



Dedicated to Community-Based Conservation of Natural Resources through Environmental Education and Outreach on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay



Harvest Hoedown Sunday, October 12 11am-4pm

Join us for our annual Harvest Hoedown celebration at Pickering Creek! Enjoy a wonderful day with your family. The Hoedown has fun for everyone including live music, tractor and boat rides, crafts, fun exhibits, children's activities, food, and a freshly harvested farmer's market!

**Admission is \$10 a car.
Rain or Shine!**



*Connecting
all generations
with nature*

Experiencing Nature: Why it is so important for our youth!

By Jillian Getman, EcoCamp Seasonal Educator

One morning while preparing my lunch for another day of EcoCamp, I heard a news story that caught my attention. According to the report, recent scientific studies have shown that children who are deprived of exposure to nature are more susceptible to certain negative psychological conditions, such as depression, than those who are in proximity to nature more regularly. The outcome of these studies came as no surprise to me, as I am a firm believer that nature offers children an experience incomparable to others. While it is saddening to learn that so many children today do not have the opportunity to be immersed in the natural world, it is refreshing to know that there are still sanctuaries like Pickering Creek that can offer those opportunities to our youth.

Coming from a rural home in upstate New York, I was raised with unlimited access to the natural environment. I have many memories of walking up the road to the "frog pond" and spending hours catching frogs in the late afternoons, taking extended walks in the woods behind our house, and even traveling the half-mile to our neighbor's farm and climbing up to the rafters in their hay-filled barn. Because of my upbringing and surroundings, I have always found nature to be a source of entertainment, an entire world that I could experience alone, without interruption.

Being lucky enough to grow up in a rural setting, I have come to see nature as indispensable to our youth. Undoubtedly, nature stimulates the human instinct to explore; it piques children's curiosity with a never-ending supply of opportunities to learn. Nature offers an experience that is



tactile, dynamic, and completely individualized. The importance of interactions with nature, in my opinion, can never be overstated.

Therefore, it has been a great pleasure for me to be involved with the EcoCamp at Pickering Creek. Camp itself has been such an encouraging experience, and I have been overjoyed at witnessing the children's interactions with nature at Pickering Creek. I am continually in awe of the kid's knowledge and interest in nature, and simultaneously encouraged by the education they must be receiving both at school and at home. Here at Pickering Creek, I've seen children who aren't afraid to pick up daddy-long-legs, who are eager to rummage for worms among dead logs, who actually request to go on long hikes. I've been amazed and amused by their interest in the creatures they find both in water and on land.

With so many warnings and dooms-day tales about our environment, it is wonderful to see the next generation being raised with a knowledge and appreciation for the natural world. Of course, they're still kids – they will leave their wrappers on the ground and scramble for toads with deet-soaked hands – but at least they are interacting with their environment; experiencing nature as a source of excitement and entertainment.

continued on page 10



Webster the Waterfowl Festival Goose visits the Pickering Hoedown

The Waterfowl Festival has supported Pickering Creek's education programs for youth for the last fifteen years. Over that time Waterfowl Festival support for Pickering Creek has exceeded a quarter of a million dollars. The Festival has been instrumental in connecting elementary school students to the Chesapeake Bay through our Gateways to Conservation program as well as being a current supporter of our Audubon Watershed Birding and Fishing program for High School students. The Festival has made a real impact on environmental quality in our communities, please support them by attending this super weekend of art, local flavor and fun.



Waterfowl Festival
A Wildlife Art and
Sportsman's Expo
November 14-16
Tickets Online at

www.waterfowlfestival.org

Pokin' Around

By Mandy Smith,
Education Program Coordinator

One of the telling signs that fall is about to begin are the yields of dark purple berries that belong to poke. A plant known as poke, pokeweed or pokeberry, *Phytolacca americana* is a diverse and beneficial plant. One can easily identify poke by its bright green leaves and reddish-purple stems that can reach heights of ten feet. However, most people recognize poke when the berries ripen.

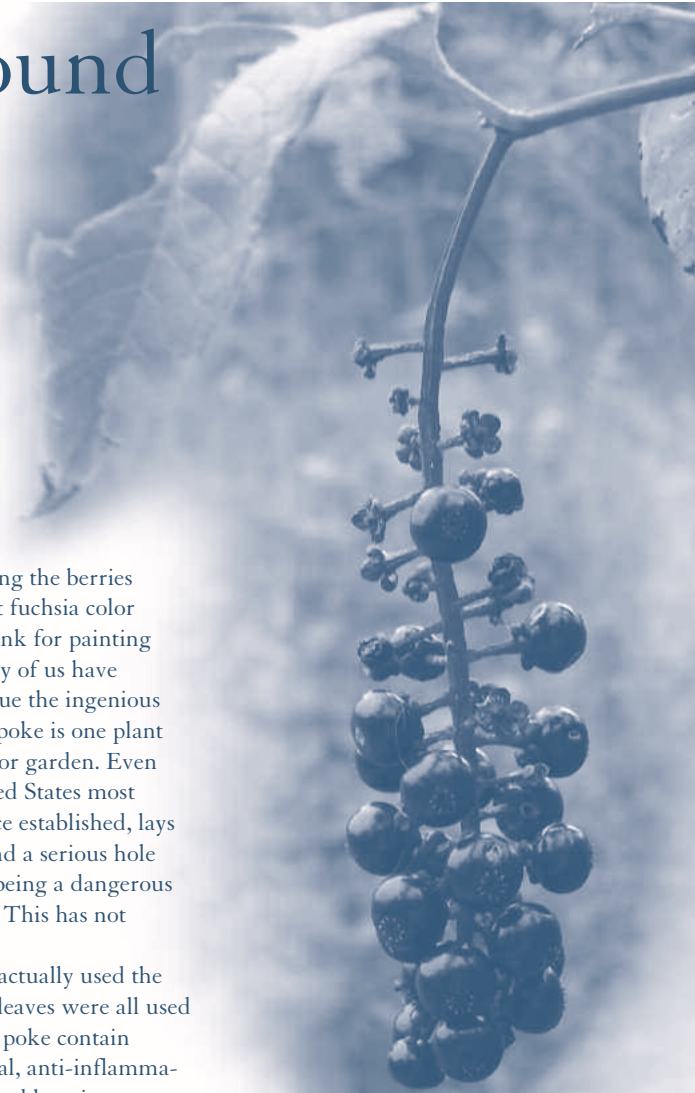
I have fond memories as a child taking the berries and smashing them to expose the brilliant fuchsia color hidden inside. I would use the berries as ink for painting and to decorate sidewalks and cloth. Many of us have similar experiences and kids today continue the ingenious use of pokeberries. Of course, for adults, poke is one plant that is not fondly welcomed to ones yard or garden. Even though poke is native to the eastern United States most people see it as a noxious weed. Poke, once established, lays down a deep taproot that only a shovel and a serious hole can remove. It also has the reputation of being a dangerous plant because of certain parts being toxic. This has not always been the case for poke.

