



# the Thrasher

Newsletter of the Richmond Audubon Society

MAY/JUNE 2011 VOLUME 38, ISSUE 3

## Pre-meeting Dinner

Naseem Reza, Chair

Hospitality Committee

[hospitality@richmondaudubon.org](mailto:hospitality@richmondaudubon.org),

Please join us for dinner (Luau)

before the meeting at 5:30 PM

on Thursday, May 19. **Bring your favorite tropical dish.** You do not

have to bring food but you are wel-

come to share one of your favorite

dishes—made by you or from a local

deli. Keep all your receipts for any

food you buy if you want to be

reimbursed. There is a \$5 charge to

cover drinks, paper products and

fill in food items. Call 804-272-

1145 or e-mail me by the Monday

*continued on page 2*

## May Program: Birds of Oahu, Hawaii with Lori & Bob Schamerhorn.



This program will cover an array of species and the complexity of their existence in the south Pacific.

Our May meeting will be on Thursday, May 19th at 7:00 PM at St. Luke Lutheran Church, located at Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway.

## Annual RAS Picnic, June 25



Photo © Joan Mazza

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Thrasher illustrations  
© Carl "Spike" Knuth

Buz and Nelda Snyder are our hosts at their beautiful Varina home with a private pond and picnic area on June 25. Come by 8:00 AM for the morning bird walk. The rain date is Sunday, June 26th. Bring your own meat to cook on the grills and a dish to share (four or more servings).

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## Richmond Audubon Society

The Richmond Audubon Society promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and preservation of birds, other wildlife, and habitat through education, advocacy, and fellowship.

### 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  
Richmond, VA 23261

(804) 257-0813  
www.RichmondAudubon.org

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# President's Message Neighborhood Notes

Lewis Barnett



© Naseem Reza

I'm sitting outside on the first really warm evening of Spring, and at the risk of straying into John Coe's territory, this time around, I just want to talk about what's going on in my neighborhood. There's a fresh breeze blowing pollen around in clouds, but I've just this second spotted my first Chipping Sparrow of the year – it has just flopped down into the grass with the four or five White-throated Sparrows that are hanging around picking at the sunflower hearts that the Goldfinch, almost completely clad in his brilliant yellow, is scattering down from the feeder. The spring frolics are going full bore – yesterday, at around this same time, there was a Cardinal singing so loudly in the tulip poplar that my hard-of-hearing father, on the phone from Georgia, asked if there was a siren going off nearby. There are odd squeaks coming from the same tree this evening as a pair of Gray Squirrels go about their most important job of the year, making more Gray Squirrels. The first Black-and-White Warblers of the year showed up in the neighborhood yesterday, and the Chimney Swifts are zooming and chattering overhead tonight. There were a couple of unusual (for my yard, anyway) Osprey flyovers yesterday afternoon. I hung my hummingbird feeder yesterday, about a week before my early date for the yard for Ruby-throats – and read a report on the listserv of a first sighting from Powhatan a few hours later. Still waiting for mine. We're just on the verge of the spring explosion as I write, with reports coming in from around the state of new arrivals daily. It's the best time of the year to be a birder, and I hope you get the chance to enjoy it. Good birding, and see you in the field.

### *Pre-meeting continued from page 1*

of the meeting week. Please let me know what you will be bringing. NOTE: If you would like to come for the dinner but are not sure if you can make it, give me your name by mid-day on Wednesday. If you cannot make it to the dinner, you will not be responsible for the \$5 charge.

*Bon Appétit!*

### Publication Schedule

The Thrasher is issued six times a year. Submit articles no later than the 15th of the month before each issue. Deadlines for each issue are listed here >

- December 15th for Jan/Feb issue.
- February 15th for Mar/Apr issue.
- April 15th for May/Jun issue.
- June 15th for Jul/Aug issue.
- August 15th for Sep/Oct issue.
- October 15th for Nov/Dec issue.

Email articles to:  
thrasher@richmondaudubon.org.  
Images to accompany articles are encouraged, and should be at full size with a resolution of 300 dpi.

