

The NATURALISTS' CLUB Newsletter

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Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts
<http://naturalist-club.org/>

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2006 SCHEDULE · OF · ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER

- | | | |
|----|-----------|--|
| 14 | Saturday | A Writing Walk, <i>West Springfield</i> |
| 15 | Sunday | Mount Tom Wildlife Viewing Area Maintenance Picnic Party
& Hawk Watch, <i>Holyoke</i> |
| 18 | Wednesday | OCTOBER BANQUET: Exploring the Wonders of Southern Utah, <i>Westfield</i> |
| 21 | Saturday | Fall Foliage, <i>Westfield</i> |
| 21 | Saturday | A Night under the Stars, <i>Wilbraham</i> |
| 28 | Saturday | Bluff Point State Park, <i>Groton, CT</i> |
| 29 | Sunday | Gawwww-ly! ~ Discovering the World of Plant Galls, <i>Westfield</i> |

NOVEMBER

- | | | |
|----|-----------|---|
| 4 | Saturday | Bear Mountain and Sages Ravine, <i>Mass. & Conn.</i> |
| 8 | Wednesday | Wednesday Morning Nature Hike, <i>Ludlow</i> |
| 15 | Wednesday | NOVEMBER MEETING: A Photographic Odyssey ~ "Sky Meadow" |
| 18 | Saturday | November on October Mountain, <i>Becket</i> |
| 25 | Saturday | A Peaked Mountain Hike after Your Thanksgiving Holiday, <i>Monson</i> |

DECEMBER

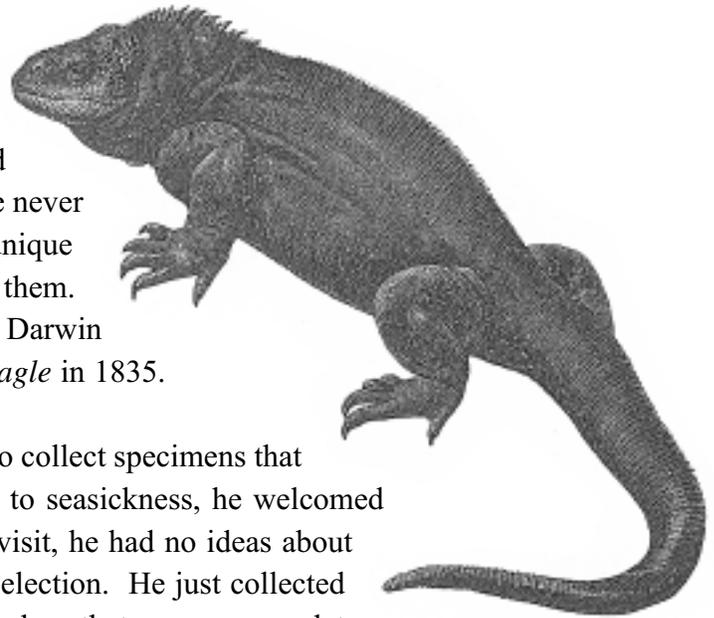
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|----|-----------|---|
| 2 | Saturday | Nighttime at Noble View, <i>Russell</i> |
| 10 | Sunday | Annual Late Fall Quabbin Hike, <i>New Salem</i> |
| 20 | Wednesday | DECEMBER MEETING: Holiday Celebration with Naturalist Friends |



NATURALIST'S CORNER

The GALAPAGOS *a Naturalist's Paradise*

The Galapagos Islands are located right on the equator, 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador in South America. They are a series of islands formed volcanically from a hot spot in the earth's crust so were never part of the mainland, a situation giving them a unique position in terms of the wildlife eventually inhabiting them. The Galapagos were made famous by the fact that Darwin visited them for five weeks while aboard the HMS *Beagle* in 1835.



Darwin was the naturalist on the ship and his job was to collect specimens that would be studied later back in England. Being prone to seasickness, he welcomed any time he could spend on land. At the time of his visit, he had no ideas about what he would later propose as the theory of natural selection. He just collected a male and a female of each different animal he found so that a more complete collection of God's creations could be made. Not until a zoologist back in England pointed out that the thirteen kinds of finch he'd collected seemed to be thirteen different species did Darwin begin wondering how it had come to be. He had noticed that these finches, different from each other, were similar to ones he had collected on the mainland. Darwin also could see that, over centuries, humans had selected traits desirable for domestication of horses, dogs, and pigeons, with the resultant varieties very different from the original stock. Could it be nature which was selecting and producing the variety of finches he'd seen on the Galapagos? Darwin proposed that the diversity of birds on the Galapagos, as well as the diversity of life on earth, was produced by means of natural selection.

