



COCHRAN MILL NATURE CENTER

THE MILLSTONE

The Millstone is a publication of Cochran Mill Nature Center.

To receive print copies contact Cochran Mill Nature Center at 770-306-0914 or cmnc@bellsouth.net

Our Mission is to encourage community awareness and active environmental stewardship through education and wildlife rehabilitation programs.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR - MARIBETH WANSLEY VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Cochran Mill Nature Center is a non-profit organization with a staff of four. (Actually it is 3.5 but that sounds insulting to Beth, our part-time helper – plus, she will say I am making a short joke!) We would not be able to operate and offer the programming we do without our volunteers. 'Chores' that our volunteers assist with include animal care, technical support, special events work and fundraising.

Once a year, the staff organizes a dinner to honor our volunteers. The running joke is that the dinner is 'in a tent, in a parking lot, in January and still they come!' GreyStone Power Corporation sponsors the event which allows us to not only rent heaters for the occasion, but provide a meal catered by Libba Wilson, also a volunteer. Volunteer gifts are donated by Carlos Montano of *Casa Montano* in Fairburn. (If you are looking for concrete statuary for your home, check out Carlos' work.)

This year, 70 volunteers attended the dinner and 19 of them received special recognition. The highlight of the evening is the announcement of the Volunteer of the Year. This is the person who went above and beyond for the Center. Every year since 1994, one individual is recognized for exemplary help and our 2011 Volunteer of the Year is no exception.

Kahlani Hall is a college student who came to the Center in the Spring of 2011. She said she wanted to volunteer one day per week, and she has done just that! The staff of 4 (actually 3.5!) has become very dependent on her. We can have a list of tasks waiting on her each week and she jumps right into it. She chops fruit for the bats, cleans out the Birds of Prey enclosures (yuck!), operates the leaf blower, cleans windows, attacks cobwebs, and on and on. No job is too small or gross for Kahlani. She is that dream volunteer who is there for the Center 100%.

Congratulations, Kahlani!

Thank you to all of our volunteers. The Center has the success it enjoys because of you. It was founded by volunteers and continues to thrive because of volunteers. Here is to a great 2012!





**Volunteer of the Year
2011
*Kahlani Hall***

***Do you enjoy helping out?
Volunteer with us!***

Cochran Mill Nature Center is always looking for a few good volunteers. Feeding animals, teaching students, planting gardens, providing technical support and serving on the Board of Directors are just a few of the jobs you can fill as a volunteer.

Visit

cochranmillnaturecenter.org/support.html and submit a volunteer application today!

**2012
Volunteers
of the Month**

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| January | Carlos Montano |
| February | Ashland Rhodes |
| March | Krys Thompson |
| April | Bobbie Laminack |
| May | Kahlani Hall |
| June | Chattahoochee Hills Fire Department |
| July | Guy Marlow |
| August | The Tillander Family |
| September | Linda Mann |
| October | Ted Wansley |
| November | Alex Ozbilen |
| December | The Young Family |

Thank you all!

Season's Green-ings

recovering from post-holiday clutter by kelly price

Do you suffer from post-holiday clean-up disorder? Perhaps there are still papers and ribbons scattered across your floor, a wilted tree in the corner of the living room or wax build-up on your heirloom lace tablecloth. Well, Greenies say, 'No more!' to this season of excess that leaves us frazzled and fried by the new year. Recover easier from the holidays of 2012 by planning ahead and remembering that less really is more.

Each year, my stress level increases around the holidays endlessly searching for a perfectly symmetrical tree obsessing over perfect gifts, wrap & bows, baking Martha Stewart-worthy desserts and finding the best photo for our family Christmas card. Well, I will stress no more in 2012 after finding low-maintenance ideas for high-impact holiday basics.

I started with the tree, as it literally stands at the center of our annual celebration. Did you know that you can rent a live tree? LivingChristmasTrees.com and other online suppliers deliver and pick-up potted trees for your holiday centerpiece, then keep them healthy and growing the other 11 months of the year. Even lights and ornaments are available for rent! The best part? The companies keep your information on file so that you can rent the same tree year after year. Start a new tradition as you watch your tree grow along with your child. While no deliveries are currently available in Georgia, this idea is not far from making its debut in our state. This might even be something you want to start on your own!
Finding the perfect family photo for your holiday greeting cards can be

tricky, but even more challenging is finding a place to put all of the cards and photo greetings we receive. Does your card collection resemble something like the *Hoarders* television show? Lighten everyone's load this year with e-greetings. Most website-based cards are free or available for a minimal cost. If you're computer savvy, design your own greeting with any number of programs you already have. Your friends and family will thank you!

You've probably already done this next tip - online shopping!

