Slab by Slab
Update on the Restoration of Slabsides

If you have ever restored a building, you probably went through what the John Burroughs Association is experiencing with the exterior restoration of Slabsides. We are hopeful that the last piece of foundation work completed this fall will wrap up our work on the exterior. The construction firm, Woodside and Young from Poughkeepsie, relayed the foundation on the south side of the cabin, to the right of the chimney. This is a critical weight-bearing section. They also relayed the eastern portion of the foundation on the north side, adding additional stone to increase the depth so it now gives greater support to that end of the cabin. We have now made repairs to the foundation on three sides. The fourth, east side, under the porch, was judged in good shape.

When we met with the construction team in October to inspect the repairs to the foundation, our esteemed member of the board and docent, Evelyn Rifenburg, asked us to take a look at the large hearthstone. Many years ago it had broken in two places near the center of the fireplace. Since the fireplace was no longer being used, this did not seem to be a problem, even when the end of one of the broken pieces began
to tip up. Over the years, however, this geologic fault had been getting more pronounced, and the difference in height between the abutting pieces is now one and a half inches.

We inspected the foundation framing as the team tried to determine the cause. The framing wood is still in good shape with no noticeable rot. With some effort, the young, muscled work team moved the stone so we could look below it. What likely caused the stone to break many years ago was the degrading of a board supporting that portion of the hearthstone. As this board rotted, its reduced volume caused one end of the hearthstone to sink, tipping up the other end. We will need your help to make the critical repairs to the hearth as they are not covered by the two matching grants the JBA received for the exterior restoration. A rough estimate puts the cost at between $1,500 and $2,000.

The two matching grants—from the National Park Service and the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation—will be used to pay for the recent foundation work. Your generous past support has enabled us to nearly meet the match required under the two grants. We are slowly closing the gap and are less than $2,000 short. Raising these funds will enable us to complete the match and benefit from the full amount of the grants.

There are now two ways you can contribute. Your gift may be sent to the John Burroughs Association at the American Museum of Natural History, 15 West 77th Street, New York, NY 10024. Or, your contribution may be made using the New York State Charities secure Web site. Start at our Web site, http://research.amnh.org/burroughs. Scroll down to “Now You Can Contribute to the JBA online!” and click on the New York Charities link given there. That will take you directly to the John Burroughs Association page, ensuring that your donation goes specifically to the JBA. Make your gift using a credit card: it is easy and secure.

The John Burroughs Association is a 501(c)(3) organization and as such your gifts are tax deductible. Thank you again for your involvement and support. Come visit Slabsides and the surrounding sanctuary. It is beautiful in the winter.

The Slabsides hearthstone, in need of repair
(Photo by Joan Burroughs)
Open Letter to Our Membership

We send you New Year’s wishes along with our heart-felt thanks for your support over the preceding year, which enabled us to keep the John Burroughs Association vibrant and productive and continue our ongoing restoration of the National Historic Landmark, Slabsides.

As we begin a new year, we reflect on the many accomplishments and events of 2009, due in part to your generosity, and pause to make plans for 2010. We had a very productive year as we pursued our mission to foster the spirit and literary legacy of John Burroughs and preserve and share his iconic Slabsides and the bucolic surrounding sanctuary lands. John Burroughs also took the spotlight in several prestigious public forums.

First, the highlights of our accomplishments this past year:

- **Restoration of the Foundation** of Slabsides under our nearly completed matching grant
- **Literary Awards** given at our 83rd annual luncheon celebration April 6 at the American Museum of Natural History for the best contemporary nature writers. The John Burroughs Medal was awarded to Franklin Burroughs for *Confluence: Merrymeeting Bay*. Awards for the best Nature Essay and Nature Books for Young Readers were also given.
- **Slabsides Open House** May 16 and October 3 with tours and nature walks
- **Scholarly Talks** at Slabsides Open Houses (see adapted versions in the next issue of *Wake-Robin*)
  - **Evan Pritchard**, Director, Center for Algonquin Culture: “Algonquin Place Names in the Life of John Burroughs”
  - **Jeff Walker**, Burroughs Scholar and Professor of Earth Sciences: on the Vassar collection of the journals and letters of JB, including a dissection of several essay passages tracing them back to his journal entries
- **School Visits** by Balmville Elementary School and New Paltz Middle School: Children participated in multi-faceted nature programs as teachers used specially developed curriculums.
- **Host of Nature Writing Contest** awards presentation sponsored by the John Burroughs Natural History Society: Ulster County 5th- and 6th-grade school children participated in the contest and were treated to a special event at the Sanctuary.
- **Teachers Guides** and curriculum to be used in conjunction with several of our past award-winning Nature Books for Young Readers are now posted on our website, http://research.amnh.org/burroughs
- **Strategic Planning Grant** awarded to the JBA from the Upstate History Alliance to fund and facilitate a three-part program to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan
- **Membership Kept Informed** through e-mails, a direct mailing, and postings on our Web site as we passed on timely information (we thank you for your e-mail addresses).
- **Geocaching** is now available at the Sanctuary through a partnership with Catskills Live! Trails and Wilderness Association. One cache was placed on the property (see www.catskillslive.org and www.geocaching.com).
- **Partnering Launch** with Woodchuck Lodge, Inc., to forge a collaborative relationship with this like-minded organization in the Catskills, owner of the beloved summer home of John Burroughs, where he stayed during his last years
- **Online Gift Shop** offers a range of publications.
- **Vitality of the Sanctuary** attracts visitors to observe the rich bird life and wildflowers as well as the occasional river otter.

There were several books, films, and libraries that highlighted John Burroughs this past year, putting him in a well-deserved spotlight:

- **The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade to Save America**, by Douglas

Open Letter continued on page 8
How a National Park Influenced My Life

By Gary Noel Ross

Summer is the best time for kids to discover things. There is unbridled time to play and to travel on family vacations. But craggy adults like myself, too, can enjoy the “dog days of summer.” Because this past summer was exceptionally hot and dry here in southern Louisiana, for instance, I spent much of my time indoors, catching up on old-fashioned hard-copy reading. My favorite was a new release: The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America, by Douglas Brinkley. The tome pays homage to the unrelenting efforts of America’s twenty-sixth president to establish national parks and monuments, federal bird reservations, and national forests—in order to preserve, for generations yet unborn, millions of acres of wild America and an untold number of unique species of wildlife. In his book, Brinkley provides insight into President Roosevelt’s relationships with two prominent naturalists and writers of the time—John Burroughs and John Muir. As such, The Wilderness Warrior is of special interest to we who champion the John Burroughs Association. That said, the book provided me with an unexpected personal lagniappe: a reflection on a particular family vacation that became seminal to my future.

The year was 1953. I was thirteen years of age and living in my natal New Orleans. In previous years, my slightly younger brother (Grant) and I had looked forward to our annual summer jaunts to Waveland, a small community on the Mississippi Gulf coast. There, my parents—sometimes in conjunction with another family of four—would rent a house for a week or two close to the beach. Our days were spent swimming in the not-so-blue Gulf water (sometimes at night to observe the luminescent comb jellies), trap netting for blue crabs, playing volleyball and the board game Po-ke-no, and doing just about anything else our minds could fancy in that pre-television era. (Because I had a yen for butterflies, I always had my home-crafted insect net along so that I could collect specimens in nearby green areas.) In the end, we all returned home rejuvenated with lots of adventure stories to recall during the upcoming school year.

But 1953 was different. In late May my father purchased the family’s first automobile—a new Plymouth Cambridge sedan, “Luna Gray” in color. Back then, new vehicles needed a rather lengthy break-in period. Ideally, this entailed taking a vehicle on long outings during which time you would gradually step-up the maximum driving speed. My father hatched a plan: We would embark on a three-week vacation to visit friends who had recently relocated to Los Angeles and Chula Vista, California. Now, this was quite an ambitious decision. First, none of us had ventured beyond the flat Gulf coast. And second, the interstate highway system, drive-throughs, convenience stores, self-serve gasoline stations, and chain motels, not to mention automobile air conditioning, were still the stuff of dreams. For assistance, we immediately joined the American Automobile Association (AAA) and requested that they map out a scenic itinerary that included two routes—one for going, the other for return.

Our high-adventure road trip began at three o’clock in the morning of June 10. Lacking electronic entertainment, we boys learned to recognize models of cars and state logos on license plates as the miles rolled beneath our wheels. That seems pretty lame today, but remember the year was 1953!