Since Darwin's time, it has been shown that occasionally a bird or some plant seeds survive the trip to the islands. Survival in the harsh volcanic environment meant an organism did best capturing its own niche rather than competing with others vying for the same resources. Organisms whose behavioral or structural traits enabled them to successfully get food either in different places or by different means lived long enough to pass on those genetic traits to offspring. Thus the next generation contained more individuals with beneficial traits distancing them from competition. In an arms race, populations became progressively more differentiated,

The Galapagos...continued on next page.

The Galapagos...continued.

resulting in this case in thirteen divergent species of finch from the original one. Darwin, however, stated that this is a very slow process, not one that a man could ever witness in a lifetime.

That view, however, changed after Peter and Rosemary Grant camped out on one of the smallest of the Galapagos Islands for twenty summers, between the 1970's and 1980's, measuring beaks of every finch on the island. Even at the equator, the climate is not always constant, as when El Niño brings a change in precipitation. Through years of observation, the Grants discovered that the average beak size of each species actually changed in response to this months-long climactic event! Of course, an individual's beak size does not change. But those finches born with the most advantageous size got enough food to live long enough to pass that trait on to their offspring and the next generation contained a higher proportion of individuals with the best beak size for those conditions. The Grants were seeing evolution happening before their very eyes. Darwin was right about the mechanism of evolution (a word he never used), but wrong about no one ever seeing it happen.

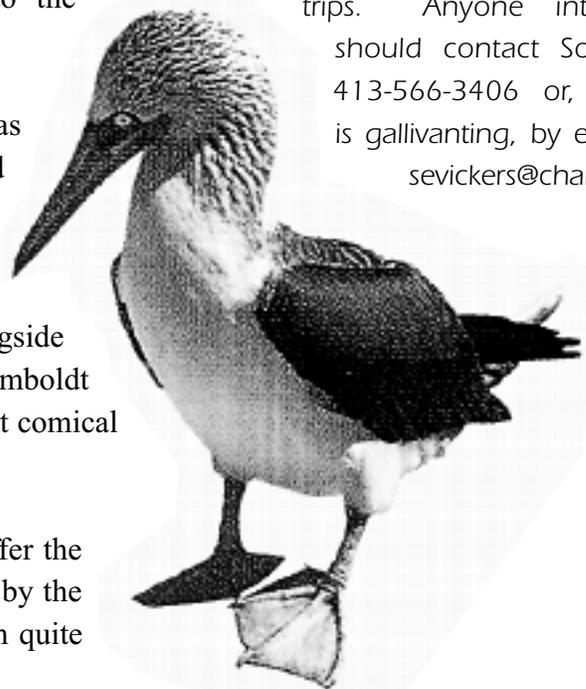
Finches are not the only example of diversification on the Galapagos. Sunflowers and cacti each have evolved into a variety of shapes, including trees. In response, tortoises have changed, becoming immense in size and able to reach the higher leaves of these trees. All this has resulted in over 250 species of organisms endemic to the Galapagos.

One animal missing for most of the Galapagos' history has been man. Without large mammalian predators in the island environment, animals evolved without having to develop defenses against attack. Thus one can approach most wildlife there without the use of a telephoto lens. Giant marine iguanas can be seen lounging on the beach, alongside seals giving birth. Penguins that have floated up the Humboldt Current nest next to colonies of blue-footed boobies, a most comical bird.

In both Darwin's time and today, the Galapagos Islands offer the naturalist a view into a very different world, one governed by the same natural laws operating here in New England yet with quite different results

TRAVEL TO THE GALAPAGOS!