Native Americans and early settlers actually used the plant medicinally. The berries, roots and leaves were all used to treat different ailments. These parts of poke contain metabolism balancing, antifungal, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, immune stimulant and laxative properties, just to name a few. Both the root and berries were used to treat the swellings brought on by rheumatism, sprains and other disorders. Folks would make teas, tinctures or poultices. The root also was a source of the immune stimulating property. They would dig up the root in the autumn to make a tincture to be taken internally before the onset of cold season. Poke was still listed in major American drug texts until the early part of the 20th century. Then, it was deemed that all parts of poke were poisonous and not fit to use. However, the application of poke as a medicine continues today.

Herbalists and families that have passed down folk remedies for generations still benefit from poke's powerful medicine. People in the South make 'poke salad' - using the tender young shoots (picked before budding) -which is not an actual salad, but a meal made from boiling the greens and cooking them with pork fat. Families in Appalachia make pink water from the berries in the fall to use as an immune booster. Being that the seed is very toxic, they boil down the berries and strain out the seeds and boil the water three times before ingesting. And some still will swallow one berry a day to treat arthritis. Knowing poke very well is the key before using this extraordinary plant.

Not only has poke helped humans over the centuries, it has also benefited wildlife. Birds will flock to the berries and devour them. This is the reason why one finds a lot of poke pokin' around. When a bird consumes the berry, it digests the fleshy part of the fruit then excretes the undigestible seed with a bit of 'fertilizer' and the seed is started on its way to germination.

When you find poke popping up perhaps you might leave some growing in an unattended place in your yard for the birds, for some young spring greens and also to appreciate the beauty of a plant that has an abundance of healing to give. If you are interested in learning more about poke resources that were used are: www.racehorseherbal.com or *Healing Plants* by Ana NexHeatherly. Make sure to not use poke on your own, it is best to consult with an herbalist or someone that has years of experience with this plant.



Pokeweed berries are a favorite of many native birds.

The Bird Call

NEWS FOR AND ABOUT PICKERING CREEK VOLUNTEERS

Partner Up! Introducing TogetherGreen and the Pickering Partners Program

By Beth Wasden, Volunteer Coordinator

Pickering Creek is thrilled to announce that it is one of 41 pilot sites chosen to participate in the TogetherGreen Volunteer Days program! TogetherGreen is a joint effort between National Audubon Society and Toyota. Our first TogetherGreen event will occur on Sunday, September 21 National Public Lands Workday! Looking ahead, the second event TogetherGreen event will occur at our annual Earth Day Workday on April 19, 2009.

TogetherGreen will provide \$7,000 for six workdays between September 21 and May 2009. This funding will help us cover volunteer program costs, such as locally grown food, safety items, tools, plants, and other equipment. The program will also provide other volunteer incentives and promotional items, including hats, t-shirts, and a banner.

One of the primary goals of the TogetherGreen Volunteer Days program is to expand volunteer programs at Audubon centers, Important Bird Areas, and partner sites and to enhance recruitment opportunities. Accordingly, part of Pickering Creek's TogetherGreen strategy is to promote and kick-start the Adopt-a-Trail and Adopt-a-Buffer aspects of our new Pickering Partners program. These adoption programs will promote local organizations, groups, and businesses who choose to adopt trail segments or buffer strips and at the same time strengthen our maintenance and monitoring of trails and buffer strips. By having built-in, long-term

Thanks to the following Pickering Partners:

DataSearch Solutions worked closely with us to upgrade and revamp our volunteer database to Filemaker Pro Advanced v9.1, which they also donated. They were a pleasure to work with and have over 15 years of experience in database programming. To find out more about services and products of Data Search Solutions, visit <http://datasearchsolutions.com>.

Chesapics provided us with a generous donation and exceptional photographs that we use in promotional materials, for thank-yous, and to accompany articles. Royce Ball's vibrant, stunning work can also be seen in media outlets such as What's Up, Eastern Shore? and Talbot Guide. To see his photos visit <http://www.chesapics.com>.



Dedicated volunteers remove Japanese honeysuckle from the riparian buffer strip surrounding prime wood duck habitat at Earth Day Workday 2008.

maintenance providers, we will also improve our leverage when applying for future restoration grants.

Adoptions can serve as terrific service learning opportunities for families and youth groups. We will provide orientation, training, tool kits, and equipment and adopters will provide at least three days of service per year. Plant identification, invasive plant removal, and native plantings will be crucial components in buffer strip adoptions. Trail adopters will be responsible for interpretive signage care, yearly maintenance of bridges and blinds, ensuring that trails are passable, and removing invasive plants from trail sides.

Pickering Partners may also opt to provide cash or product donations, to support the overall volunteer program and staff of specific volunteer events as the donor wishes. Product donations such as GPS units, first aid kits and other safety items, equipment and tools are also greatly appreciated.

For more information about volunteer program sponsorships or the TogetherGreen series of workdays, please contact Beth Wasden at dwasden@pickeringcreek.org, by calling 410-822-4903, x26, or by downloading our brochure at <http://www.pickeringcreek.org/volnews/volsponsor.html>.

Would you like monthly, environmentally friendly volunteer updates? Then join the Pickering Volunteers digital distribution list by emailing Beth at dwasden@pickeringcreek.org. You can also keep informed of upcoming volunteer programs, happenings, kudos and thanks by visiting the volunteer section of our website at <http://www.pickeringcreek.org/volnews/index.html>.

Thanks to all of our volunteers for their hard work, energy, support, and enthusiasm during 2008 and beyond!

Upcoming Volunteer Programs- Mark your Calendar!

