



The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

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<http://naturalist-club.org/>

O C T O B E R - D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 5 S C H E D U L E · O F · A C T I V I T I E S

OCTOBER	1	Saturday	Digital Camera Hike, <i>Hampden</i>
	2	Sunday	Great Meadows, <i>Hadley</i>
	7	Friday	A Night under the Stars, <i>Wilbraham</i>
	8	Saturday	Source to the Sea Connecticut River Clean-Up, <i>Springfield</i>
	10	Monday	Forest Park Fall Botany, <i>Springfield</i>
	19	Wednesday	OCTOBER MEETING: ANTARCTICA
	22	Saturday	Fall at Harts Pond, <i>Southwick</i>
	23	Sunday	Leaf Treading on Norwottuck, <i>Granby/Amherst</i>
NOVEMBER	5	Saturday	Nature Reclaims, <i>Holyoke</i>
	6	Sunday	Shatterack Mountain Hike, <i>Russell</i>
	16	Wednesday	NOVEMBER MEETING: A NATURALIST'S EYE ON GREECE AND ITALY
	27	Sunday	Explore Peaked Mountain, <i>Monson</i>
DECEMBER	4	Sunday	Late Fall Hike at Quabbin, <i>Shutesbury/New Salem</i>
	11	Sunday	Historic Becket Quarry and Forest Preserve, <i>Becket</i>
	17	Saturday	Winter at Harts Pond, <i>Southwick</i>
	21	Wednesday	DECEMBER HOLIDAYS MEETING
JANUARY	14	Saturday	Evening with Naturalists, <i>Hampden</i>



NATURALIST'S CORNER



What's In A Name?

Joe Pye Weed, Queen Anne's Lace, Rudbeckia. I tick off the most visible blossoms in the field as I go by. Then I start to feel a bit melancholy as I reflect on how these flowers bid summer farewell and herald fall. This is how I often "do" nature: I see, I name, I admire, I leave. Today, this field enriches me a bit further as I recollect that many of these flowers are a living testament to people worthy to be brought to mind when I see their namesakes.

I have always wanted to be able to name something. If I discovered a new species, it would be my prerogative to bestow a name. Would I honor a friend or loved-one? The 18th and 19th centuries were rife with naturalists wandering around the New World, painting, drawing, describing, collecting, and naming plants and animals new to Europeans ~ an ongoing task as long as new species are being discovered. Even a few years ago, during a student-oriented science program in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, a moth not yet described to science was discovered. The specialist who determined its uniqueness named it after the middle-school-aged boy who collected it. I'd like to share reflections upon some familiar plants, living memorials to significant naturalists or tied to legend by virtue of their naming.

There are two stories behind the name of Queen Anne's Lace, a flower brought over to the New World by European settlers. The flower name's inspiration according to some was Saint Anne, mother of Mary, grandmother of Jesus, and patron saint of lacemakers. Romance of more recent vintage has this beautiful roadside flower named after the English Queen Anne, who reigned from 1702 until 1714. Allegedly, she had great affection for her garden, and most especially the plant that bears her name. As legend has it, Queen Anne challenged her ladies-in-waiting to create an embroidered piece as delicate as this flower, but none succeeded. One tiny red spot in the center of this lacy bloom lends credence to the notion that while tating, Queen Anne pricked her finger with a needle, spilling a single drop of blood.

Joe Pye Weed has long been used as a medicinal plant. Most likely it is named for a Native American whose anglicized name was Joe Pye. He lived in 19th century New England and was said to cure white settlers of typhus with this plant. The genus name, *Eupatorium*, comes from an ancient king, Mithridates VI Eupator, who was keen on ingesting tiny amounts of various poisons so as to attain immunity. He was known to keep concoctions of this genus close by as antidotes.

