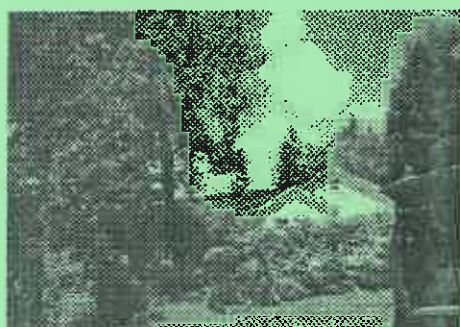




# NATURE STUDY NEWS

Nature Study Class  
Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve  
Jessie Huyck Center  
Rensselaerville, NY 12147



## PRESERVE WELCOMES GUESTS FOR THE NATURE STUDY PROGRAM

Differing ways to appreciate nature was the theme in nature study class on Thursday mornings. This year we welcomed six guest speakers who shared with us their own experiences and special knowledge. Sandy Orris, science teacher and natural history illustrator; Ken Barnett, naturalist; Martin Brand, geologist; Jackie Havens, nature photographer; Nancy Elliot, entomologist; and Tom Alworth, biologist, were kind enough to take time to teach us their specialties. We thank them for an interesting and fun summer nature study class.

Clio Moth



Ailly

## OBSERVING INSECTS WITH SANDY ORRIS

On July 10<sup>th</sup> Sandy Orris came to our nature study class at the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve.

Sandy came to teach us about catching, observing, and drawing insects. Sandy's first interest was in botany (plants). Many of the plants had insects on them and she found those interesting as well.

Before we could begin drawing we went outdoors to collect specimens by swooping our nets in the tall grass. The insects were put into collecting jars and then put out onto paper for observation under magnifying glasses. Then we drew them. Some of the things we looked for were leg joints, wings, compound eyes and mouth parts.



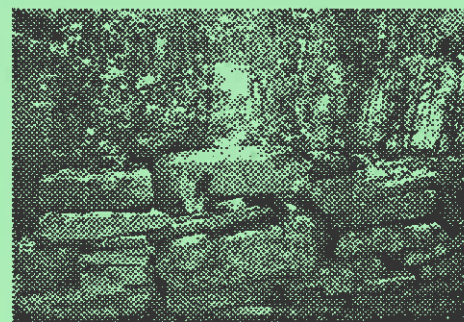
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## THE EXOTIC ANIMALS OF KEN BARNETT

Ken Barnett has over 100 animals which he raises and cares for. Some of his exotic animals are a red-eyed tree frog from South America, hissing

cockroaches from Madagascar, a Tokay gecko, an American alligator which he rescued from Long Island, and a red albino corn snake.

He showed all these and more to our nature study class on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Before Ken showed us the animals he told us to stay seated with our hands on our laps for our safety and the animals'. His animals could do many cool things. Ken put hissing cockroaches on his forehead, he also put the Tokay gecko on the glass window to show how he could hang on with his feet. We also liked the way the veiled chameleon vibrated his spinal cord. This is used for mating and stating territory. Ken said if we were interested in getting an exotic animal we should do research and make sure we meet its needs and requirements.



## MARTIN BRAND SPEAKS ON LOCAL GEOLOGY

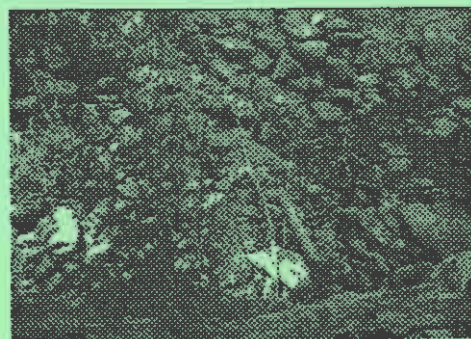
On July 24<sup>th</sup> Martin Brand came to our nature study class at



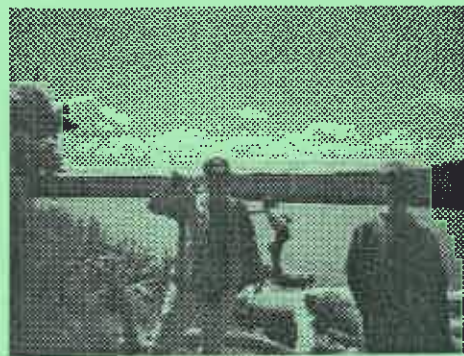
the Jessie Huyck Center to share with us his knowledge of geology. He showed us examples of rocks he brought with him which included lava and fossils. Mr. Brand then showed his tools which included a brunton compass, a rock pick, a rock hammer, chisels and hand lenses.

Mr. Brand took us all out on the nature trail. First, he picked up a rock and asked us if that would be marked on a map (the answer is no, as you can't always be sure of whether the rock was thrown, placed or naturally existing there). Continuing along the trail, we came to a dried up stream, where Mr. Brand allowed us to open up rocks that were there. Although some of the rocks we opened up appeared smooth at first glance, under the magnifying glass we could see all of the rough edges and imperfections.

We proceeded along the trail and down Bullfrog Camp Lane where we were instructed to pick up at least two fossils. Some of us gathered many examples. We returned to the Jessie Huyck Center where we compared our finds with the ones Mr. Brand brought in. Examples of both plants and animals were shown. Through rocks we learned about some things that existed hundreds of thousands of years ago. Learning about the past made a great day in the present.