Registration is required for each of the following events. Please contact Beth Wasden at 410-822-4903, x26, or via email at dwasden@pickeringcreek.org to sign up or for more information. With the exception of Harvest Hoedown, volunteers should wear long pants, closed-toe shoes, and clothing that can be dirtied. Volunteers should also bring a water bottle and work gloves, if available.

National Public Lands Workday: A TogetherGreen Event

Sunday, September 21, 10 AM-3 PM

Join us on the last day of summer as we blaze a path towards the autumn, the school groups, and our biggest event of the year, Harvest Hoedown! National Public Lands Workday celebrates the spirit of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the powerful action of a team, and the lands that are free and open to the public—like Pickering Creek. Help us improve habitat for birds, wildlife, and visitors while giving back. We'll provide a locally grown lunch, along with work gloves, camaraderie, and service projects. Participants may volunteer for the morning, the afternoon, or all day. Please specify when registering. National Public Lands Workday is the first of six TogetherGreen events we will offer through May 2009.



Hoedown Work Party/Harvest Hoedown Thursday, October 9, 4 PM-DUSK and Sunday, October 12, 11 AM-4 PM

It's that time of year again! Tap your toes, clap your hands, and get ready to bring some Hoedown fun to these lands! After enjoying eats of a locally grown harvest supper, help us prepare for Hoedown. String up the cornstalks, disperse the gourds and pumpkins, and line the lane with straw bales at the Hoedown Work Party on October 9th. We will have activities that volunteers of all ages can enjoy. Then, on October 12, join us for the big event. We need dozens of volunteers to make the day work. Two-hour to all-day shifts are available; positions include canoe soda sellers, gatekeepers, parking attendants, and more. Contact Beth for a full list and description of volunteer positions and to sign up for a shift or three!

Keep an eye on the Pickering Creek website for more information about these events and other upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Contact Beth Wasden, volunteer coordinator, at 410.822. 4903, x26 or by emailing her at dwasden@pickeringcreek.org to register for these events or for more information.

Autumn LIFE Sessions: are open to all volunteers and those interested in volunteering



Volunteer Les Roslund leads LIFE 2008 members on an enjoyable bird walk.

History of Working the Land at Heigh-Ho Farm

Wednesday, September 3, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM

Learn about Pickering Creek's past, the changing field of agriculture, and the hows and whys of farming at Pickering. Hank Spies, Eastern Shore and Pickering farmer, will lead a discussion of where we've been and where we're going. Education Coordinator Mandy Smith will lead hands-on activities from our Gateways to Agriculture curriculum guide.

Working the Land for Wildlife at Pickering

Wednesday, October 22, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM

In October, join Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage staff in a presentation about Pickering's restored wetlands and habitat improvements that homeowners can make too. Volunteer birdman Les Roslund will then take a walk on the WILD WATERFOWL side as he leads a wetland walk. Please bring a picnic lunch to enjoy after the sessions. Contact Beth Wasden at dwasden@pickeringcreek.org to register or for more information.

Ecology Themes at the Blockston Branch and Geology, Soils, and Evolutionary History at Adkins Arboretum

At Adkins Arboretum* on Thursdays, September 18 and 25

Contact Erica Weick at eweick@adkinsarboretum.org to register or for more information.

Fish Tagging Workshop and Survey and Tour of Gibson's Grant

At CBEC on Wednesday, October 8 and on Tuesday, October 14

Contact Barb Schmeckpeper at bjschmeck@comcast.net to register or for more information.

*Space is limited. Register by September 1.

Wrens in the Front, Buzzards in the Back

Article and Photographs by guest columnist Bonna L. Nelson

They all seemed to arrive at about the same time a few weeks back. Two tiny, mud-colored Carolina Wrens swooped in and out and around our covered front porch or sat up on the roof angrily chirping. And out by the water a few coal black buzzards took up silent residence in our trees and on our pier. All at once nature came calling and I didn't know where to focus my attention, front or back?

After several instances of forgetting about my guests on the front porch as I egressed or ingressed, startling them into frantic flight, I made a discovery—a little nest. The wrens constructed their nest in my front door wreath amidst silk roses, daisies and greenery. Fine strands of pale thread, thin blades of dried grasses and puffs of fluffy cotton made up the conical-shaped miniature home. The birds were wise to build their nest there, my husband said; it is cool in the shade of the porch and out of the wind and weather. But what mama and daddy wren hadn't counted on was the need for those pesky humans to use their nesting sight to get in and out of the house, thus disturbing their repose.

Meanwhile out back, what caught the interest of the large menacing buzzards, attracting them to our quiet cove? On the second day of their visit, with trepidation, I slowly walked down to the water to see for myself. By then the crowd was growing from five buzzards on the first day to eight on the second day. They seemed to pay little attention to me as I approached the pier. Only when I was a few steps away did the buzzards closest to me either back up or fly up into the trees. Apparently, they were not as afraid of me as I was of them.

Once on the pier I noticed a struggle between two buzzards in the shallow water about ten feet to my left. And there it was, the big attraction, a dead raccoon laying half in the water and half on the bank. And, for the furry brown and white, ring-tailed creature at its end, the word was out to the local buzzard colony that food was available nearby.

A few days went by during which I tried to avoid using the front door but if I even walked within twenty feet of the door the jittery wrens flew out from the porch in a frenzy. They could even see me inside the



Carolina Wren young in nest.

house through the curtain on the half-windowed door and that would send them flying away too. Why they flew away I did not understand as I had read about wreath nests and parent birds who would never leave the nest and attacked anyone who approached. But not these parents.

I planned my excursions to the front porch area from another door and attempted to take care of all business at that location at once, watering, weeding, mulching, trimming, and getting the mail. I was committed to supporting the stability of the potential new parents by avoiding disturbing them. And my attempts seemed to pay off when one day while they were away from the nest I took the wreath down to sneak a peak and there were five tiny eggs about the size of a thimble, 3 blue, one white, and one white and brown speckled. I couldn't have been prouder of those eggs than if they were my own.

Meanwhile, the buzzard crew was increasing in number day by day, twelve and then eighteen were roosting in the trees and on the pier. They each seemed to take a turn at the raccoon remains until high tide came in and covered their meal. At low tide the large black scavengers returned and took up positions around the carcass. I became braver and with camera in hand walked closer and closer each day that they visited. Some flew across the cove high into the trees when I approached. Some boldly stood their ground eyeing me warily but without fear.

