

# DELMARVA ALMANAC

February 2010

## Between The Shore Lines

### Delmarva's Winter Wonderland

As I write this it is the end of January and we have just had what will probably be our most significant winter storm of the season. There was over a foot of snow at my house in Bishopville by the time it was done. Though the air is cold the sun is as bright and clear as you can experience it. This corner of Delmarva is beautiful and peaceful this morning.

Just a few days ago it was damp and raw. Temperatures careened from below freezing to balmy fifty's. It seemed to rain at least once a week. The marsh grasses which are usually muted buff and brown had begun to look almost copper because of the constant moisture. The typical Eastern Shore winter scenery changed over night with a not so typical snow storm. I can count on one hand the number of times in the last thirty years that we had this amount of snow. While we get all excited about this notable weather event, nature takes it all in stride.

Not so empty nests and dried hydrangeas, vestiges of last summer persistently hold on under the heavy snowfall, even as new buds are forming on the lilac bushes. The quince bush defies the ice and cold with a valiant attempt at a winter bloom. Tiny birds puff up to stay warm. It is amazing that creatures who seem so tender can survive the frigid temperatures.

It's another little life lesson learned simply taking a short stroll on Delmarva. We are never as weak and small as we may think. If we just roll with the wind and heavy weather, we will bounce back. We too can tenaciously defy the elements we face to survive against the odds. By the end of this month we will see snow drops spouting in the dirt. Winter won't be over but we will blossom none the less.

## Delmarva History This Month

This is American History & Black History Month.

February 18, 1662 - Talbot County, Maryland established

February 16, 1669 - Dorchester County, Maryland established

February 2, 1781 - Maryland became the 13th state to approve the ratification of the Articles of Confederation

February 14, 1818 - Abolitionist Frederick Douglass born a slave at Holmes Hill Farm, near Easton, Maryland

February 21, 1882 - Sloop Dauntless wrecked near Chincoteague, Virginia in foul weather

February 22, 1892 - Spanish steamship San Albano ran aground on the outer shoals of Hog Island, Virginia

February 10, 1972 - Earth tremor at Wilmington, Delaware, felt as far as Elkton, Maryland.

## The Garden Of Good Living

### Feeding Our Feathered Friends

We may not spend much time in our garden during the month of February, but that does not mean that other folks don't hang out there. Feathered folks - that is. We've spoken in this column before about setting up feeders in a way that helps keep birds safe from cats and prevents furry competition like squirrels from stealing all the feed. But there is quite a bit more to learn about feeding birds in our back yard.

The area I am learning that I have neglected most of all is regular cleaning of the feeder. