

Volunteers ↔ Friends



*A quarterly newsletter for Volunteers and Friends
of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Refuge*

www.friendspwrc.org

January-March 2010

**Friends of
Patuxent**
Vol. 21, No. 1

77th Annual Federal Duck Stamp Competition held at the National Wildlife Visitor Center

By Kristen Jabanoski, Education intern



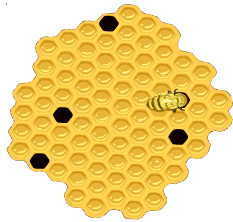
The National Wildlife Visitor Center was chosen to host the 77th Annual Federal Duck Stamp Competition. On October 16th and 17th, a panel of five distinguished judges (plus an alternate) judged the 224 entries in front of an auditorium full of visitors and hopeful artists. First place went to Robert Bealle, a local artist from Waldorf, Maryland, who has participated in the Federal competition many times. His serene depiction of an American Widgeon will be made into the 2010-2011 Federal Duck Stamp, and will go on sale in late June 2010. Second place went to Scot Storm from Freeport, Minnesota, and third place went to Jeffrey Mobley of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Last year's Federal Duck Stamp winner, Joshua

Spies, and Junior Duck Stamp winner Lily Spang notably attended the competition and autographed stamps and art work. All waterfowl hunters age 16 and older are required to purchase and carry the current duck stamp, which is sold for \$15, and is also considered a collectors item. The Federal Duck Stamp Competition is the oldest and most prestigious wildlife art competition in the United States. The stamps raise about \$25 million each year to fund the purchase of wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

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Honey Harvest Festival – A Sweet Success!

By Christine Thurber, Education Intern

The first ever Honey Harvest Festival held at the Patuxent Research Refuge was a sweet success! This event was sponsored by the Maryland State Beekeeper's Association, Inc. Participants buzzed with excitement over live honey extraction and open hive demonstrations, beeswax candle and flower making and a mock apiary on our Bayscape patio. Honey tastings, educational exhibits and special speakers all added to this exciting event. Participants made a bee-line to the Bee Keepers Rodeo to witness a smoker lighting contest and bee catching contest. For kids, there was the Busy Bees program. There, they made bee finger puppets and enjoyed stories while acting like worker bees, wearing antennae and constructing a hive, in addition to learning how to dance like bees. Special thanks to the Friends of Patuxent, City of Laurel Fire Department Auxiliary, USDA Beltsville Bee Lab, Bowie-Upper Marlboro Beekeepers Assoc, and Patuxent Research Refuge Staff & Volunteers for making this event worthy of the entire buzz. We hope to have this Festival here again next year and that'll you'll be there!



Contributors are reminded that their input to the newsletter is due no later than the **25th of the month** (Apr. 25 for the June newsletter)! The editor(s) and the layout artist need enough time to prepare the newsletter for mailing by the 15th of the month. Special thanks are due to the many contributors who have made this publication what it has become today.

Volunteers ↔ Friends is published monthly and is mailed to all volunteers and friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

The editor, layout artists, writers, and other helpers are all volunteers. There are some regular contributors, however we welcome and encourage all volunteers and Friends to write for the newsletter.

Send or bring comments or stories to:
Editor, *Volunteers ↔ Friends*
National Wildlife Visitor Center
10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
Laurel, MD 20708

To become a member of the *Friends* and receive a monthly subscription to *Volunteers ↔ Friends*, send \$15 (Individual), \$20 (Family), \$50 (Contributor), or \$100 (Sponsor) to the Friends of Patuxent at the address above.

For more information on Patuxent Research Refuge activities, visit

<http://patuxent.fws.gov>

For more information on the research activities of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, visit

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov>

“Making Green Choices”

By Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager

There was a recent article in the Business Section of the Sunday Washington Post that first caught my eye, and then, made me more than a little upset. It was titled “10 Green Myths Debunked.” Its basic premise was to take ten commonly held “truths” about the Green Revolution, and then proceed to show how they were flawed. Five of the ten examples – “Energy savings will eventually pay for replacement windows” for instance – were dismissed based primarily on economic arguments. That is what got to me. It did not matter whether making these changes in your lifestyle, purchasing habits, etc. were environmentally responsible. They were dismissed because, in the writer’s opinion, they could not be justified economically.