*continued from page 1*

We will eat around noon. RAS will provide drinks, ice, and utensils. The Snyders will provide charcoal, picnic tables and chairs, and condiments. Children are welcome, but please leave your pets at home. Besides your food and binoculars, be sure to bring fishing gear and your swimsuit. Come join us for this RAS season finale.

**Directions**

**From Richmond:** Go east on Main Street, which becomes Route 5. At the Y-intersection of Rt 5 and Osborne Turnpike, bear right onto Osborne Tpk. After 8 miles, Osborne becomes Kingsland Rd. at a 90° left bend. Proceed on Kingsland for 0.9 mi to Arrahat-teck Trail, a gravel road on the right. Take this road past the house to the end of the road at the lake. Travel time 18 minutes from Capitol Square.

**From I-295:** Take the Varina exit, (Exit 22), Rt. 5, west toward Richmond. Proceed west on Rt. 5 to 1st traffic light, Strath Road. Turn left on Strath to the dead end at Kingsland Rd. and turn right. Go past intersections at Varina Road and Hoke-Bradley Rd. About one block (0.1 mi) on the left, turn onto Arrahat-teck Trail, and proceed as above. 10 minutes from Exit 22.

**From Chippenham Parkway:** At the end of Chippenham South keep straight on I-895 east (Pocahontas Parkway- \$2.75 toll). Take the first exit, Rt 5, stay in left lane and turn left at Laburnum Ave sign. At dead end turn left onto Osborne Tpk and proceed as above from Richmond. 30 minutes from Stony Point Fashion Park.

**RAS 2011/2012 Election Slate**

**Steven Dunn**

The 2011 elections and board appointments are here for the Richmond Audubon Society and all members are asked to cast their votes at the upcoming May meeting. There are 9 positions up for election by the members of the Richmond Audubon Society this year and 3 positions still do not have nominations.

The elected board positions with nominations are:

**President**

Lewis Barnett

**1st Vice President**

Robert McLemore

**Conservation**

Lori Schamerhorn

**Education**

Betsy Saunders

**Secretary**

Pete Walker

**Thrasher Editor**

Arun Bose

The elected board positions that are without nominations that need to be filled are:

**Field Trips**

**Youth**

**Development**

The off board positions up for appointments are:

**Publicity**

Diane Jadowski

**Hospitality**

Naseem Reza

**Programs**

Linda Warfield

**Cyberspace**

If you would like to nominate someone or run for a position please contact Eileen Geller (747-5143 or legislation@richmondaudubon.org). Also remember to attend the May 19th Member meeting to cast your vote.

**Thrasher delivered late last issue?**

**Arun Bose, Thrasher Editor**

Richmond Audubon Society heard from several members regarding the late delivery of the last issue (March/April) of *the Thrasher*. RAS apologizes for any inconvenience. We rely on a network of volunteers to get the Thrasher to your mailbox and make every effort to achieve this in a timely manner. Although not everyone has access to the internet, *the Thrasher* is available online by the 1st of the month of issue.

Also please remember when someone becomes a member *or* renews, they get one copy mailed and then they have to make a request to continue receiving *the Thrasher* by mail.

If you currently receive *the Thrasher* by mail consider switching to view online only; simply send an email to Ben Griffon (bengriffon@yahoo.com), and request not to receive *the Thrasher* by mail. Printing and mailing costs make up a significant portion of the RAS budget. These funds could perhaps be better spent on other projects rather than on ink, paper, and mailing.

# From The Kitchen Window—May Wonders

John Coe

...And as April passes and the delicate flowers of our vernal forest fade quietly away. The green canopy of the trees and shrubs explode in the blink of an eye and obscure the human homes across the creek and the sound of street traffic is softly quieted. There are not enough days of May to bask in, and then to inhale the May wonders that our birds and bugs and frogs and blooms display or the sounds and scents that stream through the open window.

