Pre-meeting Dinner
Gini Quarles and Lou Reza
hospitality@richmondaudubon.org,
Please try to join us for the dinner before the meeting at 5:30 PM on Thursday, September 16 and October 21. You do not have to bring food but you are welcome to share one of your favorite dishes—made by you or from a local deli. Keep all your receipts for any food you buy and you can be reimbursed for their expenses. There is a $5 charge to cover drinks, paper products and fill in food items. Call 804-972-5140 or e-mail us by the Monday of the meeting week.

September Program
Join us for our September 16 meeting at 7:00 PM.

James River Park
Ralph White, manager of the 550 acre James River Park that flows through Richmond, will present a program highlighting the many recreational, birding, and volunteer opportunities there.

Avian Defender Award
After Ralph’s program RAS will present the Avian Defender Award to this year’s recipient.

Community to Community
We are fortunate to have Mary Elfner, Virginia IBA coordinator, and Matthew Jeffery, manager of NAS International Alliance Programs speak about plans for a cooperative program to preserve breeding grounds of the Prothonotary Warbler here in Virginia and wintering grounds in Panama, Central America.

October Program
Frozen in Flight
On October 21 at 7:00 PM.

Richmond taxidermist Robert Olson will educate us about this art form which is thousands of years old. Robert specializes in avian taxidermy. He artfully places his subjects in natural poses that display their plumage and behavior. Robert will present a slide show illustrating his work and display some finished examples.
President’s Message
The State of the Society
Lewis Barnett

In mid-July, the Richmond Audubon Society board of directors held its annual leadership retreat at the VCU Rice Center. The beautiful setting and innovative, environmentally friendly structure provided a wonderful venue for our meeting. The members of the board asked me to write this summary of the important facets of the discussion for the membership at large.

The short version is that Richmond Audubon has enjoyed great success over the past few years in developing our signature programs, but we have not been immune to the altered fund raising landscape that all non-profits are dealing with as a result of the extended economic recession in which we find ourselves. The MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship), Prothonotary Warbler and Northern Saw-whet Owl banding projects have a strong cadre of volunteers and continue to contribute valuable data on bird populations in Central Virginia to long-running scientific studies. The RAS Kids program, by dint of hard work, creativity, and its own group of dedicated volunteers, is enjoying great success introducing children from Richmond public schools and other groups to the wonders of nature and the importance of protecting them. Field trips and monthly membership meetings continue to be well attended.

Supporting these worthwhile and successful programs doesn’t come for free, of course, so it is important to understand our financial outlook as we plan for the future. RAS derives its income from three sources. We receive a certain amount each year from National Audubon based on the number of NAS members in the zip codes that have been assigned to Richmond Audubon. We raise additional monies through fundraising events like our annual auction and Bird-a-thon. And we receive some support from external grants. Successful fund raising and effective stewardship of our financial resources through the last few years left Richmond Audubon in a strong position as the economy began to deteriorate. But last year, in order to continue the historical level of

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© Naseem Reza

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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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.
Pre-meeting continued from page 1

Please let us 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 us your name by mid-day on Wednesday. If you cannot make it to the dinner, you will not be responsible for the cost but if you can make it we will save some good food for you.

Gone to the Birds T-shirts
Sue Ridd

Gone to the Birds T-shirts are still available. Proceeds go towards the payment of the booths, advertising and more T-shirts in next year’s festival. It goes through a nonprofit 501-3C organization, the Shockoe Bottom Neighborhood Association (SBNA).

Shirts are $10. Add $4.00 for postage and handling. Make checks out to SBNA or Shockoe Bottom Neighborhood Association. Send the checks to: T-shirts, 9655 Greenmeadow Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23060 or call 804-270-5365 to make arrangements to meet me at 17th Street Farmers Market.