Naturalists' Club Recording Secretary Sonya Vickers, author of this piece, will be leading a Naturalists trip to the Galapagos on July 31, 2007. If this program sounds interesting to you, how would you like to plan an adventurous trip to the Galapagos? The ten-day trip will include a four-day island cruise aboard the ship Galapagos Legend and five nights in comfortable hotels in Quito. Breakfasts and all shipboard meals are included as is the airline transportation. We will also have the chance to explore the high-altitude volcano in Quito, Ecuador, and you will have the option of extending your trip to Peru and Machu Picchu. At \$3521, the price for this trip is quite competitive with other similar trips. Anyone interested should contact Sonya at 413-566-3406 or, if she is gallivanting, by e-mail at sevickers@charter.net



A Writing Walk, West Springfield

Date and Time: Saturday, October 14, from 2 p.m. till 4 or 4:30

Leader: Susan Middleton (628-4039) and Julie Schlobohm (788-4125)

Meeting Place: Main entrance to Mittineague Park in West Springfield (off Route 20).

Registration: Call Susan before 9 a.m. Saturday, October 14. Limited to 12 participants.

As promised in last winter's newsletter, Susan Middleton and Julie Schlobohm are leading a Writing Walk in West Springfield. Whether you consider yourself a writer or not is irrelevant ~ just come try this fun, creative way to engage with nature!

During the first hour, we'll walk around Mittineague Park, stopping for about a minute each of several times to write about what we're experiencing in that place. The goal is not to try for finished pieces, just quick verbal sketches. Then we'll spend the second hour sitting comfortably in nearby shelter, reading aloud what we've written. After each person reads, others will have a chance to express what they like about that person's writing. (Because this is the tender, first-draft stage of writing, the group avoids giving criticism or ideas for improvement. Also, nobody will be forced to read aloud if he or she doesn't want to, though we may gently cajole you into giving it a try.)

Depending on size of the group, the whole outing will last somewhere between two and two and a half hours. Participants should wear footwear appropriate for walking outdoors and bring a notebook to write in while standing up. Also bring insect repellent and a snack if desired, but leave pets at home. Everyone who participated in the September 2005 Writing Walk at Stump Sprouts enjoyed the process, and we hope more people will join us and give themselves a try at it.

Mount Tom Wildlife Viewing Area Maintenance Picnic Party & Hawk Watch, Holyoke

Date: Sunday, October 15

Times: Clipping and lunch, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Hawk watch, 1 to 2 p.m.

Leader: Nancy Condon

Meeting Place: Route 5 entrance to Mt. Tom State Reservation near the maintenance building, just past the park gate. If you come late, come right up to the Bray Tower. Rain cancels.

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

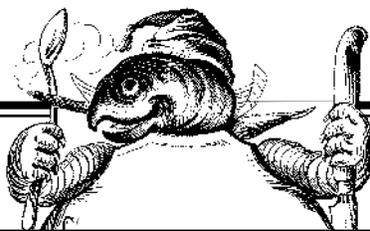
For many years, the Naturalists' Club has maintained an area at the Goodreau Memorial Overlook in the Mount Tom Reservation. Twice yearly, members pitch in to remove invasive trees, plant wildlife-friendly trees and shrubs, and erect bluebird boxes. We need your help to keep this project going. Come join us, for with many hands the work is light. We work at our own pace and abilities and simply enjoy the time in this lovely space. We've sighted many species of birds, deer, and even a snake this past spring ~ but don't let that stop you!

After a few hours of clipping down saplings, we'll break and enjoy a picnic lunch ~ on us. For those still interested in enjoying the day on the mountain, we'll move up to the Eyrie House ruins and try our luck at spotting straggling migrating hawks.



Of all the northerly deciduous trees – maples, cherries, ashes, oaks, and birches – with which it associates, beech is the only species to have completely smooth bark as a full-sized tree. The barks of maples and cherries are scaled, those of ashes and oaks ridged, and the bark of birches peels or forms plates (on black birch).

Reading the Forested Landscape: A Natural History of New England, by Tom Wessels, p. 79.



Two years ago, the Naturalists' Club held its every-other-year dinner meeting at the Bistro in Westfield for the first time. The event was well-attended, the food was excellent, and we heard a fine talk on the Birds of Australia by Sonya Vickers. We'll be back at the Bistro this October for more fine food and socializing as well as a presentation by past president and current board member Jack Megas, who when he's not gazing aloft takes an annual trek to survey the spectacular vistas of the American Southwest, which he'll be sharing with us tonight.

North of the oft-visited Grand Canyon is another spectacular wilderness area, five times larger than Massachusetts, encompassing the largest concentration of parks in the country. This photographic journey will explore southern Utah's Zion, Bryce Canyon, Capitol Reef, Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, along with other federal, state, and Native American protected areas.

