

# FIELD NOTES

PENINSULA CHAPTER



## Note From the President:

Best wishes to you and your family for this holiday season as well as the new year. Thank you for all the good things you've done in 2021, certainly a positive impact to the environment and community. Also, a special thanks to the PMN board. Your work, especially Better Impact - Laura Marlowe, kept us headed in a good direction.

So, who did you all elect PMN president? That's me - Jim Francis. A short bio: Wyoming native, retired Navy nuclear trained officer, retired Newport News Shipbuilding mechanical engineer, and now furniture maker/carver/engraver. Although there's a wealth of work in my shop, I'll ensure that PMN responsibilities are met in a timely and efficient fashion.

The theme for 2022? Do good, have fun.... and log your hours.

Again, best wishes,  
Jim Francis



PMN President Jim Francis



*Past president Charlotte Bordeau  
handing the gavel over to the Newly  
elected President Jim Francis*



In this winter issue of Field Notes, we extend a warm welcome to Jim Francis, the newly elected President of the Peninsula Chapter, the new board members and new graduates and members. Articles and photos of nature, service and volunteering, spotlight our members as they continue to make a difference in the world around them.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Field Notes this year. Please continue to share your photos and articles with Meera Rao, Newsletter chair. Email articles and photos (as separate attachments) to [pnmfieldnotes@gmail.com](mailto:pnmfieldnotes@gmail.com)

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# A Weekend in Martinsville

by  
David Boehnlein

My wife and I have a project to visit every state park in the Commonwealth. This November we added Fairy Stone State Park to our list. Located near Martinsville in western Virginia, Fairy Stone offers some good hiking in the Appalachian foothills and in the autumn, there are some great fall colors along with a breathtaking view of the Blue Ridge mountains.



View of the Blue Ridge  
from Little Mountain Falls Trail



Fairy stones

What gives the park its name are the fairy stones. These are crystals of a mineral known as staurolite, composed of aluminum, iron, and silicate. Depending on the iron content, some fairy stones may be slightly magnetic. They get their name from a legend that they are the tears of fairies, but in fact they were formed by the immense heat and pressure produced in the Earth's crust by the formation of the Appalachian Mountains. Staurolite crystals take the form of hexagonal rods. Sometimes two rods intersect to form a cross. Aficionados of fairy stones identify different kinds of crosses: the right-angled Roman cross, the x-shaped St. Andrew's cross, and the thick-columned Maltese cross. These stones are found in only a few places in the world and in no place more abundantly than this site in Virginia.

While most state parks ask that visitors take nothing but pictures, Fairy Stone allows the collection of the stones and even has ranger-guided fairy stone hunts. If you're unable to find the perfect crossed fairy stone for your rock collection, never fear; they can be purchased at the park gift shop. The photo above shows a few rough stones that I collected myself, along with a nice Roman cross that I bought.

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# A Weekend in Martinsville

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Fairy Stone State Park is not the only reason for a naturalist to visit Martinsville. The town is also home to the Virginia Museum of Natural History. As the name suggests, the museum is focused on the natural history of Virginia. There is too much there for a detailed description, although I was particularly impressed with the Ice Age exhibits. More than 10,000 years ago, giant beavers (Paleocaster) swam in Virginia's streams and the helmeted musk ox (Bootherium) dwelt alongside *Megalonyx jeffersonii*, a giant ground sloth named for the famous Virginia paleontologist, Thomas Jefferson.



*Megalonyx jeffersonii*



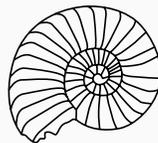
*Paleocaster* fossils at the Virginia Museum of Natural History



*Bootherium bombifrons*

It's a bit too far from Hampton Roads for a day trip, but for those who enjoy hiking and natural history, I can recommend Martinsville as a good weekend destination.

