

THE VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY, particularly those members and friends living in the northern counties, the District of Columbia, and nearby Maryland, will meet:

FRIDAY, JUNE 24 1960 at WASHINGTON-LEE HIGH SCHOOL
7:30 to 9:30 P.M. 1300 North Quincy Street
Arlington, Virginia

THIS IS YOUR PERSONAL INVITATION TO ATTEND AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS.

We hope to have as speaker for the evening, W. Leslie Burger, who, upon returning from a year's teaching at Franklin College of Indiana; takes over the reins of the presidency of this Society. Les Burger, an able herpetologist and Faculty member, is one of our six co-founders who has guided the society from its earliest days.

The topic: "The Herpetological Distinctiveness of the South-eastern and Southwestern Corners of Virginia"

ALSO: COLOR SLIDES AND SELECTED SHORT FILM SUBJECTS : :

EXHIBIT IN LOBBY: Members are invited to bring a well-labelled, one-cage exhibit of harmless specimens. These should be set up before 7:30 P.M. Exhibitors plan to arrive at the school by 7:15 P.M.

PUBLIC INVITED -- The VHS meeting will be thrown open at 8:00 P.M. to all interested members of the public who care to hear the talks and see the color slides and film. Meeting will conclude by 9:30 PM.

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COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED VHS PROGRAM FOR 1960 to 1961 have been coming in steadily since Bulletin # 17 was mailed. We are hopeful that the faculty members, now free of their academic schedules, will have an opportunity to provide both critical and constructive comment upon the draft program. If you missed or misplaced Bulletin No. 17 please let the secretary know it and a fresh copy will be mailed to you.

Lee D. Schmeltz of the National Zoo staff, has suggested several helpful training aids for popular education on poisonous snakebite as contrasted with non-poisonous snakebite. These ideas will be written and submitted to John Thornton Wood, M.D., our first President, who will be continuing as a member of the Society's executive committee in the role of Medical Adviser.

William J. Keeler has sent in some excellent thoughts on safety notes for student and neophyte herpetologists. Bill feels that more reading material and talks should be given on proper and safe hunting methods -- with snakebite prevention as the objective. He also stresses the CONSERVATION angle, one which enthusiastic herpetologist-students are apt to forget. Don't collect more specimens than you need for study. Also, make certain that those you keep are kept in clean, dry cages. FEED THEM WELL, AND IF THEY WON'T EAT -- TURN THEM BACK TO THEIR OWN NATURAL HABITAT. DO NOT TURN THEM LOOSE IN AN AREA WHERE THEY CANNOT HOPE TO SURVIVE, NOR AT A PLACE DISTANT FROM WHERE THEY WERE FOUND! :

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OFFICERS OF THE VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Elected Oct.10,1959)

- President W. Leslie Burger, Seward Forest, Triplett, Va.
- Chairman O.K. Goodwin, Newport News, Warwick, Va.
- Co-chairman Dr.H.G.M.Jopson, Bridgewater College, Va.
- TREASURER Dr. Phoebe H. Knipling, Arlington, Va.
- Secretary Franklin Tobey, Jr. Rockville, Md.

Medical Adviser to the Society . . . John Thornton Wood, M.D.
Burkeville, Virginia

NOTES FROM THE FIELD (and from our Society Co-chairman):

Dr. Harry G.M. Jopson, Vertebrate Natural History Professor at Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Va., sent in some extremely interesting notes which, unfortunately, did not get into the April Bulletin. He relates:

"Melting of March snows, followed by heavy showers and rising temperatures, brought out amphibians in swarms in the Shenandoah Valley in late March. The Bridgewater College group working in Vertebrate Natural History had a successful field trip on the night of March 30, 1960. Temporary ponds near the campus yielded a chorus of the Spadefoot Toad (Scaphiopus h. holbrookii) the earliest spawning record for the species locally. Eggs were recovered on March 31st, tadpoles subsequently observed, but none yet noted transforming as this was written (April 14, 1960).

"Chorus Frogs, (Pseudacris nigrita feriarum) and Spring Peepers (Hyla crucifer) were also out, as was the Pickerel Frog (Rana palustris). A trip to Rawley Springs, where small woodland pools were collected, produced Spotted Salamanders (Ambystoma maculatum) in numbers. Also, in the pools were specimens of Jefferson's Salamander (Ambystoma jeffersonianum) more of these being noted than ever seen here before. About eight were seen, the ratio of the two Ambystoma being about 2:1 in favor of maculatum. Newts were also present, (Diemictylus v. viridescens) but not numerous. Most interesting was the observation of quantities of Ambystoma spermatophores, deposited by early arriving males, but only one egg mass. No courtship activity was observed, however.

Wood Frogs (Rana sylvatica) were also in the pools, but had not begun spawning. On the return trip, the American Toad (Bufo t. americanus) was taken calling."

NOTEWORTHY NEWSNOTES (from our clipping service - friends, members)

Dr. Roger Conant, assistant director and curator of reptiles at the Philadelphia Zoo, testified recently before a Congressional subcommittee in connection with proposed national legislation restricting importation and sale of South American flesh-eating fish (piranhas) and interstate traffic in poisonous snakes.

Dr. Conant, an honorary member of VHS and a guiding spirit of the Philadelphia Herpetological Society, appeared before Congressional group on behalf of the American Society for Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH). An associate, Dr. Philip Sheldon, appearing for the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, said Piranhas purchased as babies may outgrow the family aquarium. If released into southern streams they may become established. A school of grown piranhas can strip a cow to a skeleton in three minutes, he testified.

THERE IS DANGER AND MISCHIEF IN INTRODUCING STRANGE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES INTO ANY LOCALITY.. IF ANIMALS CANNOT BE RETURNED TO THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT -- THE ONE FROM WHICH THEY WERE COLLECTED -- THEY SHOULD BE KILLED HUMANELY AND PRESERVED FOR SCIENTIFIC-EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.