...And then comes June with some days of lingering spring and days that hint at summer's dog days' heat and humidity. Lightning bugs and mosquitoes and bats in the evening sky and the fledgling birds that take flight from the nest and survive the rigors of weather and pests and predators.

Springtime is so rich and full of new life I wish we could have more.

As of this writing in mid-April, the kitchen window still enjoys a few slow-to-leave juncos. The White-throated Sparrows are still here, and some lingering Pine Siskins – they will leave soon. Spring migrants are arriving daily; the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds on April 11, White-eyed Vireos, Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, Chimney Swifts come and fill the newly green trees and the skies and delight our birders' senses of sight and sound. And morning song is now full of robins, cardinals and wrens, soon to be joined by the migrating chorus. The Bluebirds are incubating 5 eggs ... and we hope all is well for the summer.

The full moon in May, the Flower Moon, occurs on May 17th at 5:09 AM. Venus and Jupiter show off at dawn. June's full moon, the Hot Moon or Strawberry Moon occurs at 2:14 AM on the 15th. Summer arrives at 11:16 PM on June 21st – the Summer Solstice.

“*Slow buds the pink dawn like a rose from out night's gray and cloudy sheath; softly and still it grows and grows, petal by petal, leaf by leaf.*”

Susan Coolidge

## No Impact Man by Colin Beavan

Book review by Sue Ridd



**What does it really take to live eco-effectively? For one year, Colin Beavan swore off plastic and toxins, turned off his electricity, went organic, became a bicycle nut, and tried to save the planet from environmental catastrophe while dragging his young daughter and his Prada-wearing wife along for the ride. Together they attempted make zero impact on the environment while living right in the heart of Manhattan. This is about the sensational, funny, and conscious raising story of how they did it.**

With *No Impact Man*, Beavan found that no-impact living is worthwhile....and richer, fuller, and more satisfying in the bargain.

Beavan does it stages. One chapter “Trying to Do Enough Good to Outweigh the Harm,” he gives back to the environment through picking up trash, planting trees, raising awareness, and talking to politicians. He writes “Environmentalism is not about the environment. It is about people. It is about a vision for a better life- for people.”

I would like to add “and wildlife.” Do your part, get outside, clean up the litter, plant trees, write letters to politicians or better visit them and raise awareness. Participate in Audubon conservation projects. *Do something!*





## Field Trips

Art Baker, Field Trip Chair

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/](http://www.freelists.org/archive/va-richmond-general/)) or the RAS website for any late breaking news about field trips ([www.richmondaudubon.org/ActivFieldTrip.html](http://www.richmondaudubon.org/ActivFieldTrip.html).)

**May 1, Sunday, 6:45 AM. Bryan Park with Sue Ridd.** Come see Bryan Park from a different point of view. Each season has its own cast for your birding interests! Meet at Shelter #1. There is a Bryan Park trip on the first Sunday of each month, starting about 1/2 hour after sunrise. For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

**May 7, Saturday, 6:30 AM, 42nd Street, James River Park, warblers and spring migrants.** Meet at 42nd Street Lot. Contact Arun Bose if you have any questions at (804) 335-8813 or email: [arun1bose@gmail.com](mailto:arun1bose@gmail.com).

**May 8, Sunday - Warbler Road**  
Join us for a visit to the Blue Ridge Mountains for a drive up Warbler Road. Due to limited parking along the road participation will be limited to about 10 people. Call Art Baker (804) 730-9127 or email [albaker1@earthlink.net](mailto:albaker1@earthlink.net) to register and for details.