The evening will begin with a social hour (cash bar) including the Bistro's Deluxe Cheese and Fruit Display. Choices at the buffet dinner include roast

OCTOBER BANQUET

Dinner Meeting at
the School Street Bistro, *Westfield*
Wednesday, October 18

Social Hour at 6 p.m.,
Dinner at 7
Speaker: Jack Megas

sirloin strip, turkey breast, broiled cracker crumb scrod, penne pasta with marinara sauce, rice, seasonal vegetables, rolls, and a deep dish apple crisp dessert. Coffee and tea are also included. The cost per person is \$27 (\$13 for children 12 and under).

Please make checks payable to The Naturalists' Club and mail to Dave Lovejoy (572-5307), PO Box 219, Blandford, MA

01008, by Thursday, October 12. With advance notification, the Bistro can accommodate strict vegetarians; please indicate so on your registration.

The Bistro (562-8700) is located on School Street in downtown Westfield, with plenty of adjacent free parking including a large lot between Church and Arnold streets. Enter downtown Westfield via Route 20 or Routes 10 & 202 (North Elm Street). At junction of Routes 20 and 202 (on the north side of the town common) is a traffic light for School Street. The Bistro is about 100 yards down School Street, on the right. A map and directions may be viewed at www.schoolstreetbistro.com.

To find delight for our senses in autumn we choose particular places: the meadows and roadsides to hear the insect serenades in highest fidelity; the woodlands to revel in the wealth of color and its kaleidoscopic changes day by day; the fields again, and the orchards, for the fragrant, tasty fruits of fall. "When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock," it is the sunny acres we choose. There the plants have been building goodness into fruits and grains all summer. Now comes their time to rest. The pendulum of the year's growth has swung from tick to tock – and stopped. It is ready for the backward stroke, when it will swing to tick again next spring. Autumn is the moment of pause.

A World Alive: The Natural Wonders of a New England River Valley, by Lorus and Margery Milne, p. 114.

Fall Foliage, Westfield

Date and Time: Saturday, October 21, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Leader: Art O'Leary (789-7274)

Meeting Place: At the entrance sign to the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary (on the right, beyond the tennis courts and picnic area) in Westfield's Stanley Park.

Registration: Not necessary

Tree identification can be made by physical characteristics as well as by their colors in autumn. This crisp fall frolic will explain why leaves change color as we explore the brilliant fall outfits of the flora in the Sanctuary. Learn how the green leaves of shrubs and trees turn into a tapestry of brilliance and how to identify them by their fall colors.

A Night under the Stars, Northfield

Date and Time: Saturday evening, October 21

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

Meeting Place: Fountain Park, Wilbraham

Registration: Call Jack or Dave for time & directions.

Join us for a star-filled night. We will take you on a tour of the crisp October night sky to learn the constellations and their mythology as well as search for deep-sky splendors along the Milky Way. Of course, clouds or rain cancel.

Bluff Point State Park, Groton, CT

Date and Time: Saturday, October 28, from 9 a.m., going well into the afternoon

Leaders: Dave and Debbie Lovejoy (572-5307)

Registration: Please call to register and get directions to the meeting place in Springfield. Bluff Point is 75 miles and approximately 1.5 hours from Springfield, so please be prepared to carpool and share gas costs.

Bluff Point State Park provides opportunities for hiking on easy trails, walking the beach, birding, and observing other aspects of natural history. Bring a drink and a lunch for the beach or perhaps the point overlooking Long Island Sound.

With today's excessive gasoline prices, please be mindful of the environment, Trip leaders, and drivers. If possible, please:

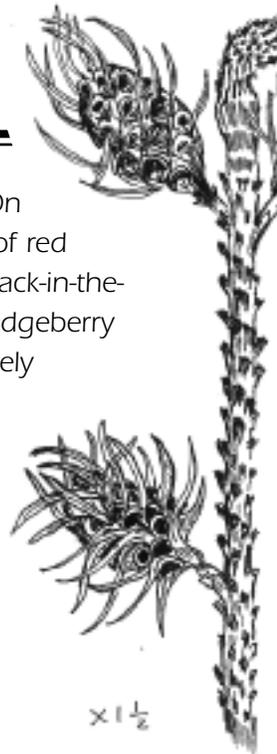
- carpool to destinations
- share costs with your driver