Our first major tourist stop was Carlsbad Caverns National Park in the Chihuahua Desert of New Mexico. We rented a quaint cabin for two nights in nearby Whites City, since the park had no public lodge. After unpacking—and in defiance of my mother’s admonition—we curious boys bolted to the rocky hillside directly behind the cabin to scour for textbook desert wildlife such as tarantulas, scorpions, centipedes, horned toads, and our crowning quarry, a rattlesnake (we discovered a few creepy crawlers but nary a serpent). The next morning we took the nearly four-hour, three-mile guided tour of the subterranean labyrinth. That included a walk through the cave’s enormous hollowed-out entrance, then down a switchback path to a depth of 750 feet. Short lectures at key venues taught us how to identify icicle-like stalactites and towering stalagmites, fluted stone cascades and drapery, cave pearls, stone grapes, and crystalline pools. At one point lights were doused and voices hushed to provide a sample of the eerie blackness and silence. We enjoyed a handy box lunch.
in the underground domed cafeteria, a leisurely walk about the fourteen-acre cathedral-like chamber named the Big Room (the second largest natural underground expanse in the world), and finally an elevator ride back to the surface. Afterward, we accompanied a park ranger on a nature walk in the surrounding desert. There we were introduced to exotic plants such as ocotillo, lechuguilla agave, and soapweed yucca. At dusk, we gathered with other visitors at the mouth of the cave to gaze upon the dark, thick plume of bats departing for their nightly hunt.

During the vacation we visited several of the nation’s other wonderlands, including White Sands, Death Valley, Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest, and Painted Desert (incidentally, I never did cross paths with a rattlesnake). For a lad from the pancake-and-
syrupy Gulf coast, all impressed me as a celebration of nature’s magnificence and glory. However, Carlsbad Caverns National Park stood as an experience apart: downright otherworldly. Here was an intimate glimpse into the secretive, mysterious, magical, and even whimsical side of nature. Upon our family’s return to New Orleans, I was inspired to begin a scrapbook of national parks and even wrote a fictional adventure story entitled “The Cave.” The storyline involved my brother and me living in Los Angeles and, while I was collecting butterflies in a wildflower meadow, discovering a cave in the surrounding San Gabriel Mountains. In my imagination, our cave eventually grew into a state park, with my father as superintendent and, later on, with my brother and me serving as park rangers.

The following fall, my seventh-grade teacher proofed the fifty-two-page handwritten manuscript and later asked me to read the story to the class. But that was just the beginning. Upon graduation from high school, I was driven by my passion and reverence for nature to matriculate in entomology and ecology, and later, to teach and conduct research in those same subjects for my life profession. Now nearing my seventieth birthday and still residing in southern Louisiana, I remain active with research and writing in the field of natural history, hoping to inspire a younger generation.

Theodore Roosevelt, who died in 1919, was probably not familiar with Carlsbad Caverns, since the cave, discovered in 1901, was not adequately explored until 1924-1925, by the National Geographic Society. The 46,766 acres embracing Carlsbad and at least eighty smaller caverns officially became a national monument in 1923 under President Calvin Coolidge; the site was upgraded to national park status on May 14, 1930, under President Herbert Hoover. Then in 1995, the park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today the park brings in roughly one-half million visitors annually.

Reading The Wilderness Warrior reinvigorated my own burnished memories of Carlsbad Caverns. I was also reminded that my mother had been the consummate shutterbug and packrat. Equipped with only a simple Kodak Brownie camera, she had photographed just about everything she considered noteworthy. In 1965, however, Hurricane Betsy, a Category 3 storm (wind speeds between 111 and 130 miles per hour) had flooded our home in New Orleans with nearly four feet of silt-laden water. The storm was nicknamed “Billion-dollar Betsy” because it was the first U.S. storm to cause more than a billion dollars in damage. My parents managed to salvage small items of memorabilia, including two cardboard boxes of old photographs and assorted documents. Upon their death in the 1990s, those boxes passed to my brother and me, and I ultimately stashed them away in a bedroom closet. Now, with our national parks foremost in mind, I decided the time was right for a trip down memory lane.