Mark Catesby was a keen observer and naturalist who wandered around South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and the Bahamas between 1712 and 1719. He sent specimens back to Europe for identification and seeds to be sown in gardens. Catesby assigned many common names, including bluebird, bluejay, and hairy woodpecker. The scientific names of the bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) and Catesby's trillium, a southern species (*Trillium catesbaei*), were named after him.

We tend to typify Thomas Jefferson's role in history as a president. I imagine he may have relished being remembered as a naturalist. He authored natural history writings regarding his home state of Virginia; entertained a string of visiting naturalists throughout the years of his presidency; financed a fossil dig, the results of which were laid out on the White House floor. Most notably, his wanderlust for natural mysteries west of established settlements resulted in the "Corps of Discovery" led by Lewis and Clark. Among all the many testimonials to Thomas Jefferson's key role in American history ~ the Declaration of Independence, Louisiana Purchase, University of Virginia, and the Jefferson Memorial in Washington ~ I suspect his favorite may have been a small flower named in his honor. Benjamin Smith Barton named *Jeffersonia*, commonly known as Twin-leaf, after his friend in 1792.

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In the 1700's, Olaf Rudbeck, one of Carolus Linnaeus' professors at the University of Uppsala, in Sweden, clearly saw the genius of our future father of modern taxonomy and had Linnaeus lecture to his botany classes and tutor some of his own children. In time, after describing and officially naming *Rudbeckia* for his old professor, Linnaeus gratefully informed Rudbeck thusly: "So long as the earth shall survive, and each spring shall see it covered with flowers, the *Rudbeckia* will preserve your glorious name."

Many birds, butterflies, trees and other creatures bear names of the early naturalists who lifted them out from the unnamed into the world of the known. Who knows, as you admire a Forsythia (named for William Forsyth), Richardson's ground squirrel (John Richardson), or an Engelmann spruce (named for George Engelmann), perhaps you'll find something new. What will you name it?

~ Submitted by Nancy Condon

Digital Camera Hike *Hampden*

Date: Saturday, October 1 **Time:** 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Rain Date: Sunday, October 2

Place: Laughing Brook Wildlife Sanctuary in Hampden

Leader: Sonya Vickers (566-3406)

Registration: It would be helpful to know how many will attend, but drop-ins are welcome.

This program was rained out when last scheduled, so here is your chance to try it again. Digital photography offers a unique opportunity to record natural sightings and events because you do not have to worry about the number of pictures you actually take and the good ones can be easily catalogued on your computer. Close-ups and telephotos are a snap, for anything from ant ID to bird ID. You can even enlarge the photo on your computer to verify the color of the eye ring of that bird you saw.

We will take a short walk at Laughing Brook Sanctuary. You may bring your digital camera or use one provided. We will return to the cars to download the photos to a laptop, so each person will be able to leave with a copy of their images on CD. Bring any connections for your camera and a laptop if you have one. Laptops will be available for those without one.

Directions: From Springfield, take Route 83 through East Longmeadow center. Travel 1.5 miles south of the center and turn left onto Hampden Road at the big green sign for Hampden. At the second stop sign (Hampden House), turn right. In a few hundred feet turn left, opposite the gas station, and go almost 2 miles to the center of Hampden. Continue about half a mile. The entrance to Laughing Brook is on the left just before the fork in the road.

Great Meadow *Hadley*

Date: Sunday October 2

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader Arthur O'Leary
(789-7274)

Meeting Place: Parking lot at the brick school (Hopkins Academy) at the intersection of Routes 9 and 47 in Hadley, Mass.
Heavy rain cancels.



The Great Meadow is a planting field consisting of long, narrow, individually owned plots, designed for plowing by oxen, extending nearly two miles from the original center of Hadley as it was established by the town settlers in 1661. The meadow sits along the Connecticut River, adjacent to the original home lots, the town common, and the burial ground. Continually farmed since the seventeenth century, Great Meadow is an example of "open field" farming by freeholders, common in medieval Europe but exceedingly rare today. These fertile fields, with their deep, rich soil and few rocks, were recognized in 2004 by Preservation MASS as one of the top ten most endangered regional historic resources. These agricultural fields, prized for sweet corn, asparagus, potatoes, tomatoes, berries, and onions, were made part of the Hadley Center National Historic Register in 1994.

