Originally from Baltimore, and also having lived in Brooklyn, NY, Hempstead, NJ, Braddock Heights, MD, and Durham, NC, Al Warfield has had a varied background. He completed secondary education in Baltimore, and attended the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, which led ultimately to a Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Chemistry. Al worked as a chemist for Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co. in Durham, NC, and Philip Morris Tobacco Co. in Richmond, and finally at Whitehall Robins until 2000. Al was interested in photography starting about 1963, had his own darkroom in the '70s, was a member of a camera club in Durham, and tried commercial photography, including advertising and weddings. After retiring in 2000 he decided to make photography his main interest.

In 1996 Al joined RAS, and from 2001 until 2009 was the Thrasher Editor. His interest in birds and photography naturally led to bird photography. Starting with Canon film cameras and graduating in 2004 to digital cameras, Al gained considerable experience in this rather technical form of photography, and also gained valuable experience in post processing using Camera Raw and Photoshop. Mostly self-taught, he became proficient with software used to create digital programs, which he then showed to RAS and other bird clubs. These presentations ranged from birding trips Al and his wife, Linda, had taken, to birds in the Richmond area. Al and Linda have been members of the Focus Group Camera Club since 2000, and together formed Allinda Photography in 2009. They offer fine art photographs of landscapes, people, as well as almost any type of subject or event other than weddings, and also custom printing, matting and framing. They have had exhibitions at various locations in Richmond, including the James Center, Richmond Public Library, Capital One, Bank of America, Richmond Camera, and Crossroads Art Center. Al & Linda's images and Al's blog, can be viewed at www.allindaphoto.com/

Only a few images were chosen for this article. There are more recent examples, but these are the most memorable.

See more photos by Al on page 7

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Important Notices

RAS membership meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of the month except June, July, August and December. Meetings are at 7:00 PM, and are held at St. Luke Lutheran Church at Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway unless notified.

RAS Board meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday on alternate months starting in January (except June and August). In July, the Board has its annual strategic planning retreat. RAS members are welcome to attend board meetings, but let the President or Secretary know due to space considerations. Meeting locations vary; contact the President or Secretary for location details.

Richmond Audubon Society is also a chapter of the Virginia Society of Ornithology and the Virginia Conservation Network.

Richmond Audubon Society
P.O. Box 26648
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(804) 257-0813
www.RichmondAudubon.org

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Thanks to these Thrasher Volunteers:
Lewis Barnett, Louise Reza: Proofreading.
Steve Dunn: Mailing List.

Publication Schedule
The Thrasher is issued six times a year. Please submit articles to thrasher@richmondaudubon.org no later than the 10th of the month before each issue. Deadline for the next issue is April 10.

President’s Message

Lewis Barnett

Birding in the Age of Social Media

Technology has remade the way we experience birding multiple times over the years. Typically cited examples are high-quality optics, field guides, rare-bird hotlines, and email lists. The most recent wave is social media and mobile devices.

By themselves, Facebook and Twitter essentially just make broadcasting information to targeted groups a little easier and more visually attractive than constructing e-mail distribution groups like RAS’s email list, and its statewide sister, VA-BIRD. The popularity of the new social media has led to the development of some similar groups like the Facebook “Birding Virginia” group – if you are a Facebook user, just search for the name on Facebook. Some tech-savvy local birders are using Twitter – the name of the service is just too apropos – to get the word out about their sightings for the day.

The real transformative power of these services comes when you combine them with their mobile apps. Now we have birders using a narrowly targeted broadcast medium to get the word out about good birding finds while still in the field, rather than at the end of the day when they’re back at their computers. It puts a whole new level of timeliness on the concept of the Rare Bird Alert. This is, of course, not necessarily an unalloyed positive. Like publication of scientific results on the Internet, it removes a layer of reflection and potential peer review from news, and this can have adverse effects on the quality of communication.