Now maybe this article served a purpose in these tough economic times of letting people know they may not achieve the savings they expected to upon purchasing that fuel-efficient hybrid vehicle, for example. But - it left the distinct impression that these decisions should be based solely on economics. Frankly, to me, that is an argument whose time has long since past when it comes to making choices that help the future of this planet. Economics, of course, is always a factor in our decisions. But, we make choices all the time that are not based solely on what is least expensive. That is certainly the case when it comes to decisions about health care and education. Sure, we try to buy what we can afford, but when a loved one is experiencing unexplained blackouts do we base whether we see a physician at Johns Hopkins or Nighttime Pediatrics on economics? If educational choices were based simply on what is least expensive, there would be no such thing as out of state college tuition, or expensive student loans that young people encumber their lives with to get the best education they can.

I am by no means the greenest person on the planet. I recently bought a used gasoline-powered car when I would have loved to have purchased one of the new hybrids that are available these days. Dollars DO dictate choices, obviously. But making the “environmentally friendly” choice needs to be more at the forefront of our thought processes as we go through our daily lives. We owe it to the only home we know. Very few of us can “go green at all costs.” But most of us can go green in small ways that, when added up, can begin to make a difference.

January & February Closings

The Refuge will be closed on the following Federal holidays:



January 1st - New Year's Day
January 18th - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 15th - President's Day



For photos taken on the refuge, visit a gallery at
http://www.pbase.com/photoops2/patuxent_research_refuge

Brenda Stone – Volunteer of the Year 2009

By Dennis Hartnett

Congratulations to Brenda Stone – Patuxent’s Volunteer of the Year 2009.

Brenda started as a volunteer on October 1, 1994. To date she has over 15 years of service as a Fish and Wildlife Patuxent Volunteer. Brenda has served as a member of the Volunteer Orientation Team, training and helping new volunteers in learning customer service and dealing with the general public. On many instances, Brenda has worked as part of the front desk personnel “Friday” crew at the Visitor Center. She and her teammates meet and greet visitors with politeness, energy and a willingness to answer the myriad of questions. Brenda has served as a model of the way customers should be helped and greeted.

Brenda has been extremely active with the Friends of Patuxent. She is currently helping the Friends treasurer with a variety of financial needs to help support the various programs at the refuge. Brenda has also helped out as an editor of the Friends newsletter. She has served as the Committee chair for the Silent Auction held at the annual Art Show and developed a special program for the design of decorated eggs by the various artists. Brenda has spent countless hours dealing with a number of different facets of the Art Show including assisting artists participating in the show.

Brenda has attended and been actively involved in various community outreach functions always helping people who have questions about the mission of Patuxent and some of the research going on at the Refuge.

Brenda has also participated in a number of special events held at the Visitor Center including but not limited to the Annual Wildlife Festival and the Refuge Birthday Celebration. She has done everything from “meet and greet” to helping staff the Crane Café.

She has taken an active interest in the biological activities going on at the refuge including nest box, whippoorwill, and woodcock surveys. As an avid birder, Brenda has helped out with bird education programs with youth and adults including bird walks and identification of the various species of birds at Patuxent.

Brenda has been directly involved with the Junior Duck Stamp Program including but not limited to assisting with the judging, awards ceremony, and logistics of planning the program.

Brenda Stone is a “model” of what volunteerism is all about. She acts as a mentor to other volunteers and an invaluable asset to the staff providing help, wisdom and guidance with the various programs that make Patuxent work. Congratulations to Brenda as the Patuxent Volunteer of the Year 2009



2009 Wildlife Festival – Another Patuxent Success Story

By Dennis Hartnett, Volunteer EE Coordinator

On October 24th, 2009, the annual Patuxent Wildlife Festival was held at the National Wildlife Visitor Center. Sponsored by the U. S. Geological Survey (USGS), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Friends of Patuxent, the festival had many scientific displays, research tours and activities for all ages. Among the many scientific organizations represented included the USGS, Smithsonian, NASA and the National Aquarium in Baltimore. Live animals included birds of prey, Wood Ducks, turtles and Sandhill Cranes.

Two special tours were given during the day. Busses took visitors to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and vans transported visitors to the McAtee Seaduck colony. All of the tours were filled and were very successful. Special thanks go to the van and bus drivers and interpreters at the two sites for their participation.

The children had an opportunity to watch a puppet show “Little Whooper’s Excellent Adventure” (led by the interns), create sand magnet art, track specific kinds of animals, play a duck matching game and listen to two stories, “The Giving Tree” and “The Eyes of Gray Wolf”. There were mystery boxes and pelts and skulls of various animals also on display for children of all ages.