Join us for wonderful views of the Great Meadow, the Holyoke Range, the Connecticut River, and hopefully some late-migrating birds. Bring binoculars/camera, lunch and beverages, and wear hiking attire. season, keep your eye on the Spontaneous Happenings listing on the Naturalists' Club website, naturalist-club.org.



A Night under the Stars

Fountain Park, Wilbraham

Date: October 7 **Time:** 7 p.m. till ?

Leaders: Dave Gallup (525-4697) and Jack Megas (782-3962)

Meeting Place: 5 Town Plaza, Allen and Cooley Streets, in front of Burlington Coat Factory

Join us for a star-filled night (we hope). Dave and Jack will take you on a journey through the night sky. Learn the constellations and listen to star stories from ancient times. With the aid of two large telescopes, you will also be able to see Venus and Mars and, in addition, observe the craters on the first-quarter moon. So come along and enjoy an evening under a starry autumn sky! Please be sure to dress warmly.

"Source to Sea" Connecticut River Cleanup

Springfield

Date: Saturday, October 8 **Time:** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Nancy Condon (564-0895)

Registration: It would be great to know you are coming, but drop-ins are welcome and encouraged.

Meeting Place: Riverfront Park in Springfield off West Columbus Avenue, where the Tinkerbell tour boat used to dock.

This is an annual river cleanup organized by The Zoo In Forest Park & Education Center, Mayor Ryan's office, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the Connecticut River Watershed Council. Join others throughout the Greater Springfield area as, together, we make our river a place we can be proud of. Other communities will be doing the same all along the Connecticut River, from "Source to Sea." Work gloves, lunches and water will be provided for as long as they last. Come and give something back to the river that provides us with so much.

Forest Park Fall Botany *Springfield*

Date: Monday, October 10 **Time:** 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Leader: Dave Lovejoy (572-5307)

Meeting Place: Parking lot between the Indian statue and Picknelly baseball field (on Route 5, opposite the entrance to King Philip Stockade)

Registration is not necessary. Heavy rain cancels.

Forest Park includes quite a mix of habitats, with lots of native species and plenty of naturalized ones, some probably dating back to the Barney Estate (Pecousic Villa) built in 1883. Depending on the group size, we may drive a short distance from the meeting place and enter the park on one of now-blocked access roads, perhaps from Park Drive in Longmeadow. Although it is late in the season, there will still be plants to see and identify as we walk on some of the easy trails alongside Porter Lake.

Seeing Better across Four Seasons

Fall at Harts Pond

Date: Saturday, October 22

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.

Guide: Mark Cashman (860-683-0835)

Registration: Call Mark and leave your name, phone number, and address, or send an email with that information (mcashman@temporaldoorway.com).

The most commonplace trails contain spectacular sights for those who know how and where to look. Mark Cashman, owner and author of *New England Trail Review*, who has taken over 15,000 photographs on over a hundred miles of New England paths, will help you look for insects, tiny mushrooms, hidden ice formations, slime molds, slugs, and many other fascinating items in this special guided hike of one trail across four seasons.

OCTOBER

MEETING

ANTARCTICA

Wednesday, October 19, at 7:30 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speakers: Teddy and Barbara Hebert

Antarctica could be described as the most forbidding, yet most pristine, beautiful and breathtaking place in the world. This ice-covered continent surrounding the South Pole is the highest, driest and coldest place on earth, a land of penguins, seals, whales, glaciers and icebergs. Join us on an expedition aboard the "Polar Star" icebreaker, off to see this incredible icecap with its magnificent mountains, awe-inspiring icebergs and amazing wildlife. Our trip will be during the southern hemisphere's summer, when Antarctica is under 22 hours of daylight and 30°F temperatures. Catch a glimpse, en route, of Buenos Aires, Argentina and Iguassu Falls, one of the largest waterfalls in the world.