I retrieved the cache. Against all odds, there they were—sixty-eight three-inch-square, black-and-white photographs from our 1953 vacation. Some bore water stains from Betsy, but most were in excellent condition. And best of all, a handful from Carlsbad Caverns graced the lot along with my scrapbook on national parks and even my handwritten manuscript of “The Cave.” As I pored over the trove, details of personal history that had been in shadow for more than five decades came flooding back. I also tried to imagine how President Roosevelt, John Muir, and John Burroughs must have felt when they glimpsed pristine parklands—Yellowstone and Yosemite, for instance—more than a hundred years ago. Had my experience of wilderness been rendered any the poorer by the encroachment of the tourist amenities, such as the paved roads and organized trails, state-of-the-art campgrounds, majestic lodges, comfortable cabins, and convenient concession kiosks? Was “user friendly” preempting preservation?

I don’t have the answer. But President Roosevelt’s legacy should be judged not only in numbers of acres of preserved wilderness and wildlife but also in numbers of humankind who have been personally enriched and who commit all or part of their time and means to resource management, environmental activism, nature writing and photography, and ecotourism. Nor should we overlook the cadre of armchair nature aficionados who contribute hard-earned finances to support nature-based organizations, media broadcasts, and the publication of books, magazines, and newsletters.

I know too that what were once the playgrounds of patricians and plundering entrepreneurs are now
venues accessible, for barely a pittance, to every man, woman, and child throughout the world. Like the awe-inspiring architectural cathedrals and monuments of other continents, America’s national parks have become important refuges for the human spirit. These parks nurture our souls and restore our innate sense of dignity and the sacred. Simply put, America’s national parks allow us to escape beyond ourselves, to alter our consciousness. As Ken Burns subtitled his recent groundbreaking television series *The National Parks*, they are “America’s Best Idea.”

*Gary Noel Ross is a research associate at the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity at the University of Florida, Gainesville.*

**Fred Shields, Our Family’s Own Sage of Slabsides**

*By Jonathan Duffy*

From about 1962 to 1976, when I was a youngster, my parents owned a small stone cabin up the road from Slabsides. Built in a seemingly haphazard style of rubble masonry, roofed in slate and with a porch perched on the edge of a cliff, the house was characteristic of the off-beat little mountain where John Burroughs had built his retreat. Burroughs’s granddaughter Elizabeth Kelly had been one of my mother’s teachers, and it was through her that we came to purchase the cabin. Because we lived in Manhattan, our little cabin in West Park provided a wonderful balance to city life and an exposure to nature that helped shape our entire family.

While John Burroughs had been gone from West Park for some time, his spirit endured with the wonderful and unique people living on the mountain. One of those figures was Fred Shields, who lived at the end of the road with his wife Clarice. A retired Dutch Reform minister, Fred had grown up in the Hudson Valley and had retired to Florida for the winters. When we first came to know them, I would guess Fred and Clarice had spent twenty or more summers on the mountain. For my sisters Robin and Anne, my brother, David, and me, the true sign that summer had come was when the couple arrived. They were like another set of grandparents to us, greatly cherished.

Uncle Fred, as we called him, was our resident naturalist. He taught us to explore the woods and swamps, and he explained in wonderful detail the particular habits of each bird, where it might nest and when it could be expected to return from winter migration. He could direct us to the location of a certain kind of flower and tell us when to expect it to bloom. We all became fledging naturalists under his tutelage, and he no doubt influenced my brother’s decision to become an ornithologist. Great and obliging company for children to spend a lazy summer’s day with, Fred was also someone who could subtly impart lasting moral lessons. He never spoke critically of anyone and truly loved mankind.

Along with appreciating nature, Fred understood the need to protect it, and he taught us to be stewards of the land. We learned to put away pesticides and try some of the old-time remedies for aphids and caterpillars. Fertilizer came from the swamp muck or the neighbor’s horse instead of the store.

There was no television on the mountain, and so evenings were spent entertaining ourselves. An accomplished violinist, Fred had struck up a relationship with some of the Christian Brother monks from the monastery down at the river. Occasionally on summer evenings, they would come up to give impromptu concerts on their recorders. Years later, on a cold winter’s day, I heard music emanating from down at the lake. Walking down, I found a skater, with robes flowing, playing a recorder; a very lovely image I enjoy to this day.

Fred was an avid ham radio operator: his property had a collection of antennas discreetly strung between trees. I remember going over in the evening—the preferred time for radio reception—to listen to him “talk” in Morse code to other operators around the world.