*Photo Credits: David Boehnlein*



*What we do see depends mainly on what we look for. ... In the same field the farmer will notice the crop, the geologists the fossils, botanists the flowers, artists the colouring, sportmen the cover for the game. Though we may all look at the same things, it does not all follow that we should see them."*

*— John Lubbock, The Beauties of Nature and the Wonders of the World We Live in*

# TREE PLANTING



## Second Tree Planting at the Mariners' Museum on 12-17 & 18, 2021

On November 17th and 18th, 2021 the Mariners' Museum Park continued the original grant site planting from earlier in March with another 750+ trees! The following species were planted:

Pinus echinata - shortleaf pine (288)  
Quercus palustris - pin oak (96)  
Carpinus caroliniana - muscledwood (96)  
Diospyros virginiana - American persimmon (96)  
Quercus virginiana - Live oak (30)  
Hamamelis virginiana - Witch hazel (144)  
Pinus palustris - Longleaf pine (24)

Unlike the Spring planting, these trees were grown in small plugs, instead of, bare root. As the trees were grown in plugs instead of barefoot seedlings, the planting process was a little slower. We marked planting locations with colored flags (white, red, blue, pink, and orange) - each color represents the species to be planted.

submitted by  
**Graham King**



Daina Henry  
Photo credits: Daina Henry



Charlotte Boudreau, Mariners' Museum employee, Kevin Barry, Graham King, Helene Drees, Meghan Mcelroy, Dave Singletary, CNU student.

I participated in the Tree Planting project on Nov.18th. On that day we were asked by Graham King, a staff member at Mariner's Musuem, who is also a member of the Peninsula Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists, to check on the pine trees we had planted last year. Diana Henry and I worked together and only found 3 trees that hadn't made it. We were excited about that. Kevin Berry, another Peninsula Master Naturalist, also participated. Our advisor, Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, was there with some of the staff from the Virginia Department of Forestry.

After that, we planted a few trees such as Red Buds, where a tree was missing. Additional trees were planted in other areas. The previous day some of the tree protector tubes had been placed over the Pin Oaks and Hornbeams, but more were needed. So, we helped make more tubes and placed them over the trees to protect them from deer browsing.

We are looking forward to seeing how beautiful the area will be when the trees grow larger. They will also be a wonderful habitat for the wildlife. The trees are visible from Boundary Road or if you are hiking the trail to the right of the Lion's Bridge.

Submitted by  
**Charlotte Bordeau**



*Winter is the life of the crystal, the architect of the flake, the fire of the frost,  
the soul of the sunbeam. This crisp winter air is full of it,"*

*~John Burroughs~*



# NATURE JOURNALING

## Signs of Spring

*Forsythia blooming*  
*Mosses growing sporophytes*  
*Red azaleas budding -- hummingbirds soon to come*  
*Mergansers migrating*  
*Osprey returning*  
*Male goldfinches yellowing*  
*Bunnies emerging from under the juniper*  
*Turtles sunning*  
*Earth turning on its axis*  
*Blest be!*

~Anne Owens~



## Confused

Forsythia blooms in  
December 2021  
Photo credit: Meera Rao



## Beautiful Parks, Beaches, and Green Spaces in Hampton Roads, Virginia

By  
Elizabeth Catherine Herbert

In a fine balance, nature represents a refuge and a place to seek refuge from to be safe. Humans and Animals need food, shelter, and water. Yet, exploring nature, such as in park strolls, swims on the beach, and botanical explorations, provides humans a break from modern day stress. Humans also need technology. Technology enhances quality of life and initiatives in saving nature, yet technology may also create tension. It is an interesting conundrum.

2020 and 2021 represent a two-year span now of challenges through the pandemic. Forest immersion walks and gazing on flower blooms provide a respite to recharge one's energy and reconnect with one's inner self. Personal visits in 2021 to Newport News Park, Sandy Bottom Park, Huntington Park, and Deer Park also echo my family's tradition of nature explorations. The roses at Huntington Park are particularly beautiful, and some species currently are in bloom even now in December 2021.

Green Spaces in Newport News, Virginia, provided by the Newport News Green Foundation, buffer the expansion of the urban environment by providing small niches of natural greenery. This is aesthetically pleasing, has great curbside appeal, and also provides areas for natural species to dwell.