Ted and Barbara Hebert, of Teddy Bear Pools, Inc., enjoy traveling and love sharing experiences of their ventures with others. As of 2001 they are proud to have seized the opportunity to visit all seven continents of the world. This couple are proactive in many local and international organizations. Join Ted and Barbara, for whom traveling is an addiction, and catch the bug!



In a unique opportunity to see how a single trail changes over time, this autumn hike is third in the seasonal series, which will conclude December 17. The 1.75-mile hike will follow a section of the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail from Route 57 in Southwick near the Agawam Bowman Archery Club south to the Connecticut border, near the intersection of Stone and Barry Streets. The terrain is of low difficulty, with 166 feet of elevation loss and 81 feet of elevation gain.

Bring your camera (film or digital, pocket or SLR). Your guide can offer advice on how to capture the beauty of the trail for memory and later identification of creatures, plants, and mushrooms. A pair of binoculars and a magnifying glass if you have them.

Please reserve your space as soon as possible. To preserve the quality of the experience, only eight may register. Directions, maps, and suggestions for equipment/supplies (clothing and lunch) will be sent mail or email, depending on how you contact us. Hikes will be carried out in rain, shine or snow.

Leaf Treading on Mount Norwottuck

Granby/Amherst

Date: Sunday, October 23 **Time:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

Registration: Please call 564-0895 to register, so if bad weather forces cancellation we can contact you.

Meeting Place: Atkins Farm, Route 116, Amherst

I have been treading on leaves all day until I am autumn tired.

God knows all the color and form of leaves
I have trodden on and mired.

Perhaps I have put forth too much strength
and been too fierce from fear.

I have safely trodden underfoot the leaves of another year.
~ Robert Frost

Join us for a chance to tread upon some autumn leaves along the Robert Frost Trail in Amherst. We will climb past the Horse Caves of Shays Rebellion fame and then onward to the summit of Mount Norwottuck. The commanding views of the Connecticut River Valley should not be missed at this time of year. We will begin our ascent from Bay Road via the Ken Cuddeback Trail. Then using the Robert Frost, Northside, and Metacomet-Monadnock Trails, we will make a leisurely four-mile circuit through the hardwood forests along the slopes of the Holyoke Range. We will stop occasionally to enjoy the forest and discuss the changing of the seasons and, of course, share a bit of Frost poetry. Bring a lunch, dress for the weather, and pack some water.

Nature Reclaims Holyoke

Date: Saturday, November 5 **Time:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Arthur O'Leary (789-7274)

Meeting Place: Parking pull-off at the Dinosaur Tracks (The Trustees of Reservations) along Route 5, Smith's Ferry, Holyoke. Heavy Rain Cancels

Seek out pioneer species of ecological succession reclaiming the former Mountain Park, Mount Tom Ski Area, and Whiting Street Reservoir. Explore the remnants of the "Queen of the Mountain," Mountain Park, a traditional New England trolley amusement park that opened during 1894 and closed in 1987. Next go birding along the ecotones of the Whiting Street Reservoir, as we discuss efforts to slow down natural succession.

Lastly, rediscover a geological and ecological gem at the heart of Mount Tom, the former ski slopes, currently owned by The Trustees of Reservations and renamed Little Tom Mountain. This relatively undisturbed natural area affords challenging hiking, splendid views of the Connecticut River Valley, spectacular birding, and is one of the most important localities of rare species in Massachusetts. Be transported back in time to the beginnings of Mount Tom, over 200 million years ago, then forward to its modern uses as mountain houses, amusement park, and ski slope.

Bring lunch and water, binoculars/camera, and wear hiking attire.

Shatterack Mountain Hike Russell

Date: Sunday, November 6 **Time:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon

Registration: Please call 564-0895 to register, so if bad weather forces cancellation we can contact you.