**May 13-15, VSO Annual Meeting in Harrisonburg**  
Located in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, hosted by the Rockingham Bird Club and headquartered at the Holiday Inn the meeting will feature a banquet, field trips, exhibits, vendors, a technical paper session, and the VSO's annual business meeting. The banquet speaker will be Dan Cristol, Professor of Biology at the College of William and Mary. Full schedule at [http://www.virginiabirds.net/2011\\_AM.html](http://www.virginiabirds.net/2011_AM.html)

**June 5, Sunday at 6:30 AM - Bryan Park with Sue Ridd.** Meet at Shelter #1. For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

**June 11-19, 2011 VSO Foray, Alleghany County.**  
The 2011 Foray will take place between June 11 and 19 in Alleghany County. As has become our custom this time period includes two weekends to try to avoid schedule conflicts. Alleghany County is along the border with West Virginia, but is rather accessible due to the fact that Interstate 64 passes through its center. Full details at [http://www.virginiabirds.net/f\\_trips.html](http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html)

**June 17-19, VSO Summer Field Trip New River Valley.** Come join our host, New River Valley Bird Club, on June 17-19 as we visit some of their best birding areas in the New River Valley and Southern Appalachians for the VSO summer field trip. The varied topography and the river valley offer a wide variety of habitats and bird species. Field trips will be offered Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Many thanks to Jerry Via and Bill Akers for working with the New River Valley Bird Club to line up these wonderful trips! Full details at [http://www.virginiabirds.net/f\\_trips.html](http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html)

**June 25, Saturday all day—Richmond Audubon's Annual Summer Picnic.** Hosted at the home of Buz and Nelda Snyder at their lovely home in Varina. **Come for the morning bird walk at 8:00 AM.** Directions and full details on page 1.

**June 25, Saturday, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM.** Meet in the rotunda of the visitor center. You must sign up in advance; there must be at least four people signed up by 9:00 PM the Wednesday before the trip or it will be cancelled. **Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Members FREE; Special Non-Member Cost: \$6.00.** Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or [tylerturpin@earthlink.net](mailto:tylerturpin@earthlink.net). Lewis Ginter BT is located at 1800 Lakeside Ave, Richmond, VA 23228-4700.

**July 3, Sunday at 6:30 AM - Bryan Park with Sue Ridd.** Meet at Shelter #1. For more information, call Sue at (804) 270-5365.

# Great Blue Herons nest in Richmond

## A visit by Southampton's Garden Club

Mary Arginteanu

**This Spring, RAS kids arranged for four trips for youngsters and adults to see Richmond's colony of nesting Great Blue herons.**

In March, Southampton's Garden Club and several parents visited a colony of nesting Great Blue Herons in downtown Richmond near the 14th Street Bridge. To get really good looks at the birds and nests, Garden Club children and their parents had to climb down a ladder under a bridge and then they walk on a pipeline. The James River was moving very rapidly and here were people kayaking.

These are some of the things the Garden Club members observed and inferred from their visit. They counted 21 nests and about 40 Great Blue Herons. They saw the birds flying carrying sticks. They saw the birds standing in the nests, which were very big and made of large sticks.

The garden club inferred that the birds fed on water critters, fish, water bugs. They observed that the Heron's habitat was water, shallow water and trees where they could build their nest. They speculated that predators to Great Blue Herons were raccoons, cats, and maybe, people.

Here are some of the things Garden Club members wrote about their trip to see the Great Blue Herons:

*"The thing I liked most was walking on the very long pipe line. It was scary at first"*

*"I didn't like the rotten fish stink."*

*"It was so fun; we even had juice and cookies"*

*"I liked the Great Blue Heron sound. I like the bright blue and that the Great Blue Heron was carrying a stick back to the nest."*