Much has been written, both positive and negative, in the publications of birding groups like the ABA and our own organization about this transition. To my mind, there are great potential benefits to these new modes of communication, if used with appropriate consideration. I encourage you to check things out and get your feet wet.

Nominating Committee Solicits Input

In preparation for the Annual Meeting of Richmond Audubon in May, the Nominating Committee solicits nominations for the following board positions: President, Secretary, First Vice-president, and Treasurer. Hospitality is an off-board position which is also vacant. If you have an interest in any of these positions, questions about the duties of a position, or suggestions on members that the committee might contact to gauge interest, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee. Members are Ben Griffon (cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org), Pam Dummitt (treasurer@richmondaudubon.org) and Lewis Barnett (president@richmondaudubon.org).
Center for Conservation (CCB) Biology researcher **Fletcher Smith** will talk with us about the on-going Whimbrels migration project. Until last year, the CCB had caught Whimbrels on their staging areas on the Atlantic Coast, principally on the Eastern Shore. This past breeding season, researcher Fletcher Smith traveled to the Mackenzie River in far northern Canada. He will share with us and we will learn about some “amazing discoveries on the Whimbrels’ migration, breeding, and winter patterns.” Come learn what tagged Whimbrels Winnie, Chinquapin, Pingo Mackenzie, Taglu and Akpik have taught us about their amazing life stories.

The March program will be on Thursday, March 21st at St. Luke Lutheran Church on Custis Road. The program begins at 7 p.m. with coffee and dessert starting at 6:30.

**Richmond Audubon Society member Steve Baranoff is a nature photographer who lives in Richmond, Virginia and Austin, Texas. He will share with us some basic principles of bird photography including capture techniques and preferred image characteristics. He will show many of his own images as examples together with the story behind each. (Steve and his photography were featured in an article in the July-August 2012 THRASHER.)**

Spring is upon us! Come sharpen your photography skills.

The April program will be on Thursday, April 18th at St. Luke Lutheran Church on Custis Road. The program begins at 7 p.m. with coffee and dessert starting at 6:30.

**Workshop – Intro to eBird**

Have you ever wondered what you were seeing in your back yard or at a favorite local hot spot this time last year or in years past? eBird is a web site that lets you keep track of your bird sightings online, so they are accessible to you from any computer. The best part about it is, not only can you find out what you were seeing, but what everyone else who uses eBird was seeing as well. And for the icing on the cake, Cornell is using the data entered by eBirders in important studies of the range and abundance of birds, and for building tools like interactive range maps. It’s like a win-win-win situation.

This workshop will cover the basics of using eBird to record your observations and helpful tools eBird provides that can improve your own birding. Participants should bring a laptop or tablet computer with wireless networking. To sign up, please email president@richmondaudubon.org.

**Details**

Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2013
Time: 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Location: Gayton Branch, Henrico Public Library - meeting room, 10600 Gayton Road
From the Kitchen Window

John Coe

“March comes and the sap quickens down at the root of life. Buds, set on the twig last summer, begin to swell toward April.” Hal Borland, Twelve Moons of the Year.

As morning sun sneaks through bare branches, and glistens the frost on roof tops, this February dawn… the anticipation of spring teases our senses.

March is so near and snow can still fall, yet, the sun is now higher in the sky and south winds will open the window and the sounds of spring will greet your day. The wren and the cardinal, and the chickadee and the titmouse will sing their songs of spring. The dove will coo, and the woodpeckers will drum on their favorite dead branch – or the side of your house!

And so March marches into April. Buds will burst and flowers will bloom, and all will be green. Our winter birds will go, north to raise families, and new birds will return – and from the window the full chorus of spring birds and frogs and toads and insects will greet the day.

The full moon in March, named the Worm Moon, occurs on the 27th. Early in March, spotted salamanders migrate to their breeding ponds. On the 10th, daylight savings time begins; on March 20th the spring equinox. Easter is on the 31st; and the redbuds bloom.