Meeting Place: Westfield State Commuter Parking Lot
Rising up over the village of Russell is Shatterack Mountain. The views from the peak offer spectacular vistas of the Westfield River and the surrounding mountains. A short but steep trail descends to Shatterack Brook, which we will trace back to near its source on the mountainside. Stopping along the trail, we will discuss signs of reforestation from recent fire, fall tree identification, and strategies of wildlife as they prepare for the coming winter.

This 1.8 mile hike is for experienced hikers. In places, the going can be rough. Although we will travel at a casual pace, there will be times when significant elevation is gained and lost in a short distance. Please wear appropriate footwear, dress for the weather, pack a lunch and carry plenty of water.

NOVEMBER

MEETING

A NATURALIST'S EYE ON GREECE AND ITALY

Wednesday, November 16, at 7:30 p.m.
Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum
Speaker: Sonya Vickers

Sonya Vickers has traveled to Greece and Italy many times and enjoyed looking at the marvels of civilization, but has spent most of her energy on the natural history of these areas. She has recorded the birds, wildflowers, geology, and insect life unique to these Mediterranean countries, constantly comparing them to what we have here at home. While others photograph the Parthenon, she investigates the unusual lichen growing between the ancient stones. As others gaze off the thousand-foot cliffs at the Isle of Capri, she is intent on viewing alpine wildflowers sprouting from among the rocks.

From bird life in Venice, to the pines of Rome, then on to the volcanoes Etna and Vesuvius, a story is compiled on how this land was formed and how it has survived thousands of years under the civilization of mankind. Between Tuscany and the Greek Islands exists a fascinating environment that might perhaps serve as a signpost for stewardship of our own North American continent, now showing the stresses of concentrated human habitation.

Explore Peaked Mountain *Monson*

Date: Sunday, November 27 **Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Leader: Dave Gallup (525-4697)
Meeting Place: 5 Town Plaza parking lot on Allen/Cooley Streets in front of Burlington Coat Factory, Springfield
Registration: Call to register and for directions if needed.

Investigate the life of a beaver at the recently acquired Trustees of Reservations property on Peaked Mountain, located in Monson. In the morning, we will hike to a pond abundant with beaver and view their lodges and dams. Bring your lunch to enjoy by the pond, while Dave talks of the life cycle of the beaver. After lunch, walk to the summit of Peaked Mountain to see vistas to take your breath away! Total hike is two and a half miles and is moderately strenuous.



Late Fall Hike in Quabbin *Shutesbury/Pelham*

Date: Sunday, December 4 **Time:** 9 a.m. till ?
Leader: Dave Gallup (525-5647)
Meeting Place: Hawley Restaurant plaza, Belchertown
Registration: Call to register and for directions if needed.

Join us for our annual December Quabbin hike. Early December is a lovely time to relax and enjoy a wonderful trek on the western side of the Quabbin, before the hustle of the holidays begins. Be sure to bring binoculars, as we should catch a glimpse of resident eagles and loons. Perhaps we will even encounter four-footed wildlife foraging about, preparing for winter! Old farm sites alongside roads that at one time crossed the Quabbin Valley are open for exploration and contemplation of times gone by.

This hike will be approximately four miles, with impressive views of the Quabbin Reservoir and the vast woodlands of the surrounding watershed. Grab hiking boots and a lunch, and come along for the last hurrah of the season, hiking in the great outdoors!

Historic Becket Quarry and Forest Preserve

Becket

Date: Sunday, December 11

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Leader: Arthur O'Leary (789-7274)

Meeting Place: Parking lot of Becket Motel, at the intersection of Routes 8 and 20 in Becket. Heavy Rain Cancels

The Historic Becket Quarry operated between the 1850's and the 1960's as the Chester-Hudson Quarry Company, spanning the Industrial Revolution ~ from wood to steel, from steam to electricity. Fine-grain granite was shipped by rail from this quarry to Chester, Mass. and Hudson, New York, for polishing into monuments destined for many states.