Avoid searching endlessly from store to store in hopes of finding the perfect gift for everyone on your list. Burning fuel and navigating packed parking lots is no way to stir up holiday cheer. Besides, delivery trucks maximize fuel by planning economical routes.

Your feet & gas tank will thank

you. Consider wrapping these online purchases using alternative materials-pretty dish towels, fabric remnants or reusable boxes to further reduce your environmental impact.

It is getting hot in here? If you plan to bake, setting aside 1 or 2 days to get it all done will save time and utilities. Cutting down on the use of heat-producing appliances makes it easier to maintain an ambient temperature, providing comfort for you and your guests. Planning to entertain? Don't spend your evening doing the dishes. Try compostable plates, napkins, cups and utensils for large gatherings. These disintegrate in your compost pile, saving water & freeing up more time to spend visiting with family and friends.

Little changes save a lot - start planning your 'Green' Christmas now!



staggering statistics of holiday consumption

1. One acre of Christmas trees produces daily oxygen needs for 18 people.
2. 50 million trees are purchased each season. 30 million go to the landfill.
3. Throwing away 100 pounds of food sounds preposterous; but 28 billion pounds of food winds up in the trash each year - that's 100 pounds per person.
4. If every American wrapped just 3 gifts in recycled paper, we would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.
5. If every American household re-used 2 feet of ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved would tie a bow around the entire planet.
6. 2.6 billion greeting cards sent each year will fill up a football field 10 stories high.
7. 5 million extra tons of trash are generated every year between Thanksgiving & the New Year. 4 out of the 5 million tons are wrapping paper & shopping bags.

ECO - EXTREME!



If you really want to embrace a green holiday, try this minimalist version of a Christmas tree. Designed by artist Adam Frank, this oil lamp shadow projector casts a beautiful image on your wall with a small flame. The stainless steel luminary comes with 2 clean-burning & odorless fuel cells for a combined burning time of 34 hours. Simply extinguish the flame for non-sense clean-up and store anywhere you can fit a baseball!

ASIAN CRANE MAKES WRONG TURN

BY RICK MCCARTHY



On December 14th, a bird watcher made an exciting discovery while watching Sandhill cranes at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, 45 minutes north of Chattanooga. It is normal for thousands of migrating Sandhill cranes and even a few endangered whooping cranes to stop, feed

and rest at Hiwassee, but when the birder noticed a particular crane with a darker body and white neck, it didn't take too long to realize that this was a special bird. After some deliberation it was determined that this odd crane was, in fact, an Asian Hooded Crane that would normally be wintering in Japan at this time! This rare occurrence was quickly picked up by local media and, upon catching wind of this, I immediately contacted a fellow ornithologist to see if he had heard the news. He did a little homework to assure that the bird was still in the vicinity and we made the pilgrimage to Tennessee to see if we could spot the navigationally challenged migrant.

When we arrived on the scene, there were about 20 other birders from as far away as Colorado hoping to catch a glimpse of our Asian visitor. After 'glassing' the far off flocks of Sandhills with binoculars and spotting scopes for 3 hours, fully expecting to return home without a sighting, a vigilant birder from Maryland exclaimed "There it is!" Sure enough, among a group of 30 Sandhills and a juvenile whooping crane was our target bird! It had probably been in view for quite a while prior to being spotted. The way that the sunlight was shining, the Sandhills were cast in shadows making the darker hooded crane blend right in with the flock. Needless to say, all the birders were extremely excited, high-fiving and back slapping as we were all going home with mission accomplished!

There are a number of resources for hearing about rare bird sightings around the country and many side benefits to going on these expeditions to try to spot them. First and foremost is the opportunity to meet folks with similar interests from all over the country/world. As of mid January, I read that over 2400 people from 40 states and 9 countries (including Russia) had made the journey to try to see this particular crane. Also, while searching for the target species, one is likely to see many other bird species that make the trip all the more enjoyable. Our trip included sightings of several bald eagles, blue phase snow geese, the whooping crane (a new and exciting check-off for me!) and several species of ducks.

If you are interested in learning more about rare bird alerts, search "rare bird alert" online or <http://birdingonthe.net/hotmail.html>.



Out of the mouths of babes...

During the first field trip of the Fall 2011 season, a pre-K group visited the Bird of Prey exhibit and listened to the calls of each bird. When Maribeth explained that the Barred Owl's call sounds like, "Who cooks for you?," a 4-year old in the group looked confused and asked, "The owl cooks?!?"

During one of our educational hikes in early autumn, a six-year-old pointed to a barren tree and exclaimed, "Oh, my gosh! That tree is naked!"