## Officers / Committee Chairs and Co-chairs for 2010-2011

President	Lewis Barnett	president@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898
1st Vice President	Robert McLemore	vicepresident1@richmondaudubon.org	804-556-2757
2nd Vice President	Caroline Coe	vicepresident2@richmondaudubon.org	804-276-1397
Secretary	Pete Walker	secretary@richmondaudubon.org	804-387-1071
Treasurer/Finance	Pam Dummitt	treasurer@richmondaudubon.org	804-929-3899
Past President	Pam Dummitt	pastpresident@richmondaudubon.org	804-929-3899
Auction	Steven Dunn	auction@richmondaudubon.org	804-647-0208
Bird-A-Thon	Lewis Barnett	president@richmondaudubon.org	804-320-7898
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Thrasher Editor	Arun Bose	thrasher@richmondaudubon.org	804-335-8813
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Hospitality	Naseem Reza	hospitality@richmondaudubon.org	804-272-1145
Conservation	Lori Kam	conservation@richmondaudubon.org	804-310-9014
Legislation	Eileen Geller	legislation@richmondaudubon.org	804-747-5143
Field Trips	Art Baker	fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org	804-730-9127
Membership	Steven Dunn	membership@richmondaudubon.org	804-647-0208
Cyberspace	Bob Schamerhorn	cyberspace@richmondaudubon.org	804-477-3433
Programs	Linda Warfield	programs@richmondaudubon.org	804-276-5520
Publicity	Diane Jadowski	publicity@richmondaudubon.org	702-308-1953
Youth	Robin Ruth	RASkids@richmondaudubon.org	804-231-5949
IBA /VAC Rep	Margaret O'Bryan	IBA@richmondaudubon.org	804-262-1656

## Enjoy Southampton School's Garden. "Garden Party for fun and profit"



© Naseem Reza

Enjoy Southampton School's Garden. "Garden Party for fun and profit" Saturday, May 7, noon to 3 P.M., 3333 Cheverly Drive, off Custis, just east of St. Luke's Church.

Southampton School's garden began as an RAS kids project, and quickly gained volunteer and financial support from the Southampton Citizen's Association. Both groups continue to support the over 3,000 sq feet of garden, BUT this year the PTA has shared the volunteer jobs and on May 7th will hold a Fun and Fund raiser for the garden.

Come join us. Just a few of the activities

- Tree climbing for kids
- Critter corner with reptiles, homing pigeons, and demonstrations from our friends at ARK —the wildlife rehabilitators

RAS specialties:

- pine cone bird feeders and lavender sachets for all
- painting rocks
- planting flowers
- Music and food

Y'all come and see what RAS started.

## Two new Bluebird Houses at Southampton ES

Mary Arginteanu

Southampton's Garden Club members have recently put up two Bluebird houses on two, very wintry afternoons. Everyone took turns digging holes. And the third grade Garden Club members studied about bluebirds and their habitat requirements, particularly protection from predators, and then shared their knowledge with the fifth graders.

The third graders reported these as the most interesting thing they learned:

- Digging the hole to put the birdhouse in the ground is hard
- Learning about how Bluebirds nest
- Learning that if the bluebird houses do not have all the things needed to protect them then other animals can come and eat them

We have not yet seen bluebirds investigating the houses, but we hear them calling in the neighborhood. In the first of a number of activities to introduce the whole school to bluebirds, Mrs. Wilson's third grade followed an indoor lesson on prey and predators with a walk to see the new houses to observe the predator guards, and the and other features likely to make nesting a success.

This was a thoroughly collaborative project of several groups interested in promoting conservation and enjoyment of birds and the natural world. The Garden Club is sponsored by the Richmond Audubon Society's RAS kids program. Nick Conklin and Gary Sargent, two Riverine Master Naturalists supervised installation of the bird houses and provided the skilled labor. The Virginia Bluebird Society donated the boxes and Anne Little of VBS provided the information we needed to site the houses.

# Observations of Nature

by Joe Lively

Watching an adult Bald Eagle, with 7 foot wingspan, zero in on a fish near the surface is awe inspiring. I am not sure what their success ratio is, but this one used his massive talons to bring up dinner three out of three tries. Some eagles migrate each year, while others exhibit site fidelity once they establish a nest. Eagles have made a strong comeback in Virginia, especially along the James River.



© Joe Lively



© Joe Lively

As night approaches, Cormorants may choose to roost on dark tree branches. Soon they become indistinguishable from the shadows.



© Joe Lively

This frisky wren is curious and cheerfully greets the day with his melodious chatter.

**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 "COZX530Z" on the check. Send your check and application to:  
**Richmond Audubon Society,**  
**P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261**  
**COZX530Z**

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