Mary Arginteanu: Getting People and Birds Together - Martha Steger

Everything clicked for this writer when Mary Arginteanu said her undergraduate degree from Antioch College was in psychology – adding that she “dabbled in graduate studies in sociology at VCU.” For the past 36 years she’s demonstrated the skills in these fields as she worked to attract people for Audubon projects.

She says she’s “been to the wars” for a few Richmond environmental issues, “but otherwise the wars have been very small. Getting and keeping good people is always the biggest challenge.” When she was president of Richmond Audubon Society in the late 1980s, the chapter hosted the Virginia Society of Ornithology -- a big, chapter-building activity -- but she’s quick to say, “Jim Strawn gets all the credit.”

She disburses credit liberally, including to other organizations: “Anything RAS has done well, it’s done collaboratively. We’ve worked with Richmond Master Gardeners and Richmond Master Naturalists.” The one thing she’ll take sole credit for is recruiting Caroline and John Coe as RAS members – which she calls “the other big thing I did as president” [besides hosting VSO].” When she started RAS Kids in 2006, she says Robin Ruth and Nan Sweet were indispensable. “We started with the idea of ‘No Child Left Inside’ and worked with several after-school non-profits to get kids into nature activities such as walks in James River Park and observation trips to the floodwall. We also worked with Swansboro Elementary School, and later Southampton, to develop gardens as outdoor classrooms on-site. There is a No Child left Inside trust with the Community Foundation established to continue the work.”

Mary did several stints as RAS newsletter editor and a couple of terms as program chair and as legislative chair. For many years she chaired the annual auction, the primary RAS fundraising activity then. She spent four autumns at the Eastern Shore Birding Festival working with RAS members John Dillard and Fred Scott. “Our main task was to work with kids and families in bird-banding,” she says. “You have to be careful of the bird [being banded] and careful of the data. That means knowing the purpose of the data and the station’s measure of the birds – their age, for example, and getting the sex if possible.”

Another data point: Mary and her husband, Larry Robinson were regional coordinators for the Virginia Breeding Birds Atlas Project. Sue Ridd, Atlas director 1984-1990, says, “We basically took a snapshot in time of all the birds in the southeastern corners of the U. S. Geological Survey map, each one being about 10 square miles. The data we gathered were fed into the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries’ database and the state’s natural heritage program. Mary and Larry helped determine which birds should be placed on the endangered species list.”

Birding – and a 1979 blizzard during a VSO trip to Nags Head – were what brought Mary and Larry together. Since 1980 they’ve been a team for RAS as well as for each other.
President’s Message - Looking Back

Lewis Barnett

It will be a great opportunity to meet other Audubon members from around the country. Registration opened April 15, and you can find further information on the web – a search for “Audubon Convention 2015” should land you in the right place. I will be attending, and I hope to see you there!

Nominating Committee 2015

As of the Thrasher deadline, the Nominating Committee (Lewis Barnett, Pam Dummitt, Sue Ridd, Nelda Snyder) has assembled the following partial slate of candidates for the 2015 - 2017 term.

President: Eileen Geller
Treasurer: Lewis Barnett
Development Chair: Jack Esworthy IV
Education: Joyce Caldwell

We have a mid-term opening for Membership, and Mario and Gail Grasso have agreed to tag team the administrative functions of that position. We would still like to identify a third member of that team to man the membership table at monthly meetings.

We have identified a potential Conservation chair and are continuing that conversation. We are still searching for members to fill the First Vice-president, Secretary, Legislation, Conservation, Youth Education and Hospitality positions. If you have suggestions or are interested in these positions yourself, please contact a member of the committee.
Birding Southeast Arizona
Ellison Orcutt

One of the most exciting parts of birding is visiting a region for the first time. When you visit a completely new region, many of the birds you only knew from field guides are finally revealed. I had that opportunity this March when I visited Southeast Arizona for the first time. SE Arizona is one of the premier birding regions in the United States. It hosts an outstanding diversity of birds and is especially famous for the number of "Mexican specialties" that occur there. Along the riparian corridors and among the mountain canyons and "sky islands" birders can stumble upon numerous species found nowhere else in the United States. My visit was a few weeks ahead of the peak for spring migration, but that didn't stop me from seeing thirty seven life birds in four days. Now that I have a good understanding of the resident birds of SE Arizona, I hope to return for a late spring trip to pick up where I left off. Until then, I have the pictures to remind me of the experience. To see the full set of my photos from the trip visit my Flickr page at https://www.flickr.com/photos/ellison_orcutt/sets/72157651670328811/

Favorite photos on next page.