Special thanks goes to the following: The City of Laurel Fire Department Rehab Unit for providing food and drink at a low cost, the National Aquarium of Baltimore, NASA, and all the volunteers and staff (well over 40) of the USGS, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and AP and the Banty Roosters who provided music for the event and all others who made the day a huge success.

Special accolades go to Michelle Donlan, Nell Baldacchino and Marilyn Whitehead who were the chief organizers of the event.

Well over 1000 visitors enjoyed the day and praised all the staff and volunteers for a job well done!



Thanks

A thick, red, curved line that starts under the 'T' and sweeps under the 's' of the word 'Thanks'.

Artists of the Month for Winter

By Faith Leahy-Thielke, Patuxent Volunteer

The Hollingsworth Gallery in the Visitor Center welcomes three accomplished artists during the winter months: Alice Lynch in January; Melissa Ramey in February; and Richard Weiblinger the first two weeks in March. (Junior Duck winners will be featured in the last two). The work of these three reflects the unique and exquisite beauty of the natural world – the world Patuxent Research Refuge works to shelter.

Nature and nurture forged **Alice Babcock Lynch**. Her grandfather painted birds and wildflowers on glass; her mother, children and landscapes on canvas. She herself learned early and began painting professionally at 16. Alice's daughters continue the tradition. Although she specializes in impressionism and describes pastels and oil painting as her real passion, Alice is well known nationally and internationally for "Old World Style" woodcarvings. These range from shore birds to full size carousel horses.

Originally from the Berkshire Mountains region of Massachusetts, Alice Lynch has lived in several central and eastern states – including Maryland for 14 years before heading back north. In January, we'll see works in watercolor, oil and gouache of her favorite subjects – animals and their habitats: these include birds of prey, wild horses, deer and African animals. She is presently working on a series that includes wetland birds of the Delaware shore and Merritt Island, Florida. Obviously inspired by her subjects, Alice states on her website: "When we strive to protect and preserve our wildlife, it is only then when we are truly protecting ourselves..."

In February, the warmth of **Melissa Ramey's** photographic images should banish winter's chill. During college the gift of a camera encouraged her to register for her first photography class. As with many, life and career put artistic leanings and yearnings on hold for a while, but they resurged and Melissa is a serious photographer whose skill makes her love of nature patently evident. Some of her most exquisite images are sunset views. "Night Landing" made her a Finalist in the 2008 Photographer's Forum; 3000 others had submitted entries. "Bay Bridge Sunset" has repeated the honor for 2009. An elegant photo of the Thomas Point Lighthouse was juried and chosen to hang in the Lowe House in Annapolis.

In the Hollingsworth Gallery, Melissa plans to display pictures from 1. Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge 2. Patuxent Research Refuge 3. Kings Gap State Park, Nature and Education Center 4. Big cat Rescue and Wildlife Center 5. National Aquatic Gardens and marshland.

The Laurel resident is a member of the Baltimore and Washington Photography Club, the Digital Photography Club of Annapolis and the National Association of Photoshop Professionals.

Richard Paul Weiblinger, our man for March, has produced incredibly beautiful photographic images. This FDA scientist has been captivated by the natural world since childhood when family trips to the Eastern Shore, camping with Scouts and walking the "wild sides" of the D.C. area wakened a lifelong passion – one he shares with his own children and now with us through his photography.

Richard is totally self-taught. With no formal training, he has achieved a level of artistry that in the last year and a half has garnered much deserved recognition. His work has appeared in national and international publications: Smithsonian Zoogoer, Photo Life, Nature Photographer, Washington Gardener Magazine and Chesapeake Bay

Volunteers Honored At the Annual Patuxent Volunteer Awards Dinner 2009

By Dennis Hartnett

On Sunday, November 8th, 2009, a large number of Patuxent volunteers were honored for their accomplishments at the annual Awards Dinner. Under the direction of Phil LePelch (Patuxent's Volunteer Coordinator), awards for number of hours and special recognition were presented to the following:

Frank McGilvery – 14,000 hours
 Dennis Hartnett – 11,000 hours (Dennis was awarded an engraved eagle statue)
 Ed Grimes – 9,000 hours (Ed was awarded an engraved clock)
 Lucy Grimes, Rod Burley, Emmy Holdridge – 7,000 hours
 “Sparky” Sparks – 6,000 hours
 Evelyn Adkins – 5,000 hours (Evelyn was also awarded a walking stick carved by Ron Clemons)
 Rudy Benavides – 4,500 hours
 Jean Sparks, Jerry Feldman – 3,000 hours
 Jay Pape – 2,500 hours
 Brenda Stone – 2,500 hours (Brenda was also awarded the prestigious Volunteer of the Year for 2009)
 Robert Hardy – 2080 hours
 Ken Lavish – 2080 hours (Ken was also awarded a plaque for Outstanding Achievement in the field of Environmental Education)
 Dennis Green, Donna Opilla and Barry Stimmel – 1,500 hours