The full moon in April occurs on the 25th and is named the Pink Moon. By the 12th, hummingbirds return; Earth Day is celebrated on the 22nd.

Take a walk in the woods.

RAS Receives Award

At their January Board Meeting, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries recognized Richmond Audubon Society for its work monitoring Northern Saw-whet Owls. Agency Director Bob Duncan presented the plaque to banders Julie Kacmarcik and Kim Cook. The recognition included a $2,500 donation to support the owl monitoring going forward. Thanks DGIF!! Way to go Julie and Kim!!!
Libraries are dark quiet places where a frowning gray-haired lady puts a finger to her lips and warns you to keep your voice down...right? Well, not any more. Today’s libraries are big and bright with cheerful librarians who welcome noisy activities. Richmond Audubon was fortunate to be part of some of that noisy activity this winter as we conducted bluebird house building programs in eight Chesterfield County Public Libraries. Twelve families registered at each branch to participate in a two-hour program hosted by Audubon volunteers. This is a popular program, and there were waiting lists at all eight branches. We hate to see anyone disappointed, so we brought along extra kits. That way we could accommodate the wait-list folks who showed up in hopes of getting in. After a short program on bluebirds, box placement and monitoring, we gave out kits and the hammering began! At the end of the program, everyone was smiling as they walked out with their brand new bluebird houses.

These workshops were funded by Friends of the Library and were free to participants; they had only to bring a hammer and a screwdriver. In total, Richmond Audubon provided 110 houses, one for each family and one for each library.

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the building:

Debbie Biggs  Lee and Jane Hesler
John and Caroline Coe  Sue Ridd
Karen Daniel  Ben and Betsy Saunders
Grace Suttle  David and Julie Wolf

And to those who spent a day cutting lumber and assembling kits. A special thanks to Eileen Geller and Steve Dunn for the use of their garage and driveway:

Lewis Barnett  Steve Dunn
Naseem Reza  Bob Schamerhorn
Lori Schamerhorn
Field Trips
Ellison Orcutt

These are all the RAS trips that have been submitted as of the publication date. Check the RAS listserv (if you don't subscribe the archives are at www.freelists.org/archive/va-richmond-general/) or the RAS website for any late breaking news about field trips (www.richmondaudubon.org/ActivFieldTrip.html.)

March 3rd Sunday
Bryan Park with Sue Ridd:
Start time: ½ hour after sunrise
Meeting location: Shelter 1, Joseph Bryan Park
Join Sue Ridd for early morning birding in Bryan Park. For more information, call Sue at 270-5365.

March 16th Saturday
Dutch Gap with Betsy and Ben Saunders
Meet Betsy and Ben at 8:00 AM at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. For more information, contact betsyben@juno.com

March 16th Saturday
Heron Rookery with Richmond Audubon
Start time: 10:00 am
Join Richmond Audubon, Virginia Audubon and Friends of James River Park to observe this little treasure of downtown Richmond. Observe the colony of Great Blue Herons as they tend to their nests. A small $5.00 fee will be collected to benefit Virginia Audubon and Friends of JRP. Go to http://ideastations.org/articles/great-blue-heron-rookery-walks-begin-2013-02-05 for details.

March 17th, Sunday
Curles Neck with Ellison Orcutt
Start time: 7:30 am.
One of our favorite birding locations, Curles Neck Farm in Henrico County, is excellent in any season. March should be a good time of year to catch waterfowl before they start heading north. There is usually high turnout for this trip so please register by calling Ellison at (804) 339-6976 or at fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org A $5 fee will be charged for this trip. Meet Ellison at the Curles Neck Farm entrance right off Route 5.

April 6th Saturday
Flood Wall with Arun Bose
Start time: 7 am
Join Arun Bose to explore the Floodwall in downtown Richmond. April along the James River always turns up nice spring surprises. Meet Arun at the Hull St. lot, which is just south of the Mayo Bridge at the intersection of Hull and 1st. St. For more information contact Arun at arunibo@gmail.com.