I was concerned about my little wrens and their eggs as the days grew hotter and because I was soon to entertain family and friends who would want to use the front door. From a call to the local Audubon Center I learned that it was against the law

to move the nest. (I thought about moving it to a nearby tree.) Also, I learned that the parents probably wouldn't follow the nest.

Curiosity was killing me and the next time I noticed the nest unoccupied I opened the door, took down the wreath and saw to my delight a fuzzy, bony, squiggling wren chick with an open beak. I quickly snapped a photo and returned the wreath to the door watching anxiously for a parent to return for a feeding, which they did.

Tired of the influx of buzzards and concerned that they might take up permanent residency, damage our residence, or get aggressive, my husband took action. He removed the carcass and one by one, slowly and almost regretfully, nature's carrion scavengers gracefully flapped their wings and glided away from the cove.

At the same time our front porch visitors were packing up and moving on. The fuzzy baby wren, the only one to hatch out of the five eggs, did not survive. Was it the heat? Was it the nervous, flighty parents? Were they not ready for parenthood? One day the vultures departed from the backyard and soon thereafter the wrens departed from the front porch. Nature had given us the gift of these visitors and then took them away again. We have the memories and the photographs to remind us of the gifts on our front porch and in our backyard.

Ms. Nelson is a writer and photographer. She lives in Easton and serves on the Board of Trustees of Pickering Creek Audubon Center. This article is reprinted from the Talbot Guide, July 2007 issue.

Family Programs

Please call Pickering Creek at 410-822-4903 for more information and to register. Registration is required for all programs.

Morning Nature Hikes

Members/Non-members: Free

Location: Welcome Center

Join one of our naturalists from 10-11 AM on the third Saturday of each month from March-October to learn about natural phenomena, flora, fauna and other topics.

Birding Bonanza- September 20

Fall Frenzy- October 18

Herb Harvest Day

Sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Herb Society

Saturday, September 13, 10 AM-12 PM

Members/Non-members: Free

Location: Herb Garden



Join members of the Chesapeake Herb Society as they give tours of the herb garden and answer questions about harvesting herbs for use in the winter. Learn which herbs should be dried and which frozen. Harvested herbs will be available to take home, and herbal ice tea and cookies will be served.

The Chesapeake Bay Herb Society was formed in 2002 to share knowledge of herbs with the local Eastern Shore community. Society members meet on the second Thursday evening of each month (except August) for an herbal potluck dinner, a short business meeting, and a presentation on an herb-related topic. For more information, contact the Herb Society at 410-819-8626 or 410-310-8437, or visit our website at www.chesapeakeherbsociety.org.

The Chesapeake Bay Herb Society was formed in 2002 to share knowledge of herbs with the local Eastern Shore community. Society members meet on the second Thursday evening of each month (except August) for an herbal potluck dinner, a short business meeting, and a presentation on an herb-related topic. For more information, contact the Herb Society at 410-819-8626 or 410-310-8437, or visit our website at www.chesapeakeherbsociety.org.

Tagging the Marvelous Monarchs

Thursday, September 18, 2008, 5-6:30 PM
Leader: Susanna Scallion

Join us for an evening of chasing, catching, tagging and releasing one of the most extraordinary insects that call Pickering Creek home. In partnership with the University of Kansas MonarchWatch program, we will be tagging Monarchs before they begin their journey to Mexico to help in the study of their unbelievable migration. Prior to going into the fields, there will be a brief discussion on the lifecycle of the Monarch and how to



Board Member
Peter Stifel
meeting the
Monarch

tag them without injuring them. This family program is suitable for children ages 7 to 107, and guaranteed to thrill all who participate. Closed-toe shoes, long-sleeves and pants are strongly suggested. Register early, only 15 spaces available.

Wetlands Wander

Saturday, November 1, 1:00-3 PM

Members: \$2/Non-members: \$4

Location: Welcome Center

Enjoy the afternoon wandering through wetlands ablaze with waterfowl and colorful wildflowers. Learn how to identify both birds and plants that make the wetlands their home. Binoculars will be provided.

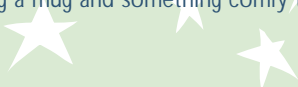
A Night with the Stars

Friday, December 5, 6:30-8:30 PM

Members: \$2/Non-members: \$4

Location: Ecology Classroom

Meet us for a relaxing night viewing the winter sky from the Pickering Creek dock. Learn how to identify several of the constellations and hear the stories that they have told for centuries. Binoculars and hot cocoa will be provided. We just ask you to please bring a mug and something comfy to sit on.



Project WILD

Saturday, October 18, 9 AM-3 PM

Members/Non-members: Free

Location: Garden Classroom

Pickering Creek Audubon Center will be hosting a Project WILD and Project Aquatic WILD workshop. The workshop is absolutely free and on completion you will receive both curriculum guides and certifications. DNR's Patty Allen will be leading the workshop. Water, coffee and snacks will be provided, however you will need to bring a bag lunch.

Youth Programs

Afterschool Nature Club

Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30 PM

\$5/child

Do you enjoy spotting wildlife, wandering through the woods and exploring nature? If you said "yes", then Pickering's Afterschool Nature Club is for you! Learn about a different nature topic each month through hikes, explorations, crafts, and hands-on activities. Nature Club is for ages 6-10. Register early, only 15 spots available per month!

November 12

Wacky Waterfowl (Welcome Center)

December 10

Eco-Friendly Gifts (Garden Classroom)

January 14

What's the Reason They're Not Freezin'?
(Ecology Classroom)

Tiny Tot Safari

Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30 AM

Experience nature through hands-on activities, stories, crafts, and much more! Tiny Tot programs are for children ages 3-5 years and accompanying adult. Fee is free to Audubon members or \$5 per child. All programs meet at the Garden Classroom. Register early, only 12 spaces per Safari!

September 24 Magical Metamorphosis:
Caterpillar to Butterfly

October 8 Harvest Time

October 22 Spinning Spiders

November 5 Sensational Seeds

November 19 Talkin' Turkey

December 1 Eco-friendly Gifts

January 21 Underground Creatures

Educator Workshops

Good Ole' Fashion Summer-Camp is Back!