~ Thank you
~ Naturalists' Club Board of Directors



At first, only a few scattered leaves on woodland trees show color. On the forest floor the green of ferns is transmuted to gold. Clusters of red fruit on bunchberry, and knobby red masses on the stalks of jack-in-the-pulpit, shine like lacquer. Where the paired flowers of partridgeberry opened there are now double scarlet fruits, joined more closely than Siamese twins. Solitary fruits of the same bright color hang below the wax-glossed leaves of wintergreen. Wild rose is a tangle of tiny red hips, like shoe buttons on short stems. And where bittersweet clammers over low-growing trees, the tan covers are ready to split from its fruits, revealing the brilliant orange-red within.

A World Alive: The Natural Wonders of a New England River Valley,
by Lorus and Margery Milne, p. 109.



Gawww-ly! ~ Discovering the World of Plant Galls, Westfield

Date and Time: Sunday, October 29, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Leaders: Nancy Condon (564-0895) and Sonya Vickers (566-3406)

Meeting Place: Stanley Park, near the Frank Stanley Beveridge Memorial Wildlife Area entrance. Heavy Rain Cancels.

Registration: Please call Nancy to register so if bad weather forces cancellation we can contact you.

Have you ever seen a weird growth on a stem, leaf, or root of a plant and said, "Gawww-ly, I wonder what that is?" Perhaps you were right in saying it was a "Gall." A plant may grow a gall in response to an intrusion by an insect, bacteria, fungus, or even a mite. Galls come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are specific to the plant and intruder that caused it. Oak trees, cherry trees, goldenrod and other plants commonly produce galls.

GALLS



WILLOW PINE
CONE GALL

FOUND OCTOBER
IN SMOKESHIRE
VALLEY ON A WILLOW
BY THE WILLIAMS
RIVER - VERMONT.

FEMALE GNAT LAYS EGGS
ON TIPS OF WILLOW BRANCHES
IN SPRING. LARVAE INDUCE
GALL AND OVERWINTER
AS A GALL.

GNAT IS
Rhabdophaga strobiloides
FAMILY: Cecidomyiidae

ACTUAL SIZE



Goldenrod Ball Gall
CAUSED BY THE LARVA OF A
SMALL SPOTTED-WINGED FLY
Eurasca solidaginis

PLANT GROWS
TO 1.5M



Ball is
4 cm

Goldenrod =
Solidago canadensis
MIDGE =
Rhopalomyia
solidaginis

Goldenrod Bunch
Gall - A MIDGE LARVA
INFESTS LEAF BUD
AND STUNTS
STEM GROWTH WHILE PROLIFERATES
LEAF GROWTH. MIDGE INFESTS
ONLY CANADA Goldenrod



SPRUCE PINEAPPLE
GALL

THE INSECT Chermes
abietis, an Aphid,
lays eggs on a
spruce tree in the
fall. THE INSECTS
HATCH INTO A DIFFERENT

KIND OF FEMALE APHID THE SAME
FALL. THESE FEMALES ARE WINGLESS.
THE WINGLESS FEMALE LAYS HER EGGS
AT THE BUDS WHERE THEY OVERWINTER.
IN SPRING THEY RESUME FEEDING
AND THE NEEDLES SWELL AND PRODUCE
A GALL AS THE TREE GROWS. THESE
NYMPHS LAY EGGS, WHICH HATCH,
FEED ON THE NEEDLES, ENTER THE GALL
AND EMERGE AS WINGED FEMALES
WHICH ARE THE ORIGINAL KIND.
REPRODUCTION IS DONE PARtheno-
GENICALLY WITHOUT MALES!

FOUND ON LAST YEAR'S CHRISTMAS TREE

Join Nancy and Sonya as we become amateur cecidologists (people who study galls). Yes ~ there is actually a name for it! We will take a short hike to collect and observe some galls, then sit down and dissect them and examine gall residents under the microscope. Perhaps our examination into this tiny world will answer your questions, or maybe it will just create more, but in any case you will be in for some intriguing discoveries.

Bear Mountain and Sages Ravine, Mass. & Conn

Date and Time: Saturday, November 4, from 8 a.m. till 2 p.m.?