Birdathon Update
Pam Dummitt, Treasurer

As of Thrasher article deadline day, all identified pledges for this year’s Birdathon have been collected. Our best event year ever brought in over $4,000. This year’s grand total stands at $2,875.10. Thanks to everyone who pledged and/or donated to make this a great fundraiser.
Climate Bill Setback; Conservationists Hopeful

Glenda C. Booth, gbooth123@aol.com, Advocacy Chair, National Audubon Society

Despite concerted efforts to craft a bill that would garner 60 votes in the U.S. Senate, Senate leaders announced in late July that the Senate would not take up a comprehensive clean energy and climate bill before the Senate’s August recess because 60 senators would not commit to voting for a comprehensive bill.

Most major conservation groups expressed disappointment in this announcement and urged the Senate to pass a bill this year. Clean energy and climate change are National Audubon’s top federal legislative priorities. It is not clear at this time what the Senate will do.

Don’t Disable EPA: There are rumblings that the House of Representatives and Senate may consider legislation to limit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s use of its current Clean Air Act authority to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. National Audubon urges all Auduboners to ask legislators to oppose legislation that would curb EPA’s authority to curtail greenhouse gas emissions. In voting on one such measure in June, the Murkowski amendment, Virginia Senator Jim Webb announced that he would support a similar measure introduced by Senator Jay Rockefeller. You can read his comments here: http://webb.senate.gov/newsroom/pressreleases/2010-06-10-03.cfm.

Here are some points you could make:

- The current Clean Air Act is designed to protect human health and welfare. Greenhouse gas emissions are a threat to human health. For example, as the Earth warms, we will have increased incidences of vector-borne diseases and respiratory illnesses. EPA has a responsibility to protect the public health and needs the legal tools to do so.
- The U.S. Supreme Court in 2007 reaffirmed that U.S. EPA has authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the current Clean Air act.
- EPA, using this authority, is beginning to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, from, for example, vehicles. EPA is merely doing what the Clean Air Act already requires—and what it was ordered to do by the Supreme Court.
- Hamstringing EPA would seriously set back 40 years efforts to improve air quality.

Keep Pressing on Energy/Climate: National Audubon asks all Auduboners to urge Virginia Senators Mark Warner and Jim Webb to pass a comprehensive bill this year. Here are some points you could make:

- Climate change is one of the most serious environmental threats to ever face the planet.
- The House of Representatives passed a bill last year and President Obama has asked Congress to act.
- Senator Warner and Senator Jim Webb should take strong leadership roles. They are key to moving a bill forward.
- The Virginia Climate Commission asked Virginia’s legislators to act.
- The past decade was the warmest on record. Increased warming without curtailing greenhouse gas emissions will bring more violent weather events, more drought, more sea level rise, more vector-borne diseases and higher energy costs.
- The disastrous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the West Virginia coal mining accident are unfortunate reminders of our heavy reliance on fossil fuels and the need to transition to cleaner sources of energy.
- Moving to clean energy and energy efficiency can create jobs.
- Many other nations have acted. The United States should do. We are losing credibility internationally.

How to contact Virginia’s U. S. senators:
The Honorable James Webb
(http://webb.senate.gov/)
The Honorable Mark Warner
(http://warner.senate.gov)
U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C. 20510.
For clean energy and climate fact sheets, visit http://www.audubon.org/globalWarming/GetTheFacts.php
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/) or the RAS website for any late breaking news about field trips (www.richmondaudubon.org/ActivFieldTrip.html.)

September 5th, Sunday, Bryan Park with Sue Ridd, 6:30 AM. 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.

September 8, 2nd Wednesday Walk, Robious Landing Park: John Coe will resume the 2nd Wednesday RAS walks in September. There will be a walk at Robious Landing Park on the James River in Chesterfield County. Call or email John for details at (804) 276-1397 or johnwcoe@verizon.net.

Sunday, September 12, Curles Neck Farm, 6:45 AM. Call or email John Coe to register for the trips. (804) 276-1397, johnwcoe@verizon.net.