Pauline Chvilicek and Jeanne Latham – 1,000 hours
 Anne Vore – 1,000 hours (Anne was also awarded a plaque for Outstanding Achievement in the field of Environmental Education)
 Janet Hardy and Charlotte Melichar – 750 hours
 Pamela Waterworth – 500 hours
 Gary Gebauer – 500 hours
 Jessica Tapp, Frank Cockrell, Kristen Jabanoski, Bryan Jones, Christine Thurber – 300 hours
 Melanie Lang, Tim Duclos and Lisa Garrett – 200 hours
 Aliya Azim – 50 hours
 Fran Lewis-Steiner, Thomas Estill and Chris Feral – 25 hours

With the pot luck dinner, the great dessert table and all the honorees, the Annual Volunteer Awards Dinner was a huge success with over 100 volunteers, staff, interns and special guests. Congratulations to all the award winners!!!!



Artists of the Month for Winter

Continued from page 6

Foundation Magazine, Nature's Best and Birder's World featured his images as pictures of the week; several images were selected for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge Associations 2008 gallery. One appears in the Bay Foundation's 2009 calendar.

From spring 2008 through fall 2009, Richard's photographs have appeared in juried exhibitions and hung in prestigious galleries throughout the Metropolitan Area. In March, Richard intends to include a wide variety of wildlife photos and feature those of birds actually found at the refuge. Hopefully, we'll see some of the beauties from Great Falls and Blackwater as well. Birds, flowers, insects, mammals and incredible scenic vistas make Richard Weiblinger's work a joy we look forward to seeing.



Friends of Patuxent Elect New Chairperson; Harlan Tucker Honored for Dedicated Service

The Friends of Patuxent held elections at their annual meeting October 27, 2009.

Elected officers are:

Chairman – Emmalyn Holdridge

Vice Chairman – Ed Grimes

Secretary - Pauline Chvilicek

Treasurer – Evelyn Adkins

Former Chairman, Col. Harlan Tucker, was presented a plaque by Refuge Manager Brad Knudsen at the November Friends meeting for his dedication and service to the Friends since the late 1980s and service as Chairman of the Board for the past 12 years. The plaque was presented from both the Refuge and the Research Center. Research Center Director Greg Smith was not able to be present, but sent a letter of commendation which was also presented.

Harlan has been a strong supporter of Patuxent for many years, and one of the founding board members of the Friends of Patuxent. He was a member of the Prince George's Community Foundation, the organization that took on a leadership support role for the development of the National Wildlife Visitor Center in the late 1980s. The Friends of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Inc. evolved from this organization and became officially incorporated in late 1991, gaining State certification in January 1992.

From the very beginnings of a Friends and volunteer movement for Patuxent, Harlan worked as a board member to support the missions of Patuxent. He was elected chairman in 1997, and served in this leadership capacity until October 2009 when Emmalyn Holdridge was elected as the new chairperson. Harlan will continue to serve and support Patuxent as a board member of the Friends.

Harlan Tucker's many years of service as a volunteer at Patuxent is deeply appreciated by staff, volunteers, and Friends alike. His many connections to leaders of Prince George's County, to elected officials of the Cities of Bowie and Laurel, and his many community connections, along with his dedicated support and many volunteer hours, have been invaluable to the success of the Friends and the work of the Research Center and Refuge. He is indeed a true "Friend of Patuxent."



Notes from the Friends' Membership Committee

Volunteers at the Patuxent Research Refuge are eligible for membership in the Friends of Patuxent at no cost. We have been distributing membership cards to all volunteers. All volunteers should have cards shortly. All annual volunteer memberships will have a November expiration date.

Volunteers are awarded Lifetime memberships for:

- Receiving the Volunteer of the Year Award
- Serving 5,000 hours of volunteer work at the Patuxent Research Refuge
- Giving 5 years of volunteer service to Patuxent Research Refuge

As a reminder: You may also become a member of Friends of Patuxent through a donation:

- Individual (\$15)
- Family (\$20)
- Contributor (\$50)
- Sponsor (\$100)

(See the membership form on the back of the newsletter.)

