and enduring relationship evolved, resulting in Wil archiving nearly 2000 recordings! Many subjects from birds to insects are represented in this collection. Several unusual vocalizations of birds and a comprehensive selection of singing orthopterans are also included.

Read more about Wil and Donna's works at natureimagesandsounds.com.

For the curious...

Orthoptera is an order of insects including grasshoppers, crickets, weta, and locusts. Many insects in this order produce sound known as a **stridulation** by rubbing their wings or legs against each other. The sound is created by rows of corrugated bumps on these surfaces.

The name is derived from the Greek *ortho* meaning **straight** and *ptera* meaning **winged**.



Pre-registration is encouraged but not required. Admission for Friends of the State Arboretum (FOSA) and Shenandoah Audubon members is \$8. The cost is \$10 for nonmembers and \$20 for family admission.

To register for this event, please call 540-837-1758 ext. 224, or register online at blandy.virginia.edu (register as if you were a FOSA member).

Shenandoah Audubon, your local Chapter of the National Audubon Society, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Financial statements are available upon request. Our Audubon Chapter Code is X-54.

Visit us on the web at
AUDUBON-NSVAS.ORG

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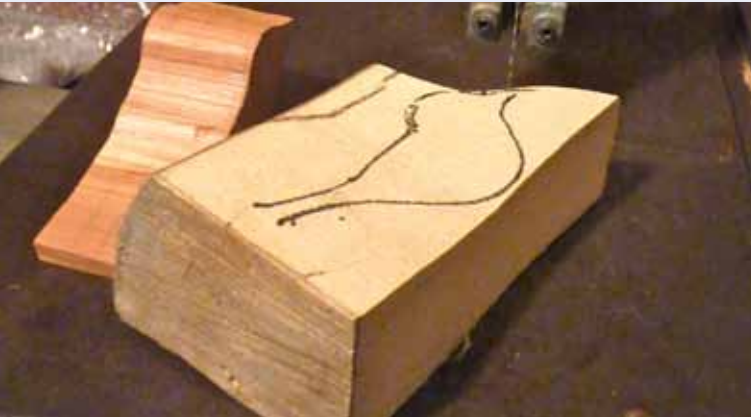
Our friendly Programs/PR chair Rosemary Rogers can field any questions or concerns at (540) 323-7627

Have A Wonderful Summer!

A MASTER OF DETAIL

Join us **Sunday, July 21** at **4:00 PM** at Cristina's Cafe in Strasburg for our FREE summer program meeting.

▼ Where it all begins!



Our very own Vice President Eric Williams has a long history of carving birds.

Eric took up carving in 1976 and quickly began honing his skills with birds and duck decoys. Shortly after, he was entering competitions. He has won several awards over the years, including third best in show with a goose carving at the Ward World Championship Carving Competition.

Eric's carving style is quite diverse. In his collection you will find realistic pieces, craftier stylistic pieces, and working decoys made of cork.

For his realistic pieces, Eric uses multiple photographs of a species to ensure every detail is accurate and as true to life as possible.

A great deal of time and effort go into each of these carvings. Eric worked on a particular Red-Tailed Hawk piece over a span of 3 years.

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to connect with a local craft master and hear the fascinating stories behind these pieces of art!



Eric Williams is a retired substance abuse therapist. He has been an active birder for over 60 years. In addition to his carving presentation, he will also give us an educational talk about birds.

Cristina's Cafe (left) focuses on environmental preservation through sourcing as many local and organic ingredients as possible. They support their community in every way they can, from showcasing local musicians to adorning their walls with artwork from local artists.

They are located right along Route 11 in Strasburg (219 West King Street). For more information about their restaurant, check out cristinascafe.net or call (540) 465-2311.

We thank them for generously hosting this FREE event!

After 37 Years - SUCCESS!

A “sparrow proof” birdhouse? Made of recycled materials no less? Say it ain't so!

On the evening of May 8, members of the Shenandoah Audubon board met with Paul White from Sand Lake, Michigan to discuss his “sparrow proof” birdhouse design.

Paul's box features a raised floor, small interior dimensions and a wooden cup for sawdust (below). The idea is that the compact dimensions do not give House Sparrows enough room to build their trademark bulky nest.

Since bluebirds prefer deeper, traditional boxes, the sawdust is used to simulate a small natural cavity, enticing the birds to nest there.



With the exception of mounting hardware and staples, Paul's houses are made entirely of recycled materials.

“My son worked at Tiara Yachts, and I got all of the wood from them. It was all scrap that was going to be burned.”

Even the conduit mounting poles are from an old orchard.

“I have lived on my property for over 37 years. Last year was the first I had bluebirds successfully nest in my yard. Usually the sparrows drive them out.”

House Sparrows are a non-native species. They reproduce at prolific rates, forcefully monopolizing all cavities available and pushing native birds out of their habitats. Their worst trait is their aggressive nature. They will enter a box and kill the occupants inside, even if the other birds are larger.

Adult bluebirds and chicks may fall prey to House Sparrow attack if they nest in areas where House Sparrows are present. The unique slot entrance of this house allows adult birds to escape rather than be trapped, as would be the case with a classic entrance hole.

Paul continued, “The sparrows checked out the house multiple times and passed it up. They didn't have any interest in it until bluebirds moved in. When they did, the sparrows still harassed the female, but she was able to escape safely. She held strong and raised 2 broods!”

Calling a birdhouse “sparrow proof” is a bold move, but this box passed the test with flying colors on Paul's property.

Our gratitude to Paul for sharing his story with us!



▲ Male (left) and female (right) House Sparrows.

◀ Paul White standing by one of his “sparrow proof” boxes. The dark semicircles below the entrance slot are his trademark smile “brands”.



Note:

It is important to closely monitor *any* birdhouse, especially an unconventional box design like this one.

Please visit sialis.org for information on monitoring procedures and other suggestions for deterring House Sparrows.

SUPPORT US

Help Shenandoah Audubon be the voice for environmental awareness in the valley.
Together we can promote conservation and appreciation of this beautiful place we call home.

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Kindly remit payment to **Shenandoah Audubon,
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Your membership dues and additional donations help defer costs such as website fees, liability insurance, materials for bluebird trail maintenance and Shenandoah Audubon Arboretum maintenance, educational programs and more.

This printed newsletter is made possible through the generous donations of ColorCraft of Virginia and WeKnowMail. The only cost to Shenandoah Audubon is nonprofit rate postage, allowing your contribution to go further than ever. [Thank you sponsors and supporters!](#)

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QUACK FOR THOUGHT

Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint
you can on it.

-Danny Kaye

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Share it with us in the next issue! Email your submissions to
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