Saturday, September 18, York River State Park, 8:00 AM. Join us on for a 1.8 mile hike at. We will most likely be taking the Taskinas Trail. Visit: http://www.virginiaoutdoors.com/parks/activities/york-river-state-park/Hiking/ and scroll down to the Taskinas Trail section to see a description and view a short video. This trail is rated as moderate due to stairs and hills. It passes through field, forest and a boardwalk takes you along Taskinas Creek Marsh Area. Meet in the parking lot on the right after you pass through the ranger station near the restrooms. There is a $3 park entrance fee per person. Contact Margaret Ebbs at mebbs525@juno.com or 804-338-5416. Directions: From I-64, take the Croaker Exit 231B. Go north on Route 607 (Croaker Rd.) for one mile, then right on Route 606 (Riverview Rd.) about one and a half miles to the park entrance. Take a left turn into the park.

September 25, Saturday, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM. Members FREE; Special Non-Member Cost: $6.00 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. Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or tylerturpin@earthlink.net. Lewis Ginter BT is located at 1800 Lakeside Ave, Richmond, VA 23228-4700.

Tuesday Twitter, Tuesday afternoons in September beginning at 1:15 PM. For more information contact Barbara Eck, baraeeck@verizon.net, or Alice Boller, Boo0935@aol.com, for more information.

October 30, Saturday, The annual trip to Fisherman Island. This trip is full. Feel free to call or email if you are still interested and I will gladly put you on a waiting list. Life happens and people have to reschedule. We go rain, wind or shine and sometimes that is not for everyone. Call Julie Kacmarcik at (804) 530-3660 evenings after 8:30 PM, or email juliekazz@comcast.net.

October 30, Saturday, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM. Members FREE; Special Non-Member Cost: $6.00. Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or tylerturpin@earthlink.net.

November 13, Saturday (rain date for this trip is November 20), Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 8:00 AM to 9:45 AM. Members FREE; Special Non-Member Cost: $6.00. Contact: Tyler Turpin at (804) 317-9478 or tylerturpin@earthlink.net.

Sunday, November 14, Curles Neck Farm, 6:45 AM. Call or email John Coe to register for the trips. (804) 276-1397, johnwcoe@verizon.net.

Sunday, December 19, Hopewell Christmas Bird Count. Call or email Arun Bose to sign up or get more details. (804) 335-8813, arun1bose@gmail.com.
The dragonflies feel a change. There are three of them—green darners—lined up on the clothesline; two facing each other, the other facing away, their large eyes turning all about, their transparent wings shining in the afternoon sunlight. They tilt their wings to catch the sun's rays, like tiny solar panels. They fly off one by one darting over the lawn and then return to seek the sun.

Tonight the winds are forecast to come out of the north, bringing our first taste of autumn—a “notice” to summer of its ending. The dragonfly knows this. The butterflies feeding out front on the butterfly bush know, too. How do they know?

I'm in awe of nature's little beings—brains so small, yet each a masterpiece. How do they know? I have watched as a mingling of songbirds busily feeding at the feeder, engaging, perhaps, in small bird-talk, raise not so much as a feather when a the Mourning Dove swoops in at warp speed. Yet, if a Sharp-shinned Hawk happens across the neighborhood, a block away, full-scale panic sets in. I myself have trouble sometimes telling a Mourning Dove from a small hawk in flight. How do they know? And the pretty little female hummingbird that faithfully returns to my yard year after year to raise her young, after an annual migration across the Gulf of Mexico and back. How does she know?

Speaking of hummingbirds, we have had more enjoying our yard this summer than I can remember lately. Also lots of young cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Tufted Titmice, chickadees, House Finches, White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers, goldfinches, and Mourning Doves. Robins nested nearby and the Great Crested Flycatchers, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-eyed Vireo and the Barred Owl nested in the woods down by the creek, as did the Red-shouldered Hawk. Our neighborhood has a family of Indigo Buntings, to our delight, and the bluebirds have raised two healthy broods this summer.