Richmond Audubon's Annual Bird-a-thon

Each year, Richmond Audubon sponsors a Bird-a-Thon as one of our major fund raisers. Crack teams of intrepid birders criss-cross the state over a frantic 24 hour period of their choosing, identifying by sight and sound as many species as they can.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to pick one of the teams to back and make a donation to show your support!

Learn more about the participating teams, or make your donation:

Birdzerk!
Crazy Coots
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Ducklings
Purple Martians

Kids Who Find It Hard to Believe Anyone Cares

Martha Steger

When Fox News WRLH’s anchor Diane Walker was inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame on April 9, 2015, she talked about visiting second- and fifth-graders at Swansboro Elementary School – one of the same schools at which RAS started an outdoor program. About her own visit, Walker said, “A fifth-grade boy asked me, ‘Why are you here?’ I didn’t know what he meant so I just stood there for a moment. He repeated the question, adding, “This is Swansboro Elementary School – nobody cares about us. You stopped what you were doing on TV to come and be here with us?”
Birds of Southeast Arizona

Elegant Trogon: Patagonia Lake State Park, AZ

Say’s Phoebe with Costa’s Hummingbird: Sun City Grand, AZ

Spotted Towhee: Carr Canyon, AZ

Curve-billed Thrasher: Sun City Grand, AZ

Cactus Wren: Sun City Grand, AZ

Photography by Ellison Orcutt

Nikon D 7100 with Sigma 150-500 lens
If you miss the May RAS meeting, you risk not seeing more pictures like the ones above and on the left.

Mary Arginteanu conducting an outdoor nature class for high school students.
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.)

May 2nd  Saturday
42nd St. with Ellison Orcutt
Start time: 7:00 am
Warblers! Join Ellison to explore one of the best city limits locations for enjoying the spring warbler migration. This beautiful section of the James River Park has a treetop pedestrian bridge that can produce eye level views of hard to spot warblers and other migrants. Meet Ellison at the 42nd St. lot off of Riverside Dr. A small $5.00 donation per person will be collected to benefit Richmond Audubon. For more information contact him at fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org.

May 3rd  Sunday
Bryan Park with Jan Frye-Johnson
Start time: ½ hour after sunrise
Meeting location: Shelter 1, Joseph Bryan Park
Join Jan for early morning birding in Bryan Park. This historic park in Richmond’s Northside always has an abundance of birds. Migrants will be preparing for their journey and resident birds will be busy with the breeding season. For more information, contact Jan at byrdnyrd33@gmail.com.

May 9th  Saturday
Warbler Road with Darrell Peterson
Start time: 7:00 am
Join Darrell to explore one of the premier spring birding areas in Virginia. The roads that make up “Warbler Road” lie within Jefferson National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Seeing more than 20 species of warblers in a day during spring migration is possible here. Meet Darrell at the Sunset Fields Overlook (mile marker 78.4) on the Blue Ridge Parkway at 7:00 am. From there the group will bird their way down the mountain roads until reaching the James River via FR-812 around lunchtime. For those wishing for a little extra birding, Darrel will meet folks at the Sunset Fields Overlook at 5:30 am to take a walk up the hill and listen for owls and to take in the morning chorus. The drive is about 2:45 hours from Richmond. Staying the night before at one of the nearby hotels is recommended. For more information and help with directions contact Darrell at dpeterson@vcu.edu.

May 10th  Sunday
Three Lakes Park with Ellison Orcutt
Start time: 7:30 am
Join Ellison for a Mother’s Day morning of birding at Three Lakes Park. This small Henrico County Park, which is known for its lakes is also home to nesting Prothonotary Warblers and can have good birds during migrations. The park is located off of Wilkinson Rd near its intersection with Chamberlayne Ave. The address is 400 Sausiluta Dr. Henrico, VA 23227. For more information contact Ellison at fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org.