New this year we are offering a \$5 discount on Wildlife Art Show and Sale Artists' Reception tickets (Friday, March 26, 2010) to Contributor and Sponsor members. We are considering additional benefits for members at those levels.

We are also working on a members-only event for 2010.

Reminders:

- Members get a 10% discount at Wildlife Images and may get a discount at other refuge store.
- Members are always welcome at the monthly Friends of Patuxent board of directors meeting, the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the National Wildlife Visitor Center.

The Big Sit! Hosted at Patuxent Research Refuge

By Michelle Donlan, Patuxent staff

On Sunday, October 11th Patuxent Research Refuge staff along with Paul Baicich, consultant to the FWS Birding Team, hosted The Big Sit! at the National Wildlife Visitor Center. The Big Sit! is an annual, international, noncompetitive October birding event hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest* and founded by the New Haven (CT) Bird Club. The National Wildlife Refuge System has adopted it as an activity for National Wildlife Refuge Week. The idea is simple - we identified a 17 foot diameter circle near the National Wildlife Visitor Center, set up chairs and binoculars, and identified as many birds as we could. With the help of Paul and naturalists, Helen Alexander, Rudy Benavides, Lisa Strobel and Warren Strobel, we identified 37 different species of birds. While birding, participants could also enjoy a Duck Matching game and making pine cone bird feeders led by the refuge environmental education interns Christine Thurber and Kristen Jabanoski.





Friends of Patuxent

presents the

Twenty-first Annual Wildlife Art Show & Sale

Saturday, March 27, 2010, 9AM - 4:30PM &
Sunday, March 28, 2010, 11AM - 4:30PM
Admission to the show is free

National Wildlife Visitor Center

10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop,
Laurel, MD 20708-4027

Artists' Reception

Spend a special evening, Friday, March 26, 2010 6:30PM - 9:30PM with over 40 nationally and internationally recognized Artists and Artisans specializing in wildlife art; participate in the annual Silent Auction fundraiser. Tickets for the Evening Reception are \$40.00 per person advanced purchase or \$45.00 at the door. Two or more tickets purchased before March 8th will be discounted \$5.00 each. Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres and beverages while listening to live music. The Saturday and Sunday Art Show and Sale is free and open to the public. For further information or to order tickets, call (301) 497-5789, FAX (301) 497-5765 or visit us on the web at www.friendspwrc.org.

Special Weekend Events Sponsored by Friends of Patuxent

Wildlife Interpretive Tram Tours, Live Animals, Artisan Demonstrations,
An Egg-citing Silent Auction

Saturday — 12:00PM - Maryland Migratory Game Bird Design Contest &
Maryland Black Bear Conservation Stamp Contest

Sunday — 12:00PM - Films



www.DCenvironmentalfilmfest.org

PBS NATURE "AmericanEagles" & A JOURNEY SHARED



**Refuge System
Birthday Bash!
National Wildlife
Visitor Center**

Saturday, March 13th
9AM - 3PM FREE

Participate in the Annual
Refuge System Birthday Celebration!

Enjoy live animals, kids' activities, and wildlife
habitat tram tours.





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Friends of Patuxent
 National Wildlife Visitor Center
 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
 Laurel, MD 20708-4027

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“Friends” website: www.friendspwrc.org
 ☎ (301) 497-5789

We invite you to join ...

Friends of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge, Inc. is a designated Section 501(c)(3) public charity. It is a membership organization whose mission is to financially support the research of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and the environmental education, outreach, and recreation missions at the Patuxent Research Refuge. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our **2009** Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number for the **Central Maryland** area is **63960** and Maryland Charitable Organization Registration number is **2348**

Your mailing label denotes your membership expiration date. We appreciate your prompt renewal.

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

- Newsletter
- 10% discount in our Wildlife Images bookstore and other area refuge bookstores.
- Attendance at members-only functions
- Participation in on-site educational programs
- Sense of accomplishment in providing many opportunities for wildlife-related recreation, education, and research

Friends of Patuxent Membership Application

Please mail, along with a check, to:

Friends of Patuxent
 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop
 Laurel, MD 20708-4027
 (make check out to “Friends of Patuxent”)

Date: _____

New Member Renewal

Annual Membership Rates

Individual (\$15/yr) Family (\$20/yr)

Contributor (\$50/yr) Sponsor (\$100/yr)

Donation only \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ (Zip) _____

Telephone:

Email _____