It would be beneficial to include more small "parks" in Newport News City for leisure walks, such as the space in City Center, for urban social green spaces. It would be even better to carefully plan in integration of Virginia's natural species to support local wildlife. As a resident of the area since 1977, it is especially important to me that the city provides a safe haven for people from all walks of life, and simultaneously crucial to keep the place as beautiful as it has been always.



## Roses in December

Photo Credit: Elizabeth Catherine Herbert

## Stones at Mariner's Museum

*amongst stones and pebbles*  
*a memory of a smile*  
*an artist*  
*a bond of life*  
*of a loved one*  
*solid and permanent*  
*surrounded*  
*by nature's beauty*  
*restating impermanence*

~Meera Rao~



## Stones at Mariner's Museum...

Photo credit: Larry Lewis

# WINTER CELEBRATIONS



L to R: Laura Marlowe, Helene Drees, Amber Miller, Janet Tucker, Kathy Dansey, Emma (granddaughter of Janet) and Chris Gwaltney.

## Wreath Making Workshop

We had a great time helping with the wreath making workshops offered by Endview Plantation on December 4. Workshops were fully booked. The workshop included the making of the wreaths and a tour of the decorated home.



## Wreath Making Workshop at Endview Plantation.



Submitted by *Daina Henry*

### Preparations

Thanks to the many workers who came to help on Nov 22 with preparations for the Endview Wreath Making workshop, we glued, wired, made bows, etc. for the upcoming event.



L to R: Caroline Herath, Hillary Probst, Daina Henry, Merry Kennedy, Maria Nissen, Chris Gwaltney.



## Cohort 16 Graduation

### Congratulations to the New Graduates:

**Melody Avery  
Elizabeth Bircher  
Mark Cockran  
Suzanne Collins  
Helene Drees  
Elcke Erb  
Marsha Hoiberg  
Rex Holmlin  
Taylor Littleton  
Amber Miller  
Howard Miller  
Kim Prisco-Baggett  
Roger Rice  
Raymond Thurnes  
Tanya Ward**



At the December 13, 2021, Peninsula Chapter monthly meeting, we celebrated the Virginia Master Naturalist program graduation of Cohort 16. The Basic Training chair, Christiana Wilson and Sandy Graham thanked all who had assisted in the training process for Cohort 16. Each graduate was presented with a certificate and was acknowledged by the membership with a round of applause. Photo Credit: Sandy Graham



# Book Review

## Cosmos III: Possible Worlds by Ann Druyan

Book Review by

David Boehnlein

This book, published in 2020 by National Geographic Society, is a sequel to the original Cosmos book and television series by the late Carl Sagan. Ann Druyan, who would become Sagan's wife, helped to produce that series. In 1980, it held me mesmerized for an hour every week as Sagan presented another aspect of the cosmos - the natural universe and everything in it. In Possible Worlds, Druyan continues the exploration without Carl Sagan, although her enduring love and admiration of him shows in every chapter. Like the original Cosmos, this book is episodic, with each chapter standing reasonably well on its own, addressing the vastness of space and time, microcosms of life on our own planet, and the human stories behind the discoveries. The consistent theme that ties them together is one of unabashed optimism and hope. In a time when one reads a lot of gloom and doom, Ann Druyan is a breath of fresh air.

One might expect that an astronomy-oriented book titled Possible Worlds would focus on the many other planets that might be orbiting those billions and billions of stars out there. Druyan does touch on this, but some possible worlds are those that might exist unknown to us on our own planet, or worlds that we could create here if we so choose. A couple of examples:

The chapter The Search for Intelligent Life on Earth includes a poignant section on the Arecibo telescope, which played a role in the movie Contact, before its tragic collapse. But Druyan poses the question: As we seek our first contact with an alien civilization, would we recognize communication if we saw it? She turns to the evolution of pollinators and to the bees' method of communication using flight patterns. They "dance" aerial messages which depend on numbers, flight speed and the direction of the sun. This intricate conversation between insects played out before our eyes for millennia, but it wasn't until the 20th Century that we recognized their behavior for what it is.