Fred also had colorful stories about West Park. He told tales of a time when music would drift up from the hotel down at the lake, which was doing a thriving illicit business during prohibition. Road maintenance was courtesy of the town crew paid in drink. There were stories of rigged elections won with carloads of out-of-town relatives. There was the not-so-amusing time the swamp caught fire during a drought and burned for months.
Through Fred we met Mrs. Niffen on Floyd Ackert Drive, who as a young girl had baked a pie for Teddy Roosevelt when he had come to visit Burroughs at Slabsides. He also introduced us to shad fishermen, orchard owners, and migrant workers. In all the people we met through him, you could see the special appreciation they had for a man like Fred, a man who appreciated and respected them for who and what they were.

It was a sad day when the Shieldses sold their house, around 1969 or 1970; I expect it was similar to when Burroughs no longer returned to the mountain. Fred had been so much a part of the fabric of its life. He had worked hard on the part of the John Burroughs Association to help protect and enlarge the sanctuary when it came under threat of development. He understood well before most of us, the siege that the environment was coming under and how vulnerable so small a place like the sanctuary was. I think it would be a great comfort to him to know that the sanctuary endures, and that a dedicated community of people is still working to preserve, protect, and enjoy it.

Jonathan Duffy is a beekeeper in Virginia.

Open Letter continued from page 3

Brinkley, prominently features TR’s close relationship with JB and the influence the elder naturalist had on the younger naturalist and statesman.

- The National Parks: America’s Best Idea, the six-part film produced by Ken Burns, along with the companion book of the same title, features John Burroughs in the second episode on the famous 1903 trip to Yellowstone with TR, drawing heavily from JB’s Camping and Tramping with Roosevelt.

- Hudson River Valley Review, a Journal of Regional Studies featured five scholarly works on Burroughs. Though this issue came out late in 2008, it was more widely distributed in 2009.

- Vassar Library’s Project to transcribe and digitize the fifty years of the journals of John Burroughs will make his notes and observations available online to both scholars and climate researchers.

- Town of Esopus Library rededicated its John Burroughs collection with a lecture and exhibit.

- Ashoken Civil War Days Reenactment in May included a walk with John Burroughs, portrayed by JBA board member Jeff Walker.

- Poughkeepsie Journal interview with our resident naturalist Jason Dempsey, titled “Burroughs’s West Park Home Was a Get-away.”

- Catskill Center Erpf Gallery lecture on John Burroughs and Woodchuck Lodge.

Our plans for 2010 include our hallmark events: Annual Literary Awards Luncheon in April, Slabsides Open House events in May and October, and school visits. Our work developing curriculum and outreach will continue as a priority. We are excited about the production of the Silver Films’ documentary about the history of the Catskills, which will feature Burroughs. When complete it will be added to the other films on Burroughs in our library. We are also looking forward to the next prestigious John Burroughs Conference, Sharp Eyes VI: “Old Lessons for a New Millennium: Nature Writing and Environmentalism in the 21st Century,” June 7-11, 2010, the State University of New York at Oneonta. We will keep you up-to-date through occasional e-mails and through our Web site.

We will continue to focus on Slabsides and the Sanctuary to improve both. Enhancing trail access for nature walks, birding, and hiking will add to your experience when you visit. Our fund raising is ongoing as we close the gap to meet the match required under our two restoration grants. Your support is vital to our success.

We always look forward to your letters and e-mails. Whether you have given of your time, talent, or treasury, or connected through our Slabsides Day events, the Annual Literary Awards celebration, our newsletter Wake-Robin, the Web site, or just enjoyed the peace and beauty of the Sanctuary when no one else was there, you have helped the JBA to flourish and fulfill its mission.

This is an exciting time to be a member of the John Burroughs Association. We look forward to seeing you in 2010.

With sincere thanks and best wishes for the coming year,

Your Board of Directors
New News

Nature observed in 2009 at the John Burroughs Sanctuary: river otter, osprey, kingfisher, blue herons, wood ducks, Canada goose, mallard, blue birds, goldfinch, orioles, cardinal, scarlet tanager, worm-eating warbler, chipping sparrow, red-eyed vireo, American goldfinch, Dutchmen’s breeches, trillium, columbine, stargrass, herb robeat.