By Scott G. Stewart, Pickering Creek Audubon Center EcoCamp Director

Humor me for one minute and let us reminisce; close your eyes, take a deep breath, relax all of the muscles in your body and picture yourself when you were ten years old, playing with all your childhood friends at summer camp. I am willing to bet that you can almost smell the fresh air, mingled with the scent of bug spray and suntan lotion. There is a beautiful canopy of trees above your head and a sky full of puffy white clouds visible through a spider web of branches. The cheerful songs of birds intoxicate your ears along with the deep bellows of bullfrogs. You can taste the salty sweat on your brow, while simultaneously feeling the warmth from the sun's rays shining down on your back. Fond memories I hope! Pickering Creek is on a mission to revive the old-fashioned summer camp. We believe it is time to get your children outside and away from television, video games, and the Internet. We want every child in our community to get their heartbeats racing by running around playing games in the woods, getting their hands dirty foraging for worms to place on their fishing hooks, and splashing their peers while paddling canoes down the waters of Pickering Creek.

Creating happy childhood memories while stimulating the young minds of our youth is what Pickering Creek EcoCamp is all about. Our fundamental goal, as counselors and director, is to arouse, motivate, and inspire every one of our campers. We want every child to go home at night having learned something new about the world around them, so that they are instilled with a tangible love and appreciation for our environment and all of nature's wonders! We at Pickering Creek sincerely believe that our youth hold the future health of our planet in their hands. This belief drives our motivation to foster the development of a physical and emotional connection between each of our campers and their Bay. It is our hope that they will grow up and become leaders in the battle to save our lands precious resources.

Within a single day our campers have the opportunity to touch a corn snake or a Maryland terrapin. They have the chance to paddle a canoe down the brackish waters of Pickering Creek, and some may watch a Bald Eagle soar overhead. All use their creativity and imagination during eco-



The Scurvy Crew regale Ecocampers with Pirate Lore.

themed arts-and-crafts sessions, hikes through all seven of the Eastern Shore's unique ecosystems, and even play an exciting game of dodge-ball! Our intent is to send each child home having made a new friend in nature, having learned something exciting that they did not see on television and so exhausted that they are unable to keep their eyes open on the way home!

Two final unique and exciting highlights about Pickering Creek EcoCamp are our fieldtrips and musical guests. During our fieldtrips, we made bamboo fishing poles and collected crickets to go fishing in the pond at Pemberton Historical Park in Salisbury, we were given a presentation on birds of prey and reptiles at Tuckahoe State Park, we paddled down Broad Creek at the Jean Ellen duPont Shehan Audubon Sanctuary and learned about the beautiful ecosystems that comprise the Eastern Shore. Every camper was amazed to learn about

the importance of marshes and oyster beds to the cleanliness of the Bay during our paddle to Wye Island, and we simply had a good-ole-time swimming and soaking up the sun at the Sandy Point Beach. Thanks to the generosity of the Talbot County Arts Council, we were also fortunate to have talented musicians like Chris Noyes, Tom Wisner and The Scurvy Crew come to Pickering and entertain our campers and staff. We sung along with songs about the Chesapeake, made musical instruments to play along, and had a fantastic time dancing to the music creating more special moments of the 2008 summer.

That being said, please send your children to Pickering Creek EcoCamp next summer so they can spend the days on the beautiful Chesapeake Bay we all call home. I promise we will be happy to have them and you will be happy when they come home with smiles on their faces!

Invest in the future of Pickering Creek

We hope you will consider a gift to Pickering Creek Audubon Center.

Your generosity and support may be expressed by giving:

- Cash gifts
- Gifts of stocks or mutual funds
- Planned gifts such as charitable gift annuities
- Bequests

To receive more information about one or more of the above ways to maximize your commitment to our conservation education programs through giving, please contact Rita Osgood, Development Officer at Pickering Creek by calling 410-822-4903.

Visit www.pickeringcreek.org to learn more about your donation options or to use our new secure online contribution feature to make a gift today.

—Rita Osgood, Development Officer

Pictures: Remembering Gilbert

by Kelley Malone (July 12, 2008)

Toward the end,
you wanted to take my picture.
Your eyes, still blue under a milky broth,
turned in my direction.
I took your hand, light and dry,
and we made our way
out the groaning door you had built
generations before,
out into the woods shrouding your cabin,
out with Old House Cove pooling the creek
of San Domingo
shimmering in the sun behind.

Was it I who clung to the sleeve
of your sweater as we negotiated
the roots elbowing up from the earth?

I gave you the camera and backed away.
“Where are you?” you asked,
and I called your name—
“Gilbert, over here!”
Gnarled hands clutched the camera;
straining to find me, still,
amidst the shadows
with light pouring down
and the tall oaks, stout pine,
and hovering dogwood
crowding around,
you aimed at the center of the sound
of your name and shot.

Later I told you the pictures were lovely
and left you copies:
one, a partial sky eclipsed by thumb,
one, a floor of dry leaves restless as bones,
one, I wore an explosion of light
in the midst of something black.
On all, I signed my name on the back.
I did not know what else to do.



First Annual Gilbert Byron Day

On the evening of July 12, friends and readers of Chesapeake Bay author Gilbert Byron gathered near his self-built house to celebrate his one hundred and fifth birthday; Gilbert shares this birth date with that of Henry David Thoreau. His self-built home was brought in 1995 to the Pickering Creek Audubon Center where it is undergoing restoration. A young Willow oak tree donated by two of Gilberts students, Anna Hemming Norton and Michael Hemming, was dedicated to the memory of the “Voice of the Chesapeake,” who often wrote in the shade of another older and much larger oak near the banks of Old House Cove. The following is an excerpt from the dedication ceremony, led by Jacques Baker.

As most of you know, this little house, though relocated from its original site near St. Michaels, was built by Gilbert, and it was in this house that he lived and wrote for more than half of his life.

In January of 1942, he and his wife Edna came from Dover, Delaware, to look at building lots which were for sale on Old House Cove, just off San Domingo Creek, west of St. Michaels. They purchased three of the small lots with no hesitation: “We favored the lots near the mouth of the cove and discovered a giant white oak that must have been a sapling before the Declaration of Independence promised us the pursuit of happiness. Here I would build our cabin, beneath this giant and sturdy tree... The blue cove was only twenty feet from its massive trunk.”