Karl Vetter



PHOTOGRAPHING NATURE WITH JACKIE HAVENS

Photographing nature was the topic for July 31<sup>st</sup>, when Jackie Havens came to our class. Mrs. Havens showed slides of photos that she and her husband Jonas took, many of them right here on the Preserve. She discussed how she managed to get certain animals to look the way she wanted them to. On one occasion her daughter Kathia held cheese balls up in front of a gecko, just out of view of the camera, to achieve the desired result. Mrs. Havens' camera has a removable flash which can be placed anywhere to enhance lighting. She usually takes many photographs of the same object under different conditions (time of day, different lighting, different background, etc.), sometimes not knowing which will achieve the best results until they are developed.

Essentials to a good photograph are lighting, focus, composition, color, and contrast. The reason for the photograph often dictates what is emphasized. For example, a photo that will be in a field guide would be different than one that documents where you went on vacation.

Tips to make photos from a 35mm camera turn out better were given since distance, light and size of the subject can be limiting factors. She also gave general rules to follow when photographing nature including respect for the flora and fauna and their habitat; safety rules for dress (long pants,

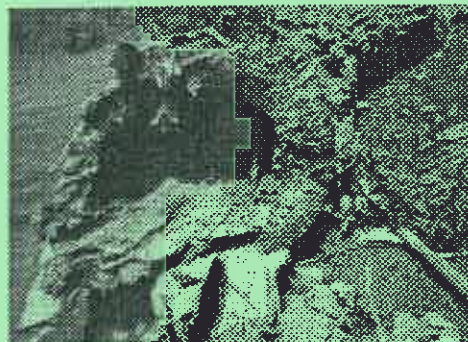
etc.); and risk taking (when and when not to take a risk).

After an interesting introduction we got our chance to take our own photographs of nature right outside of the Jessie Huyck Center. We found out there is a lot more to taking pictures than we thought. Our results are shown throughout this newsletter.

Melinda



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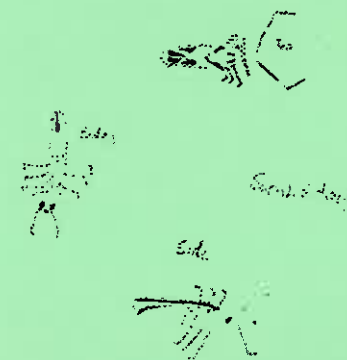


OUT IN THE FIELD WITH NANCY ELLIOTT

Insects can be interesting, we found out, when Nancy Elliott came to visit our class on August 7<sup>th</sup>. As a professional entomologist, Dr. Elliott conducts her research in the Bahamas where she often waits by holes in the ground for insects to appear so that she can study their behavior.

We had our own field experience up by the Ordway House, where we looked for insects and wasps. Armed with our nets we walked through the tall grass, sweeping for insects as we went. We caught two ambush bugs. Ambush bugs are particularly interesting because they eat pollinators that can be up to twice their size. They do this by waiting at a flower and when a bee or wasp

comes by they jump up and ambush them - making them not only well named but also well fed.



STUDYING BIRDS OF FLIGHT WITH TOM ALWORTH

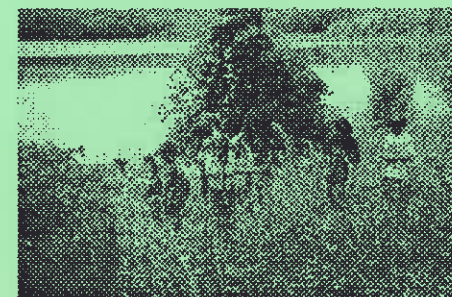
Tom Alworth came to our nature study class on August 14<sup>th</sup> at the Jessie Huyck Center to tell us about how birds are able to fly.

They have certain adaptations such as: hollow bones, no bladder, a beak instead of jaws, and light feathers instead of heavy skin which enables them to fly. All these adaptations make them very light. Birds are streamlined in shape and birds also flap their wings like butterflies to create "lift". If they were to flap up and

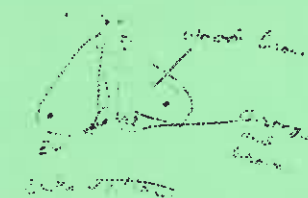
down, they'd push air down and would go nowhere.

We tried to catch birds in a "mist net". This net is invisible to birds in flight. When the bird finally sees the net, he cannot maneuver out of the nets way - except for the barn swallow - who has great maneuvering capabilities, because his back tail is forked, which allows him to steer and do "flips". This is another cool adaptation of birds.

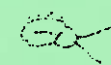
We have learned a lot from bird adaptations. Zippers are based on feathers; and airplanes are based on the shape of a bird's wing. Many human inventions come from observing our bird friends.



Under 6-10



MEREDITH KENNEY



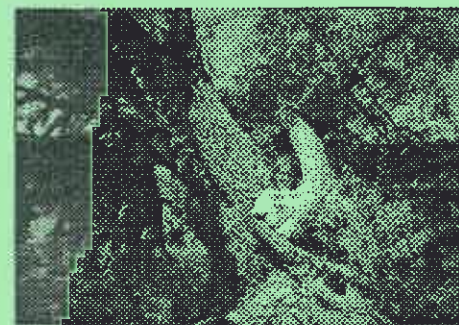
Let's hope



Have



Bethany Barrett



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