In A Tale of Two Atoms, Druyan imagines the formation of a carbon atom in the core of an ancient star and a uranium atom created in a supernova explosion. Long afterward, they become part of the stardust of which Earth is made. The uranium atom becomes embedded in the Earth's mantle, eventually to migrate into the crust toward the surface. The carbon is incorporated into a succession of organisms as life evolves on Earth. Eventually it becomes part of the eye of a woman named Marie Curie. Meanwhile the uranium atom has been mined and brought to Mme. Curie's laboratory. The discoveries she makes with it offer our planet both opportunity and danger. But what will we, as a society and as a species, choose?

Imagining good choices, Druyan ends the book with a description of the 2039 World's Fair. The backstory to this is that young Carl Sagan visited the 1939 World's Fair in New York and was deeply impressed by visions of the future. Unfortunately, World War II soon intervened to put those visions on hold. When the war was over, the boy produced a "newsletter" depicting what he imagined to be the history of the future, with headlines like "SOVIET AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS AGREE ON MUTUAL COOPERATION" and "SPACESHIP LANDS ON MOON!" The young visionary placed the moon landing a bit early, in 1955, but eventually he would be proven right. As an homage, Druyan, after describing the grand pavilions to rise in 2039, proposes her own future headlines. "INTERPLANETARY SEED BANK OPENS AT LUNAR SOUTH POLE!" "1,000,000TH TREE PLANTED ON MARS!" Maybe it's a stretch. But who can say what's possible?



# PENINSULA CHAPTER



## 2022 Peninsula Chapter Board of Directors

<b>President</b>	Jim Frances
<b>Vice President</b>	Shirley Chirch
<b>Secretary</b>	William Boeh
<b>Historian</b>	Maria Nissen
<b>Treasurer</b>	Christy Gardner
<b>Chapter Advisors</b>	Megan Tierney & Meghan Mulroy-Goldman

## Member Meetings and Continuing Education

**Day/Time:** Second Tuesday of every month, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
**Location:** Sandy Bottom Nature Park  
1255 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA 2366  
(Currently held on Zoom until further notice)

## 2022 Committee Chairs

<b>Basic Training</b>	Rex Holmlin
<b>Better Impact Coordinator</b>	Laura Marlowe
<b>Continuing Education</b>	Yukari Hughes
<b>Community Outreach</b>	Kimberly Prisco-Bagget
<b>Fund Raising</b>	Charlotte Boudreau
<b>Hospitality</b>	Merry Kennedy
<b>Membership</b>	Cindy Moore
<b>Newsletter</b>	Meera Rao
<b>Projects</b>	Chris Gwaltney
<b>Property Manager</b>	Jeanette and Ray Yoh
<b>Public Relations</b>	Nate Brauner
<b>Web Master</b>	John Berry
<b>Past President</b>	Charlotte Boudreau

## Upcoming Meetings and CE are listed in VMS-BI Calendar

**Date:** January 13, 2022 (Contact: meeragrao@gmail.com)  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m. Potluck Book Club Meeting. CE

**Date:** January 18 VIMS CBNERR Discovery Lab -Hurricanes  
8:00AM-10:00AM (details: BI Calendar) CE

**Date:** January 29-30, 2022, VA Beach Winter Wildlife Festival  
Registration Link on BI Calendar. CE

**Date:** February 8, 2022 (Zoom link on BI Calendar)  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m. Member Meeting  
7:00 CE: Author talk: Bicycling with Butterflies by Sara Dykman

## FIND US!

**Peninsula Chapter Website:** <http://vmnpeninsula.weebly.com/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/VMNPeninsula/>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTblGR9RcDI62oxfJSLi3Ww>

**Pinterest:** <https://www.pinterest.com/VMNPeninsula/>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/vmnpeninsula/?hl=en>

**Our Address: 809 Aberdeen Road, #9263,  
Hampton, VA 23670**

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