Gilbert did build his cabin next to that oak tree and, frequently alternating between the table in his kitchen and an old picnic table under the oak tree, he did much of his writing.

Perhaps, therefore, it is only fitting that we dedicate this young oak tree to the memory and spirit of Gilbert Byron. We believe that planting this healthy young oak here at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center will have many benefits to this present generation and to those which follow, and it is a most appropriate honor for Gilbert Byron, the Voice of the Chesapeake.

After the dedication of the tree, poems written by Gilbert were read, and several of those in attendance shared their own poems and memories of the late Bay area writer. Phyllis Davis, a former student of Gilbert, was recognized both for her assistance in preparing his manuscripts for publication and for providing several of the writer’s inscribed works to the Talbot County Free Library’s Maryland Room. The group then enjoyed a tour of Gilbert’s house and adjourned to the classroom to have birthday cake and time to reminisce and look over some of Gilbert’s books and other memorabilia. Each person in attendance received a copy of the John Moll-drawn map used in Byron’s weekly “Chesapeake Cove” column, which appeared in the Star-Democrat for nineteen years. They were also given a limited edition print of Byron’s sailboat Avalon, signed by the late artist Jack Schroeder.

For more about volunteer opportunities related to the “Voice of the Chesapeake,” please contact volunteer coordinator Beth Wasden at 410-822-4903, x26, or via email at dwasden@pickeringcreek.org.

Major success for Tour, Toast & Taste 2008

Pickering Creek Audubon Center and the Historical Society of Talbot County held their second joint fundraising event, Tour, Toast & Taste hosted by Hope and Tony Harrington, at Ratcliffe Manor, Easton, MD, on Saturday. The event was a great success for both organizations and raised a significant amount for each organization.

Guests enjoyed delectable wines, delicious hors d'oeuvres, live entertainment and they delighted in purchasing a variety of intriguing dinners offered by Board members and friends of both organizations.

A very special thank you to this year's dinner hosts: Steve and Gigi Hershey; Beverly and Richard Tilghman; Mike Linardi and Dr. Dean Tyson and Mary and Bill Griffin; Jane and Tom Nigra; Michelle and Bill Corace; Lisa and Tim Wyman; Barbara and Bill Lane; Alexa and Tom Seip; Norma Redel , Bruce Summer and Carol O'Driscoll; Kit and Bud Hughes; Carolyn and Charles Thornton; Mary Lou and Joe Peters; Mike and Irina Tappan; Peter Stifel and Michael Rork; Cleo Braver and Allie Tyler; Christy and Dirck Bartlett; Catherine Liebl; Danny and Lucy Tepper and Kevin and Betsy Greaney; Drs. Jim and Judy Geiske and Richard and Annie Graham; and Carolyn Williams and Collin Walsh. Guests were quick to sign up for the dinners, which will be held throughout the coming year.

Many guests recaptured the excitement of the era of rumrunners, flappers and Great Gatsby by dressing in period clothing to reflect the historic ambiance of Ratcliffe Manor, a place that from the beginning epitomized class and elegant country living. Henry and Gale Petronis brought two vintage automobiles, a 1934 blue Rolls Royce and a 1937 Bently, from their renowned collection to add to the evening's mystic.

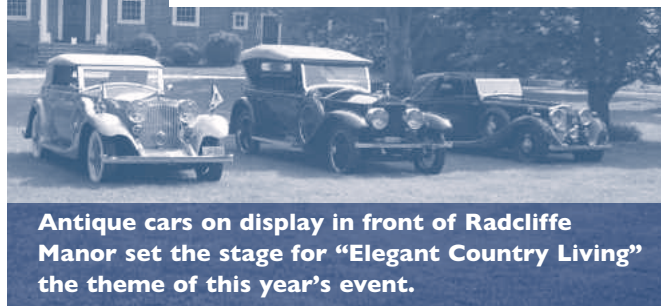
Enhancing the evening's festivities was a live auction featuring a Nantucket Getaway for Two (donated by Kim Corkran), a dinner for 8 guests prepared in your home (donated by Ken's Creative Kitchen of Annapolis), a week in Nantucket (donated by Mick Edgell,) a week on Grand Cayman Island

(donated by Magenta Yglesias,) and a fabulous Thai dinner for 12 (donated and prepared by Geoffrey Longfellow.)

Wonderful silent auction items were generously donated by Greg Hill; the Honorable Brompton M. Earnest; Aloft Aerial; Lee Denny's Giant Fishing Charters; Richard and Beverly Tilghman; Pauline Cox; Gogy Irving; Erney and Margaret Maher; Bunk Ewing; Oliver Michael' Salon; Captain Homan Hallock; Clark's Landing Yacht Center; East Coast Flight Services, Inc.; Bill and Michelle Corace; Mick Edgell; and Guyette and Schmidt, Inc.

Both Pickering Creek and the Historical Society have found that partnering on a special event with another non-profit organization is a wonderful experience. They share in expressing a heart-felt thank you to the 2008 Chairs Bill Corace, Steve Hershey and Richard Tilghman; the hardworking and very creative Event Committee; and all of the people who supported Tour, Toast & Taste 2008.

Flappers Michelle Corace (left) and Beth Hansen (right) enjoyed the spirit of the evening in 20's attire.



Antique cars on display in front of Radcliffe Manor set the stage for "Elegant Country Living" the theme of this year's event.



Pickering Creek Audubon Center and The Historical Society of Talbot County wish to thank the sponsors of the highly successful Tour, Toast & Taste 2008

GREAT GATSBY

Bay Hundred Foundation

WHITE TIE AND TAILS

The Frederick W. Richmond Foundation

Mr. and Mrs. John E. Akridge, III
CES Acquisitions and Beowulfe Energy

SPRUCE GOOSE

Norma Redel 

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Tilghman
Chevy Chase Bank

BARNSTORMER

Vito and Patricia Spitaleri
Lane Engineering, Inc.

Bridges Land Management

Intown Restorations

David and Martha Tuthill

Avon Dixon Insurance

Mr. and Mrs. William L. Lane, Jr.