Leader: Bill Fontaine

Meeting Place: Friendly's parking lot, Route 7 just north of the Route 23 intersection in Great Barrington

Registration: Call Bill (533-2153)

The South Taconic Range, where Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York adjoin, has been described as one of the most beautiful and ecologically significant regions in the northeast. The Nature Conservancy has called it one of the nation's "Last Great Places." It has not always been so. In the 18th century, the South Taconic region was home to several ironworks that manufactured cannon and other munitions for the War of Independence and later the Civil War. Then, the forested hills were all but denuded of trees, to produce the charcoal needed to fuel the iron furnaces. Each furnace required 1,200 bushels of charcoal to run for a single day!

Today, the forests and the wildlife they contain have returned, offering naturalists and hikers some of the finest and most remote outdoor experiences to be had in southern New England. On this hike, we'll walk one of those old charcoal roads to intersect the Appalachian Trail, as we explore Bear Mountain in Mt. Riga State Park, Connecticut, and beautiful Sages

Ravine in Mt. Everett State Reservation, Massachusetts. Bear Mountain offers panoramic views of the South Taconic region from a stone monument that mistakenly commemorated its summit as the highest point in Connecticut. To the north, the deep hemlock gorge of Sages Ravine shelters a cascading brook and several small waterfalls.

This moderately strenuous 4-mile loop hike is well worth the effort, particularly if you have not yet visited this remarkable area. We'll take our time and proceed at an unhurried and leisurely pace, so times are only approximate. Bring sturdy shoes, plenty of water, and a lunch.

Wednesday Morning Nature Hike, Ludlow

Date and Time: Wednesday, November 8, at 9 a.m.

Leader: Dave Gallup (525-4697)

Meeting Place: Ludlow Reservoir trail entrance parking lot (Route 21, Ludlow)

Hopefully, we will have a crisp clear morning to enjoy this time of the year for hiking. This is an easy hike, along a paved road skirting a beautiful body of water, with a great diversity of forest to be seen along the way. There are many species of waterfowl on the reservoir and birds of fall and winter all around us. Don't forget your binoculars, sturdy walking shoes, and maybe a hot drink. See you there!

Thoreau was interested in the process by which a forest changes over time from, say, a pine forest to one dominated by oak. He studied the dispersal of seeds, becoming the first person to note that squirrels, by caching acorns and other nuts, were important agents of forest change. He also identified wind as a significant factor in forest succession. An abandoned field on the leeward side of a pine forest would most likely succeed to another pine forest as it was colonized by windblown seeds:

Two or three pines will run swiftly forward a quarter of a mile into a plain, which is their favorite field of battle, taking advantage of the least shelter, as a rock, or fence, that may be there, and intrench themselves behind it, and if you look sharp, you may see their plumes waving there. Or, as I have said, they will cross a broad river without a bridge, and as swiftly climb and permanently occupy a steep hill beyond.

Thus Thoreau not only explained changes in forest composition through time but also developed and named one of ecology's most basic concepts – succession.

The Granite Landscape: A Natural History of America's Mountain Domes, from Acadia to Yosemite, by Tom Wessels, p. 50.

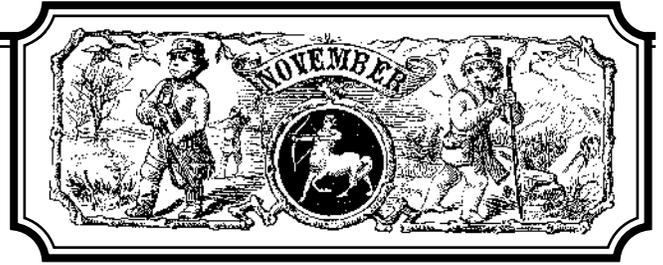
NOVEMBER MEETING

A PHOTOGRAPHIC ODYSSEY ~ "SKY MEADOW"

Wednesday, November 15, at 7:30 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speaker: Les Campbell



"Sky Meadow" is the name given by photographer Les Campbell and his wife, Terry-Ann, to their unique 25-acre homestead in Belchertown. At Sky Meadow, gentle rolling fields, wet meadow, little pond, cascading brook and woodland groves, surrounded by the state's 1400-acre Herman Covey Wildlife Management Area, are capped with a sky canopy outlined by a 360-degree tree-lined horizon. The visual beauty and diversity of this special place will be portrayed in a slide presentation.