DON'T FORGET THE MEETING IN ARLINGTON COUNTY

JUNE 24, 1960 FRIDAY NIGHT 7:30 to 9:30

WASHINGTON-LEE HIGH SCHOOL CHERRYDALE SECTION

COME AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS --

NOTEWORTHY NEWSNOTES, continued: Interstate traffic in venomous snakes was protested by Dr. Conant. He cited his experience with venomous snake bites and said he wanted to see more control over poisonous species. (The proposed law provides for the legitimate needs of responsible scientists and zoological parks.) There is little doubt that the recent Australian Tiger Snake bite on the West Coast was in the minds of the witnesses and the Congressional group.

THE BEST PLACE FOR POISONOUS SNAKES IS THE REPTILE HOUSE AT THE ZOO.

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LOG-ROLLERS' ROUND-UP: J.Lear Grimmer and Mrs. Grimmer have recently returned from a trip to India. They brought back with them some fine new zoo acquisitions - mammalian and reptilian. Lear will turn about and head for the jungles of British Guiana -- by late June. * * * * * Dr. Edward F. Knipling, husband of our Treasurer, Dr. Phoebe H., has recently received a prized National Award in the Agricultural Sciences for his work in eradicating the screw-worm fly in the Southeast. Dr. E.F. Knipling is director of the entomology research division of the U.S. Agriculture Research Service at Beltsville, Maryland. * * * * *

John Bradshaw, VHS member formerly residing in Burkeville, Va., has relocated with his family. They are now at the Bradshaw Motel, on Route # 1, south of Stafford, Va. -- Not too far from Naturalist Franklyn Hambly at Prince William Forest Park -- Good Luck Bradshaws!

Dinton Lee Bragg, herpetology student of Hampton, Va. saw mention of the VHS while going over back issues of VIRGINIA WILDLIFE (June, 1958 issue). He has organized local student herpetologists into a regional club known as the Peninsular Junior Herpetologists. We hope this group will affiliate in a bloc with their state society. Individually and collectively, we welcome one and all. HOPE WE'LL SEE THIS GROUP AT THE NORFOLK MEETING -- LET'S GATHER THE SOUTHEASTERN MEMBERS SOON!

Dr. Richard G. Zweifel "called" your editor's bet (Bulletin No. 16). He (Dr. Zweifel) notes that the late Emmet Reid Dunn, born in Alexandria, Va., had more than 200 scientific papers to his credit at the time of his untimely death. (Your editor hastily takes refuge in an unstated qualification -- "living herpetologists" should have been specified. The Bulletin has paid tribute to the late E.R.Dunn in past issues. There was no intent to belittle his fine contribution!)

Sergeant Harold E. Drake, U.S. Army, Fort Belvoir, Va. who is scout-master of Troop # 118 at Fort Belvoir, writes the following:

"I am interested in corresponding and doing some field work with a herpetological student, or amateur, interested in research into the amount of mosquito control effected by herpetofauna (mainly pond turtles)."

Sergeant Drake is a student of entomology but thinks that some of the reptiles (or amphibians ?) might win laurels for the part they play in control of insect pests. Incidentally, both Sergeant Drake and his troop have individually and collectively become VHS members! For anyone wishing to collaborate with him, write c/o Qtrs 1120-C-4 Fort Belvoir, TEC, Va. Mention the VHS Bulletin - it identifies you!

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MEMBERSHIP IN THE VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY IS WELCOMED BY:

- (name)
- (address)
- (title, or occupation)
- (county)

Faculty, staff, student, BSA, or press-radio membership: dues \$1 per yr All other gainfully-employed persons - annual dues \$2.00 per year. To prevent loss of cash to unauthorized handler of mails, make out check or postal note to: Dr. Phoebe H. Knipling, Treasurer; write on check "for dues, 1960-'61" and mail with this detachable stub to Dr.Knipling at 2623 Military Road, Arlington, Virginia. Membership card will be sent with the next bulletin thereafter. SEND IN YOUR DUES NOW.

LOG-ROLLERS' ROUND-UP continued:

Wallace Evans, Richmond, Va. scout and VHS member has a growing snake collection. He has been hunting around upper Hanover County. When the green snake sheds, Wallace, please send the skin (or a major piece of it) to F. Tobey, 4706 Tallahassee Ave., Rockville, Md. for inclusion of it in a study of Opheodrys (sp.) * * * * A magnifying glass is useful on smaller Green Snakes (Opheodrys) when separating them into the two species - vernalis and aestivus. Skins of either are welcome if you don't wish to part with the live specimens. Tobey welcomes sheds (properly labelled with collecting data, and identified). * * * * VHS student member Joe Tobey was awarded a certificate of completion in the Junior Naturalist Training Course sponsored by the Department of Interior and conducted by National Capital Parks Service naturalists. Quite unexpectedly (it wasn't on the program) young Joe caught a small Northern Black Racer (Coluber c. constrictor) at the Kenilworth (D.C.) Aquatic Gardens. * * * * Similarly, Paul Millsback of the Millsback Brothers, Arlington, Va., (regular exhibitors at the statewide) caught a Black Racer on Roosevelt Island in the Potomac River.

HOPE TO SEE ALL THOSE WITHIN EASY TRAVEL DISTANCE ON FRIDAY, JUNE 24:

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SEND IN YOUR COMMENTS UPON THE VHS PROPOSED PROGRAM -- BEGIN NOW :

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 The VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY
 Treasurer: 2623 Military Road, Arlington, Va.
 Editor, 4706 Tallahassee Avenue, Rockville, Md.
 Return Postage Guaranteed