The Becket Land Trust has developed a new Historic Quarry Walk, inaugurated August 27, 2005, designed to appeal to all ages and to acquaint visitors with a brief history of this 25-acre site through interpretive stations. A kiosk has helpful definitions, maps, and related information about the self-guided walk. This important historic quarry landscape contains antique machinery, artifacts, representative objects, and quarry remnants.

The adjoining Forest Preserve encompasses 300 acres of healthy woodland habitat with almost five miles of trails (hiking and cross-country skiing) that traverse a Demonstration Forest containing vistas, birds/wildlife, vernal pools, and quiet natural areas.

Bring lunch and beverages, binoculars/camera, and wear hiking attire.

Seeing Better across Four Seasons

Winter at Harts Pond

Date: Saturday, December 17

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m.

Guide: Mark Cashman (860-683-0835)

Registration: Call Mark and leave your name, phone number, and address, or send an email with that information (mcashman@temporaldoorway.com)

This winter outing concludes a series commenced this past spring, bringing to close a cycle of hiking across four seasons in a unique opportunity to see how a single trail changes over time. For more information, please refer back to the write-up in this issue for the fall hike, October 22.

DECEMBER

HOLIDAYS MEETING

Wednesday, December 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Co-Hosts: Nancy Condon and Arthur O'Leary

It is once again that time of year for members to share their natural history experiences with the club. Have you traveled to an interesting place this past year? If so, please bring your slides or PowerPoint show and give the rest of us a taste of it in a 10-minute presentation. Or perhaps you have prints and can display an album for others to browse. Possibly you've picked up some interesting natural items you could exhibit on the "Neat Nature Stuff" tables. Please be creative and join the fun by sharing your interests and love of nature. Oh, and one of your favorite holiday treats would certainly go a long way towards invoking the holiday spirit!

Afterward, we'll gather to enjoy lots of holiday goodies and fellowship. No business meeting tonight. Please register to get on the docket for a presentation or to reserve tabletop space with Nancy Condon (564-0895).



2006 An Evening with Naturalists *Hampden*

Date: Saturday, January 14 **Time:** 7 p.m.

Hostess: Sonya Vickers (566-3406)

Registration: Space is limited. Please call.

This is the eleventh year in a row for this winter evening gathering for conversation, food and drink, maybe a little observation of the winter sky, and warming by the woodstove. There will be desserts and refreshments to share ~ please let us know if you'd like to bring something along. Directions will be provided when you call to register. Extreme weather cancels.

2005
2006

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M E M B E R S H I P

Here's how to become a member of the Springfield Naturalists' Club: Enclose a check, in the appropriate amount, payable to The Naturalists' Club.

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

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.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

September, the month for membership renewal, has come and gone. Fall is also the time that our largest annual bills (rental of Tolman Auditorium, liability insurance) are due. Please submit your dues at your earliest convenience: You may pay at the next monthly meeting (cash or a check payable to The Naturalists' Club) or send a check to Dave Lovejoy, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086-1630. If you cannot recall when you last paid, ask Dave at the meeting or inquire at dlovejoy@wsc.ma.edu or call 572-5307. If you have not paid since 2003-2004, you will receive one dues reminder letter (probably in late October) requesting payment. Timely dues payment saves the Club the expense of sending letters. Most members renew at the regular rate, but as of September 2005 there are 13 supporting and three sustaining members.

Please note: Dave Lovejoy maintains the Naturalists' Club mailing list, so direct all address changes to him.



RENEWAL FORM

Become a Club Member or Renew Your Existing Membership for 2005-2006.

Name

Address

Phone Number

Requests for programs/trips

Please fill out the above form, clip, and mail to club treasurer, Dave Lovejoy, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086-1630. Or email dlovejoy@wsc.ma.edu