The Coney Island Gospel Assembly thanks the JBA for its 2009 donation of nature books to their library. Nature books were donated to the Town of Esopus and Mohonk House libraries.

The JBA welcomed the Reverend Canon Andrew Dietsche, Canon for Pastoral Care of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, and Mark Sisk, the Bishop of New York and his staff for a tour of Slabsides during their retreat at Holy Cross Monastery, immediate neighbor to the home of John Burroughs in West Park. Another special visitor to slabsides included David Duffy, now in his nineties, who used to live with his young family in one of the rustic houses behind Slabsides. Look for the related story by his son Jonathan in this issue of *Wake-Robin*. Other members came from as far away as Oregon.

Work on the Slabsides’ foundation is now completed. See the restoration grant news (“Slab by Slab”) on page 1.

New Paltz Middle School students visited Slabsides on October 14, 2009, to participate in a science and nature program.

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area brings the National Park Passport Program to the region. Acquire cancellation stamps at the John Burroughs Sanctuary at Slabsides. Each stamp says “Hudson River Valley NHA” with the name of a heritage site (Slabsides in this case) on top and the date of your visit. Contact Jason Dempsey, interpreter/naturalist at 845-384-6320. For passport central log onto www.hudsonrivervalley.com (Slabsides is listed under “special interest”).

A National Historic Landmark Photo Contest of National Treasures was held in 2009. For information log onto the contest site at www.nps.gov/nero/nhlphoto. Watch to see if a new contest is initiated in 2010.

Resources

For your next birding visit to the John Burroughs Sanctuary, arm yourself with a *Hudson River Birding Trail Bird Checklist*. Funded by the Department of Environmental Conservation, it can be downloaded from www.hudsonriverbirdingtrail.org.

Check out the *Discover the Forest* Web site for a program designed to inspire tweens (ages 8-12) and their parents to reconnect with nature. You can download forest activities to use in the John Burroughs sanctuary during your next visit by logging on at www.discovertheforest.org.

Boyden Wilderness Writing Residencies are now available at the Dutch Henry Homestead in the Rogue River Canyon. Spend six to seven months in

*Wake-Robin* Volume 42, Number 2, Winter 2010
backcountry solitude with bears and old-growth trees, with the support of a $5,000 stipend. For full residency description and application instructions, log on at www.johndaniel-author.net/mdb-res.php. For a residency description with photos, log onto www.writersconf.org/memdir/members/PNW00019.php.

Teaching the Hudson Valley, a not-for-profit organization, has posted eight teacher-tested lessons and activities relating to John Burroughs. They can be found by logging on at www.TeachingtheHudsonValley.org.

(If you don’t have access to the Internet, you may write instead to the JBA secretary for further information.)

**Member Highlight**

![Jason Dempsey](photo by Jackie Becket)

Jason Dempsey has been serving as the Interpreter/Naturalist for the John Burroughs Sanctuary for more than ten years. He conducts nature walks and tours of Slabsides by appointment and on weekends and he also writes occasional features for the *Wake-Robin* nature column. Look for him in our next issue that will feature Pond House education programs in the John Burroughs sanctuary.

**New Additions to the JBA Web Site**

Check out the new teacher guide *Tracking Trash* by Lisa Mielke, to be added soon, and the nature essay “John Burroughs and Sierra Nevada Drift Boulders,” by Mathew Tekulsky (http://research.amnh.org/burroughs/).

**New Ecards**

Receive a 2010 holiday greeting for you, a friend, or relative, showing Slabsides in winter with a John Burroughs quote: Just send us your e-mail address to receive the greeting.

You will receive an Ecard when you make a donation to the John Burroughs Association through www.NYCharities.org (see online donation instructions on page 2).

**Enews**

Sign up for Enews to receive timely news from the John Burroughs Association. Stay current on upcoming programs at the JBA. Please e-mail your addresses to lbreslof@amnh.org or mail it to: Secretary, John Burroughs Association, Inc., 15 West 77th Street, New York, NY 10024-5192. Be assured that the information you provide us will be kept confidential and we will never give your e-mail address to outside companies and agencies.