Anonymous

Stoltz Real Estate Partners

Chesapeake Shotcrete

BOOTLEGGERS & FLAPPERS

Barclay Designs

Cooke's Hope Properties

Kleppinger Electric

Ilex Construction And Development

Miles & Stockbridge

Pickering Creek and the Historical Society encourage all of our friends to support all the community-minded individuals, non-profit organizations and businesses listed above.

Work, but FUN work!

By Lindsey Kisloski, EcoCamp Seasonal Educator

Every summer students from around the Easton area entering grades seven through twelve volunteer their time to be junior counselors at Pickering Creek EcoCamp. Prior to each camp year the students are required to complete eight service hours at Pickering Creek to be eligible to become junior counselors. Some volunteer students enjoy working as junior counselors so much, they volunteer for more than one week of summer camp. Each week the students earn 35 volunteer hours, which is used towards helping them meet their required 75 volunteer hours needed to graduate high school. The majority of the students who have volunteered at the camp this year already have well over the required amount of hours needed to graduate. For example, one junior counselor, Brianna, is our longest returning junior counselor and is completing her fifth year of volunteering at EcoCamp.

The junior counselors receive two days

continued from page 1

Personally, I have found that Pickering Creek is a wonderful example of all that nature has to offer, not only to young children but to anyone who has an interest in the natural world. The habits of my childhood have certainly carried through to the present, and I have fully enjoyed my surroundings at Pickering Creek. I cannot fully describe the beauty of the dock on a calm evening or the satisfaction of hearing multitudes of cicadas in your life's daily soundtrack. I have been calmed by the stillness of the trails and humbled by the enormous trees that stretch overhead.

Pickering Creek is certainly a gem of an environment; there are no frills, no gimmicks, no distractions, just pure, unadulterated nature. I encourage anyone to take a hike through the trails, marvel at the spiders and listen to the insects and birds; step out on to the dock and watch nature display itself – just for you.

As for the kids: let them know that they are lucky to live in an area where nature is easily accessible. Nature is a free gift, and it is unfortunate that only some are given the opportunity to enjoy it. So encourage your children to show their appreciation for our natural world, and hopefully their lives will mirror the respect and concern of their educators and role models.



of training the week prior to the start of camp. This training is designed to give JCs a chance to meet each other, review their responsibilities during camp and get an overview of activities they can help with throughout camp. The group also got an opportunity to go on a challenge course in Mardela Springs and go out on a canoe trip for a little more team building and fun with each other. The two day training was a great way to help break the ice and begin to make new friends.

Being a junior counselor is a great experience for students. It gives them the ability to be a mentor, teacher and friend to younger children. As a junior counselor they often complete the less attractive yet critical tasks such as clean up or taking the campers to the bathroom, yet, they also get to do all the fun activities along with the campers and often lead many of the games that the campers play during breaks. The junior counselors are a very important asset to have when it comes time to take the campers canoeing, by joining the inexperienced paddlers.

Junior counselors develop many leadership skills during the summer that will be helpful to them in everyday life, especially as they continue on after High School. While working with campers and counselors, they have an opportunity to work on their

Junior Counselors share the joy of being at EcoCamp.

communication skills by giving and receiving direction, and they develop a good work ethic while there, by volunteering for various jobs and roles even if they are not required to do so.

The junior counselors have many different reasons for why they like volunteering at the EcoCamp, but one of the most prevailing responses is that they enjoy getting to play dodge ball every day after lunch against the campers. (Don't worry the campers hold their own and make sure the junior counselors don't always win.) Abe said, "I like volunteering at Pickering Creek because it helps little kids learn about the environment." Other junior counselors agree with Kruger and said that they enjoy being able to work outdoors. Carna said that she likes to volunteer because she gets to meet new people and make new friends. Another great reason the junior counselors enjoy volunteering at Pickering is because, "it is work, but it's fun work" as Natalie puts it. The junior counselors are working, but get to enjoy themselves by hanging out with kids and doing fun activities outdoors. Getting to be a junior counselor is a great opportunity and a lot of fun. As Carna says, "I am never bored."

Heigh-Ho! Pickering's Past

By Angela Peterson

"We do so in appreciation of and behalf of those among us who place value in preserving natural riches wherever they exist. We want those in our immediate greater Community who love the myriad forms of life in nature to inherit with us now what little we can make available to them, namely the Pickering Creek sample of untrampled land... Ultimately we hope that this property will be made available for education programs involving our Community's school children. If this world is ever to bring mankind's material needs into harmony with the needs of our natural environment, we must start with the education of the young people."

— George Olds III and Margaret Olds Strahl

In the early 1940s this 400 acre farm with deep-water shoreline and woods along Pickering Creek was sold to George Olds Jr., a graduate of Amherst College and a nationally acclaimed businessman. In 1943 Mr. Olds retired from his job with the Continental Oil Company to live on the farm, renamed from "New Quarter" to "Heigh-Ho," with his wife Margaret Atwater Olds. After a successful career spanning several decades, Mr. Olds was content to become, in his words, a "simple dirt farmer" and philanthropist. In the late 1970s Mr. and Mrs. Olds' deaths left "Heigh-Ho Farm" in the hands of their children, George D. Olds III and Margaret Olds Strahl. They started to receive offers from developers in the region, but the two were not swayed to sell their land. As avid conservationists and patrons of various conservation organizations, in 1982 they decided to benefit the Mid-Shore community by donating the property to a private non-profit organization, the Chesapeake Audubon Society.

The Olds family

George Olds, Jr. and his wife had a sense of community spirit and generosity towards Talbot County. As President of Memorial Hospital, he developed a landmark fundraising campaign that brought in over \$1.5 million dollars in 1952 for expansion of the facility. He also served on the Washington College Board of Governors from the 1950s to the 1970s. Mrs. Olds served as chairperson of the Maryland Board of Mental Health among other charities.

Their children carried the Olds' tradition for service and dedication to the community. After service in WWII, George Olds III returned to Talbot County to pursue a career in the frozen food business. Over the next 45 years, he became one of the

great civic leaders of Talbot County. His contributions to the development of community programs such as the YMCA, Academy of the Arts, and Memorial Hospital were legendary. He was a member of the Cruising Sailors of St. Michaels, the New York Zoological Society, and the Wildlife Conservation International. Somebody once said, "He was one of the most amazing people I ever met. I've never heard him to have a bad day or a negative word to say. He was completely upbeat. He had a wonderment about everything that was going on." His sister, Margaret Olds Strahl, pursued a career in psychiatry in New York spanning 50 years, publishing several landmark texts in her specialty field. She volunteered for family service programs, treatment of Vietnam veterans, and worked on several charitable boards in psychiatry, conservation, and population issues.