Education Coordinator, Kelly, introduced her three nephews and niece to several reptiles during their first visit to the Center this winter. Upon meeting the Inland Bearded Dragon, 3-year-old Adam asked, "Where's his wings?"



CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

14 - Valentine's Day
Don't forget!

20 - Home School Day
TBD

MARCH

19 - Home School Day
The Physics of Flight

APRIL

23 - Home School Day
Insect-o-rama!

MAY

17 - CMNC Board Meeting

21 - Home School Day
Solar Power!

28- **CLOSED**

JUNE

4 - Junior Naturalist Camp
begins!

11-15 - Session 1 of
Camp Cricket

25-29 - Session 2 of
Camp Cricket

JULY

4 - **CLOSED**

9-13 - Session 3 of
Camp Cricket

23-27 - Teen Adventure
Camp

BATTY ABOUT BATS

VICKY SMITH, THE BAT LADY

Things have been a bit Batty around CMNC for the last few months. In July CMNC had a visitor from across the pond. No, not the fish pond but the big 'pond' ----Sylvia Bevis from Devon, England came to visit during Summer Camp. Sylvia is known as The Bat Lady in her community of Stoke Gabriel and the surrounding area. Sylvia is a licensed bat warden for Natural



England and is frequently called on to give advice when repairs or restoration work are planned in buildings where bats roost. She also gives educational talks on bats. We shared many stories about being known as the 'The Bat Lady' -it's not so different between the UK and the US. While here, Sylvia visited all the animals and had a special encounter with 'The Girls', the resident Egyptian Fruit bats.

If you have been to CMNC lately and think you have been seeing double, rest assured your vision is fine. There are now two CMNC Bat Ladies. Norma Lewis moved to Newnan and began doing some volunteer work for CMNC this summer. Norma and I first met at the Birmingham Zoo and have been presenting public programs, school programs, teacher workshops and other batty things for many years. In August, Norma joined me at CMNC to present a bat program, kicking off a year-long, world-wide celebration known as Year of the Bat. We joined other educators around the world by celebrating International Bat Night with an informative presentation and a close up look at the fruit bats. As darkness descended, everyone headed outside to watch local native bats hunt for insects and

listened to them echolocating with the help of a bat detector (an instrument that converts a bat's ultrasonic echolocation sounds into audible clicks).

Also, in August, my beloved bat, Phaedra, died at the age of 19. Phaedra had been delighting audiences at CMNC with her 'Queen of the Colony' attitude for over 2 years. In October, the colony increased to 4 bats with

the addition of a male bat, Pharaoh, who was on loan as a breeder. Pharaoh disrupted the tranquility of the all-female colony and behaviors changed. In December, we acquired 3 new females and Pharaoh was returned to his colony. All seems peaceful and calm again-you would never guess there are now 6 bats in that exhibit! New colony members are Amunet (mythical goddess of mystery), a partial wing amputee, Aloli ('grape'- perfect name for a fruit bat, isn't it?) and Delilah (gentle) who seems to be very calm. In a few months we will know if the breeding loan was successful and will keep you posted if babies join the colony.

Please stop by and to meet the new girls and consider 'adopting' one to support their care. Because 'the girls' have more adoptions than any of the reptiles, I tease Rick relentlessly that warm blooded (endothermic) animals are loved more than the cold blooded (ectothermic) animals. Adoption packages include a nameplate on your chosen animal's exhibit, a personalized certificate, photo and fact sheet for you to enjoy. Regardless of whom you choose, the \$25 adoption donation helps support CMNC resident animals and rehabilitation efforts.

NATURE IN THE KNOW

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

ALLIGATORS & CROCODILES

GATORS HAVE A BLUNT HEAD

NATIVE TO CHINA
& AMERICAS

SLOWER & CLUMSIER THAN
CROCS

CROCS HAVE NARROWER,
LONGER HEAD

FOUND IN AFRICA, ASIA,
AUSTRALIA & AMERICAS

4TH TOOTH OF LOWER JAW IS
VISIBLE WITH A CLOSED MOUTH





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THE MILLSTONE

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About Our Organization....

Our Vision is to be the dynamic resource center for outstanding environmental education and wildlife rehabilitation, serving our diverse communities within the Atlanta Southern Crescent region. CMNC will also be recognized for providing fun, flexible, thought-provoking programs and exhibits.

Our Values: CMNC priorities are to:

1. Instill environmental stewardship in future generations
2. Educate our communities and members in environmental conservation and protection
3. Support dedicated Volunteers, Staff, and Board of Directors, who possess a desire to serve our diverse community
4. Provide humane treatment of the wildlife under our care

Maribeth Wansley, Executive Director
Rick McCarthy, Wildlife Specialist
Kelly Price, Education Coordinator
Beth Harbin, Office Assistant