E-mailAddress_______________________________
Name (required)_____________________________

**Remember**

The JBA Gift Shop
Check out the books at http://research.amnh.org/burroughs/jba_shop.html

**ReMEMBER to Join Us**

*Wishing Everyone a Happy and Healthy 2010.*

(Photograph)
New Paltz Middle School students

(photos by Robert Rifenburg)
JB Medalist Scheffer Celebrated at 103

By Patricia Duff


He has been a longtime resident of Langley, on beautiful Whidbey Island in Puget Sound, which overlooks the Cascade Mountains of Washington. Langley Mayor Paul Samuelson formally proclaimed the dedicated naturalist’s 103rd birthday as Dr. Victor B. Scheffer Day, in recognition of his achievement and lifelong defense of nature and wildlife.

As Scheffer resides in a local retirement home, his ninety-seven-year-old sister accepted the proclamation of municipal honors at a City Council meeting. Next day, the mayor visited the naturalist to present the city’s proclamation in person.

Scheffer was born in Manhattan, Kansas, and earned his doctorate in zoology in 1936 at the University of Washington. He joined the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey in 1937, which would later become the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, where he devoted his skills as a scientist and conservationist for the next 33 years.

During his career, Scheffer worked from Alaska to southern California, and in many places throughout the rest of the world, studying everything in the sea from marine mammals to seaweed. His first book, *Seals, Sea Lions, and Walruses*, was published in 1959; to date, he has written fifteen books on nature, biology, and ecology.

His JB medal-winning book on whales helped to spark the worldwide movement to ban whale hunting. In 1973, President Nixon appointed him chairman of the first International Marine Mammal Commission.

Scheffer is a founding member of the Nature Conservancy’s Washington chapter and perhaps the state’s longest-lived conservationist. His father, Theophilius, also a biologist, lived to be ninety-nine.

Scheffer is patriarch of a clan that includes three children, eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. When asked what it was that allowed him to lead such a long and successful life, Scheffer replied, “Genetics and a sense of wonder.”

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*Annual Dues*

Please assist in supporting the mission of the John Burroughs Association by renewing through your membership. Becoming a Patron or Benefactor will reflect an even greater interest and help in the goals of the organization. Stewardship of the John Burroughs Sanctuary can happen with your generous contribution.

Tax-deductible dues for the membership year April 1, 2010, through March 31, 2011

- Student $15
- Annual $25
- Patron $50
- Bequest
- Senior $15
- Benefactor $100
- Life $500
- Family $35
- Additional Gifts for John Burroughs Sanctuary

Gift Membership of $_____ for (name and address):

Name_________________________
Address_______________________

Annual Luncheon, April 5, 2010

Make checks payable to the John Burroughs Association and mail to: John Burroughs Association, Inc., American Museum of Natural History, 15 West 77 Street, New York, NY 10024-5192.

*Save the Date*

Annual Meeting, Monday, April 5, 2010, 10:30 a.m.
Annual Literary Awards Ceremony and Celebration, Monday, April 5, 2010, 12 Noon
American Museum of Natural History, New York City

We look forward to seeing you there.
To Our Members and Donors
The JBA gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and donors. Our mission to preserve the legacy of John Burroughs would be impossible without your commitment and support.

Honorary Members
Mr. & Mrs. Gus Schmidt

New Members
Gloria Ausubel
Paul K. Barten
Bill Birns
Scott Blair
Diane Galusha
Julian Laderman
James Marion
Douglas Markel
Van Markel
Theodore Olson
Chris Prislopsi
Del and Doris Umbers
Anne Walsh

Life Members
Louis H Blumengarten
Dr. Edith F. Bondi
James R. Butler
Mrs. John Chamberlin
Ralph M. Chism
John Daniel
Camie De Gaeta
Sally Fairbairn
Elizabeth Feldhusen
Vera Julia Gordon
Robert Grant
Henry Guthrie
Tom Horton
Paul Huth
Keneth Jasko
Daniel G. Jones
Regina Kelly
Mr. & Mrs. David Lane
George D. Langdon
Paul Lewison
Alfred Marks
Wallace & Margaret McIntyre
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Meyer
Mary Moxham
John Padalino
Roscoe Pecora
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Calendar
Feb 12 — Deadline to submit articles or news items for publication
April 5 — 10:30 a.m.: Director’s Meeting
April 5 — 12 Noon: Annual Literary Awards Celebration Luncheon, American Museum of Natural History
May 15 — 12 Noon: Slabsides Lecture
May 15 — 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.: Spring Slabsides Open House