April 7th Sunday
Bryan Park with Sue Ridd:
Start time: ½ hour after sunrise
Meeting location: Shelter 1, Joseph Bryan Park
Description: See March 3rd walk for more info.

April 13th Saturday
Heron Rookery with Richmond Audubon
Start time: 10:00 am
See March 16th Heron Rookery walk for info.

April 20th Saturday
Dutch Gap with Betsy and Ben Saunders
Start time: 8:00 am
Dutch Gap with Betsy and Ben Saunders
See March 16th Dutch Gap trip for more info.

April 27th Saturday
Ashland Trolley Line with Bob and Linda Cole
Start time: 7:00 am
Join Bob and Linda for this annual spring walk, to see what is migrating through Ashland. Meet at 7:00 am in the Luck Chevrolet parking lot. Wear shoes/boots for possibly wet conditions. The walk is usually about 4 hours. Contact Bob or Linda at (804) 798-6618 with questions or directions. No reservations are needed. Luck Chevrolet (516 S. Washington Hwy, Ashland, VA) is at the Intersection of Rt. 1 and Ashcake Rd. Please park in the dirt parking lot to the left and do not park among the new or used cars in the paved lot.

May 4th Saturday
42nd St. with Arun Bose
Start time: 7:00 am
Join Arun Bose to explore one of the best city limits locations for enjoying the spring warbler migration. Meet Arun at the 42nd St. lot off of Riverside Dr. A $5 fee will be collected to benefit Richmond Audubon. For more information contact Arun at arunibo@gmail.com.
Al Warfield - continued from page 1

2012 Christmas Bird Count Highlights - Arun Bose

Below are some highlights, and a few lowlights.

Gadwall 328 - High Count; Previous 308, 1986
Green-winged Teal 725 (720 @ Curles Neck) High Count; Previous 400, 1970
Bufflehead 195 - High Count; Previous 185, 2011
Red-breasted Merganser 1st since 2008
Killdeer 45, lowest since 2003, 40
Laughing Gull 4491 - High Count; Previous 3860, 1999
Bonaparte's Gull 26 - good count for recent years
Rufous Hummingbird 1 new to count (a Count Week bird in 2011)

From the Editor

Al Warfield is our featured nature photographer in this issue. Since joining RAS in 1996, he has served as President, Vice President and Thrasher Editor. Al has graciously shared his expertise and has been a mentor to many RAS members.
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Chapter Membership Application
Yes, please enroll me (us) as a **new** member(s) of both National and Richmond Audubon Societies at the address below, **at the introductory rate**. A subscription to the NAS magazine, *Audubon* is included.

- [ ] Individual/Family Member(s) $20 enclosed
- [ ] Student/Senior Member $15 enclosed

**Name** __________________________

**Address** _________________________

**City** ____________________________

**State**  **ZIP** _____________________

**Phone** __________________________

**E-mail** __________________________

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and write “C0ZX530Z” on the check. Send your check and application to: Richmond Audubon Society, P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261 C0ZX530Z

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**Officers / Committee Chairs for 2012-2013**

- **President** Lewis Barnett
- **1st Vice President** Robert Mclemore
- **2nd Vice President** Ben Saunders
- **Bird-A-Thon** Lewis Barnett
- **Conservation** Lori Schamerhorn
- **Cyberspace** Ben Griffon
- **Development** Robert Knox
- **Education** Betsy Saunders
- **Field Trips** Ellison Orcutt
- **Hospitality** Vacant
- **IBA/VAC Rep** Margaret O'Bryan
- **Legislation** Eileen Geller
- **Membership** Steven Dunn
- **Past President** Pam Dummitt
- **Programs** Caroline Coe
- **Publicity** Diane Jadlowski
- **Secretary** Vacant
- **Thrasher Editor** Naseem Reza
- **Treasurer/Finance** Pam Dummitt
- **Youth** Robin Ruth (interim)

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