Les is well-known locally for his Quabbin photography ~ many people have a Les Campbell photo hanging in their home or office. However, he is better known on regional and national levels for the diversity of his photography, his creative organizational talents, and especially for his pioneering work in establishing multi-image and multi-media slide presentation as an art form in its own right.

Les is the holder of numerous awards and citations from many prestigious organizations. Among them are the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the University of Massachusetts, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the New England Camera Club Council, the Massachusetts Camera Naturalists, the Boston Camera Club, the Springfield Naturalists' Club, the Town of Belchertown and the Photographic Society of America, where he holds four of its highest awards given annually to a single person.

We welcome our old friend Les, who through his photography has shown us his true love of nature!

November on October Mountain, Becket

Date and Time: Saturday, November 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (564-0895)

Meeting Place: Westfield State College commuter parking lot, off Western Avenue, in Westfield. Heavy Rain Cancels.

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

Join us for a hike along the gently rolling hills of October Mountain State Forest. After running a car shuttle, we will start hiking off County Road (gravel) in Becket (5 miles from Route 8). We will then hike the Appalachian Trail to the picturesque Finerty Pond. If a bit of fall color still survives, this pond is a real delight. The trail is relatively gentle through this section of forest. We will then begin a gradual ascent of both Becket (2,180 ft.) and Walling (2,222 ft.) mountains. Although the summits are forested, the open woods in the area makes for a very pleasant fall hike as the newly fallen leaves pad our steps - which sure beats raking them! The total distance of the hike is 5.5 miles. Bring a lunch, plenty of water, raingear if needed, and good hiking boots.

A Peaked Mountain Hike after Your Thanksgiving Holiday, Monson

Date and Time: Saturday, November 25, at 9 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup (525-4697)

Meeting Place: Burlington Coat Factory at the shopping mall at Allen and Cooley Streets, Springfield

Join us and walk off those calories from that Thanksgiving dinner! We will be hiking around a lovely pond with plenty of beaver activity, including two lodges. You may remember that the Naturalists' Club supported The Trustees of Reservations a few years back in the purchase of



the tract of land encompassing Peaked Mountain, with all its incredible vistas. We will be hiking this mountain after our early morning walk around the pond. Bring snacks and a hot drink. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and don't forget your binoculars!

Nighttime at Noble View, Russell

Date and Time: Saturday, December 2, from 7 to 9 p.m.

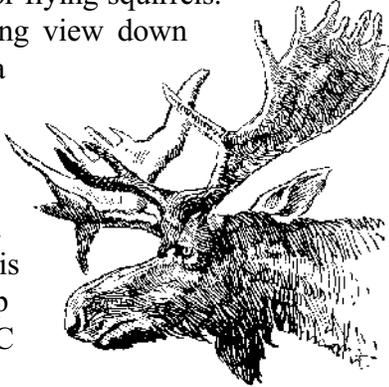
Leaders: Tom and Nancy Condon (564-0895)

Meeting Place: Noble View parking area, South Quarter Road, Russell.

Registration: Please call to register. Heavy rain or heavy snow cancels. Light snow would be a delight.

Sunset is about 4:30 p.m. ~ winter is just about upon us. Join us for a pleasant leisurely nighttime walk along the road to the Appalachian Mountain Club's Noble View cabin. Along the way, learn how to call for owls. They will not be nesting until next month, but it is worth a try. We will be alert for other nighttime creatures like porcupine or flying squirrels. Our destination will be the stunning view down into Westfield, where we'll enjoy a little stargazing (if the weather permits) and some hot chocolate and goodies at the picnic table.

Bring along a mug and flashlight. Dress for the weather. Although this hike is free, a donation to help preserve this beautiful piece of AMC property is an option.



Annual Late Fall Quabbin Hike, New Salem

Date and Time: Sunday, December 10, at 9 a.m.

Leader: Dave Gallup (525-4697)

Meeting Place: Crystal Springs Mall, Routes 9 and 202, Belchertown

It's that time of the year again, folks! It was snowing last year when we did this hike and it was one of the most beautiful days I can remember hiking in the Quabbin. We had about a dozen people ~ those hearty Naturalists!!!! Our destination is Gate 15, which takes us on a wonderful loops hike with great views of the northern section of the Quabbin. Lots of stonewalls and farm sites. We might see eagles and hear loons. We have seen moose tracks on the sandy beaches. It is a great hike and one of the most beautiful areas to explore in the Quabbin.