The Olds and Pickering Creek

George Olds III first became interested in the environment when he was in the Navy during WWII. He was amazed to see the star-filled sky at night. "I got tremendous feeling for nature...even when you saw the thousands of stars, you couldn't help but wonder." He carried his concern for the environment with him to Talbot County. George's sister, Margaret Olds Strahl, worked with the New York Zoological Society- the Wildlife Conservation Society. Like George, she became concerned about the environment. Following the example of the New Jersey Audubon Society, they believed local Audubon Chapters should have sanctuaries. The Olds donated 35 acres to Chesapeake Audubon Society in 1982 specifying the property must be forever preserved in its natural state as a wildlife sanctuary and working farm, and used strictly for environmental experiences and education. In 1988 they donated the remain-

ing land and created Pickering Creek Environmental Center. The Olds' wanted something unique and local that Talbot County could call its own.

Pickering Creek Audubon Center and the Olds' vision

During the 1980's, the Chesapeake Audubon Society worked on building endowments, developing a membership, organizing a local Board of Trustees, and obtaining small grants. Farm profits were re-invested in improvements to the property. Local educators were encouraged to use the land, and informal field trips from local schools were begun in the mid 1980s. In 1988, through contacts with the Natural Resources Defense Council, George Olds III obtained a major 3-year grant to initiate a formal program of school field trips. A full time director and educator were hired when Pickering Creek Environmental Center was created.

Dr. Stuart Strahl, nephew of George, was named executive director. He also had a life-long dedication to conservation, ecology, and environmental education. Dr. Strahl carried on the Olds' heritage during his term. One notable feat occurred 1994 when Pickering Creek's environmental education program was built into the Talbot County curriculum. Since then, every first through fifth grade class in the county visits Pickering Creek, has a Pickering Creek educator visit the classroom, or meets Pickering Creek at an outreach site.

The Pickering Creek legacy continues. In 2000, Pickering Creek Environmental Center became an official center of the National Audubon Society. Though still owned and managed by the Chesapeake Audubon Society, Pickering Creek Environmental Center became "Pickering Creek Audubon Center," dedicated to community-based conservation of natural resources through environmental education and outreach on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. At the present time Pickering Creek serves the community with more than 16,000 people visiting each year. The property features a working tidewater farm, a demonstration garden, wildlife programs, a pond, nature trails, ecology and garden classrooms, a low-ropes course, a canoe launch, a dock, and 75 acres of fresh-water wetlands. A dedicated team of permanent staff and seasonal educators from around the country share the pristine land of Pickering Creek with school children from the entire Eastern Shore and inner city Baltimore and DC. Thank you for visiting and spreading the Old's legacy even further!

Board of Trustees

Richard Welch, President
Tom Lane, Vice President
Vacant, Treasurer
Gail Bounds, Secretary



PICKERING CREEK
Audubon CENTER

11450 Audubon Lane • Easton, MD 21601
410-822-4903

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 27
Easton, MD

William Corace	Norma Redelé
William Griffin, Jr	William Reybold
Steve Hershey	Hugh Simmons
Mark Jules	Eva Smorzaniuk
Erney Maher	Bruce Summer
Bonna Nelson	Richard Tilghman

Emeritus

Peter Stifel Stuart Strahl

Staff

Mark Scallion, Center Director
Mandy Smith, Education Coordinator
Rita Osgood, Development Officer
Beth Wasden, Volunteer Coordinator
Scott Stewart, Eco Camp Director
Jillian Getman, Seasonal Educator
Lindsey Kisloski, Seasonal Educator
Matt Polzin, Seasonal Educator

Britt Slattery, Acting Director, Audubon Maryland-DC

Views Layout: Liz Fisher/Grafix Galore

New Welcomes and Many Thanks!

We welcome back two former board members to the board this year, Bill Griffin, owner of Bartlett, Griffin and Vermilye Insurance and Bruce Summer, active community leader. They join new member Gail Bounds, who began last summer, as well as a new executive committee led by President Dick Welch.

We especially take this time to acknowledge those who have served the Center loyally. We hope each and every one of these special individuals will continue to be active in the Center's future success as volunteers and program participants. Michael Linardi, founder and owner of Halcyon Coaching completes one term as a board member and two terms as Board President. We thank Mike for his leadership over the last two years. Mike continues to provide pro bono leadership consulting to the Center. John Bayliss has completed two terms as a board member as well as two years as Vice President and several years as Chairman of the volunteer committee. John continues as an active buildings and grounds volunteer who keeps the Center looking great. Carolyn Thornton completes one term as a board member fulfilling an active role in our event committees over the years, quietly accomplishing many successes behind the scenes. Chef Michael Rork has provided the Center with many desserts, fish fries, and layers of support over his two terms as a board member. We hope our stomachs remain close to his heart. Most importantly, this July marks the departure of Richard Leader, Ex Officio member of the Pickering Creek Board of Trustees, Director

of Pickering Creek Audubon Center from 1996-2002 and Executive Director of Audubon Maryland-DC from 2000-2008. Rick's vision grew programs at Pickering and eventually transplanted them to the Shehan Sanctuary in Bozman and Patterson Park Audubon Center in Baltimore. His tireless work on behalf on conservation and education was notable, we wish him the very best in future endeavors.

Come out and explore PCAC!

Directions to PCAC From Easton

- take Route 50 West
- take a left at the stoplight by the airport
- take the immediate right on Longwoods Rd. (Rt. 662 North)
- follow Longwoods to Sharp Rd. (this will be a left hand turn)
- take another right onto Sharp Road (the sign will say to Presquile & Sharp Road)
- follow Sharp Road until you see the Pickering Creek sign on your right.
Turn right onto Audubon Lane. 410.822.4903

IN DESPERATE NEED OF: We are in need of a low profile tractor with a belly mower or bush hog to maintain Pickering Creek Audubon grounds and trails. Anyone wishing to help with a donation of equipment or a financial contribution contact John Bayliss, Volunteer Committee 410-924-3806.