May 16th  Saturday
Lickinghole Creek Craft Brewery with Lewis Barnett.
Join Lewis for a walk on the site of Virginia’s only Farm Brewery. Located on Little Lickinghole Creek in Goochland County, the property boasts a variety of habitats and birds. After the walk participants will head to the patio to try some fine craft beers. Meet at the Tuckahoe Village Shopping Center on Patterson Avenue near the McDons at 8:15 am to carpool to the Brewery, or meet on site at 9:00 am. Contact Lewis Barnett (president@richmondaudubon.org, 804-920-4723) to register. The brewery is located at 4100 Knolls Point Dr, Goochland, VA 23063.

May 17th  Saturday
Dutch Gap with Lewis Barnett
Meet Lewis at 8:00 am at the entrance to Henricus Historical Park/Dutch Gap Conservation area. Explore this great birding destination to see what birds are around. Migration will be in full swing; help Lewis find some stunning spring warblers. For more information, contact president@richmondaudubon.org.

June 6th  Saturday
Dutch Gap with Lewis Barnett
Start time: 8:00 am
See the May 17th trip for more info.

June 7th  Sunday
Bryan Park with Rex and Kathy Springston
Start time: ½ hour after sunrise
Meeting location: Shelter 1, Joseph Bryan Park
See May 2nd walk for more info. Contact Rex and Kathy at crexs@aol.com for more info.

June 20th  Saturday
RAS Picnic
Rain date on June 21st.
Details on page 7.
“In evening, as storm clouds pass and streams of gold wash the banks of gray and bathe the hills with sunset colors, and birds fly quietly to secret roosts...night is near.” John Coe, from a friend’s porch in Highland County

May and June...a time of change... Storms and rainbows, greens and flowers and buzzy insects, and little toads in the garden. And new birds- lots of new birds singing in the very early morning and quiet at midday; a time of teaching and learning. Our new birds of summer finding their wings and finding their way. The “old timers” who call our yard home year long tend their young, and some build new nests and raise more young to enrich our yard and feast on our bugs and seeds and bring color and song to our eyes and ears. Soon enough the heat of summer will bring more change, and then, that too will pass.

May - the Flower Moon - almost the whole green world comes to blossom, a feast for the bees, a treat for the eye. The full moon occurs at 11:42 pm on the 3rd. Saturn is opposite the sun – very bright – rising at sunset and setting at sunrise.

June – the Hot Moon, the Strawberry Moon occurs at 12:19 am on the 2nd. Look to the western night skies the 19th – 21st, the moon, Venus and Jupiter stage a beautiful encounter with the star Regulus.

Annual RAS Picnic, Saturday, June 20, 2015

Nelda Snyder will host our annual picnic for the twenty-fourth consecutive year at her beautiful Varina home on Saturday, June 20th. Come by 8:00 am for the morning bird walk. Coffee will be ready and waiting for you. The rain date is Sunday, June 21st. Call Nelda at 795-1446 or 869-7588 Saturday after 7:00 am if in doubt.

Bring your own meat to cook on the grills and a dish to share (four or more servings). We will eat around noon. RAS will provide drinks, ice, and utensils. Nelda 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.

Nelda’s address is 9900 Arrahatteck Trail, Henrico VA 23231

May Program: Chicken Odyssey
May 21, 2015: Join us for “Our Chicken Odyssey”: A 2,500-mile circle around Denver in 10-days and a different motel every night, over 150 species, all in freezing weather.

Long time Auduboners and local characters Bob Coles and Jerry Uhlman will give us the insider’s story, with great pictures and a pretty impressive bird list. See a preview on page 5.

The May program will be on Thursday May 21st at St. Luke Lutheran Church on Chippenham Parkway at Custis Road. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. with coffee, cookies and conversation starting at 6:30 pm. See you there.

Richmond Audubon has no member meetings in June, July or August. We look forward to seeing you on September 17th!

This edition of the Thrasher represents the last one under the able leadership of Lewis Barnett who has worked tirelessly to improve the Richmond Audubon Society. Thank you Lewis for six great years.

Our main fundraiser is the annual Birdathon that is held in the April/May timeframe. Please join an existing team or form your own and get out in the field for RAS.

Q - Why did the Crazy Coots cross the road?
A - They were taking part in the 2015 RAS Birdathon.
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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