The full moon in September occurs at 5:17 AM on the 23rd, and is known as the Harvest Moon. The autumnal equinox occurs at 11:09 PM on the 22nd, marking the end of summer and the beginning of fall.

The full moon in October occurs at 9:37 PM on the 22nd, and is known as the Hunter's Moon. The Orionid meteor shower peaks the night before the full moon so only the brightest shooting stars will be visible.

“The greater the efforts we make to fathom the secrets of the birds, the more our knowledge expands, the clearer becomes the realization that the secrets of the birds will remain mysteries of nature as long as she abounds with the miracles of life.”

Hans Dossenbach

From The Kitchen Window—Summer’s End
John Coe

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Southampton Elementary School Butterfly Garden

Donna Cottingham

As a Salisbury Garden Club member, I received a $900 grant from the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs to fund a school butterfly garden project. Through RAS Kids, I was already working with several elementary schools so I chose Southampton as the site. Using the book *The Life Cycles of Butterflies* by Burris and Richards as a resource, I planned the garden to feature specific plants that a variety of butterflies need as both nectar plants and host plants for their caterpillars. Since it was late fall when grants were announced, I started the project immediately so it would be in place and ready for the students to use in the spring.

The biggest factor in starting the project was turning a high traffic, compacted space of weeds and dirt, into an attractive and visible spot that could be used for outdoor lessons about plants, insects, life cycles, soil, roots, seeds and much more.

Transforming the area required a raised bed, so half of the funding went toward professional labor to till, build the 10x12 frame and deliver truckloads of composted bedding material and mulch. Mary Arginteanu and Joyce Caldwell assisted throughout the labor process. The plants we installed in the fall were:

- 2 milkweeds – swamp and ice ballet
- 5 coneflowers – ruby star
- 3 asters – wood’s pink
- 2 butterfly bushes – honeycomb

I also added a few tall verbena from my garden and ornamental cabbages for texture and color since the above items lost their leaves for winter and the brand new garden lacked color.

Next, volunteers were on hand to assist several classes with planting pansies and muscari bulbs in late November. As a result, the garden instantly provided a bright splash of color in front of the school that lasted until late spring.

In the spring, I added several bloodflower milkweed plants, a monarch favorite, as well as lantana, an annual in Virginia. After I presented a lesson on butterfly habitat needs and life cycles, fifth grade students planted zinnias, fennel, snapdragons, cosmos, phlox, pentas and monarda. Art students made mosaic butterfly stepping stones. The art teacher made "butterfly garden" signs in English and Spanish to complete the garden. RAS Kids was instrumental in securing funding and establishing other classroom gardens at Southampton. On May 1 a celebration and ribbon cutting was held to celebrate all of the school gardens. About 100 people attended. The school dedicated the butterfly garden to a favorite teacher who passed away last year.

The butterfly garden is now complete and ready for the butterflies. Teachers have already used the school gardens to enhance classroom learning. The students and the surrounding community will enjoy all of the gardens for many years to come.
Email list connection (RAS Listserv)

Diane Jadlowski, Publicity Chair

Want to be in the know with the latest, greatest local up to date information in the Richmond area BY the members and FOR the members? Subscribe now for Richmond Audubon Society (RAS) email list connection (RAS Listserv). RAS Listserv is an email based message delivery system accessible to RAS members and non-members that broadcasts a message from any subscribed RAS Listserv member to the entire group that has signed up for it. This communication tool is regularly used to post bird sightings, to update field trip changes, announce upcoming RAS meetings or to ask questions.

To join for free —
Go to our website RichmondAudubon.org
CLICK on “Membership” at the top of the page
Scroll down to the end of the first paragraph under “Benefits”
CLICK on “RAS Listserv”
Scroll down to “To Subscribe:” and CLICK on the designated place and an email with “subscribe” in the subject line will come up on your screen.
The just SEND the email. *Important to confirm* to activate account so when you receive the confirmation email a few minutes later you simply CLICK on REPLY Must complete this step or you won’t be subscribed and won’t receive any emails. It is that easy!