Bring your binoculars, lunch, and a hot drink. Please dress for the weather. If you arrive early at the meeting place, you can enjoy a hearty breakfast at Hawley's Restaurant. See you there!

DECEMBER MEETING

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION WITH NATURALIST FRIENDS

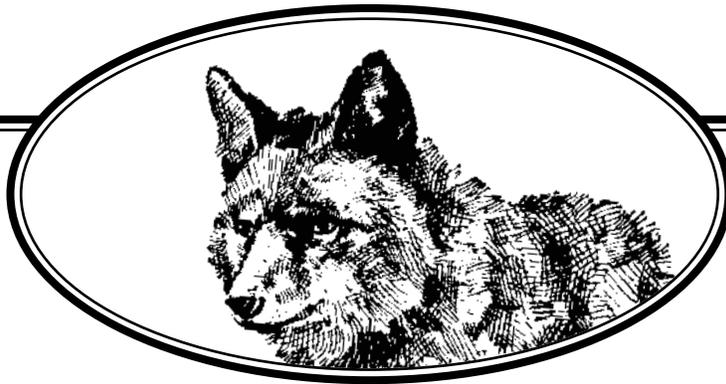
Wednesday, December 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum



It is once again that time of year when members 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" table. Please be creative and join in the fun by sharing your interests and love of nature ~ as well as a favorite holiday treat if you're so inclined.

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



The plateau-like character of the Berkshire Hills may be clearly seen by driving across them. The Massachusetts Turnpike climbs gradually westward from the Connecticut Valley, crossing several deeply cut river valleys on the way. After about 25 miles, in the town of Becket, there is a sign on the roadside stating that the highway has reached its highest point. From here the land stretches away to an almost flat horizon. It is only the rather northern flavor of the woods, the spruce and balsam, that gives the traveler any clue that he has reached a fairly high elevation.

The drive up Route 2 in northern Massachusetts, the Mohawk Trail, illustrates even better the steep-sided plateau-like appearance of the Berkshires. From the Connecticut River the highway stays in the valleys, first along the Deerfield River, then up an impressive gorge formed by a tributary stream, the Cold River. The highway finally twists and turns itself free of the deep valley and climbs steeply to the top of the plateau. For 5 miles the highway crosses a landscape hardly more hilly than that of eastern Massachusetts, until it reaches the western edge of the Berkshires, where it abruptly drops 1,000 feet to North Adams and the Husac River Valley below. The views from this road at both the eastern and western edges of the Berkshires are impressive, particularly the western view, for directly opposite, rising abruptly behind North Adams, is Mt. Greylock, the highest point in Massachusetts.

A Guide to New England's Landscape, by Neil Jorgensen, pp. 28-29.

I spent the afternoon today astraddle the ridge of the new barn-loft roof laying down a ridgcap, a course of overlapping shingles that covers the seam where the shingles meet from each slanting roof face. It would have been difficult not to have been happy up there. The fall migration of monarch butterflies, stunning creatures of orange and black, has begun, and numbers of them flew past me while I worked. The sumac along the woodlot edge has started to redden. It was more vivid from up on the roof, and I could see deep into the woodlot as well. The new roof is three feet higher than the old one and, standing up, I could see north beyond the river, over ridge after wooded ridge, farther than I have been able to see before. After a few days of rain, the skies have cleared to the deep blue that reminds me that Missouri is a part of the West.

A Country Year: Living the Questions, by Sue Hubbell, p. 87.

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.



'06
'07

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MEMBERSHIP

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

Mail to Club Treasurer Dave Lovejoy, Biology Dept. Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086-1630. Include your mailing address and phone number.

FROM THE TREASURER:

The fall of the year is the traditional time to renew membership in the Club. Those of you with an "06-07" on your newsletter mailing label are paid up for the coming year. For those who are "05-06," you may renew by sending a check (payable to The Naturalists' Club) to Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State College, Westfield MA 01086. If you have an "04-05" on your label, you will receive a final reminder renewal notice in a few weeks, but no further newsletters unless you renew. Membership levels are indicated elsewhere on this page. A special thank you to the increasing number of members (about 30) who have renewed at the supporting or sustaining level.

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



Become a Club Member or
Renew Your Membership for 2007.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Requests for programs/trips _____

Please send information per the above form to Club Treasurer Dave Lovejoy, Biology Department, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA 01086-1630.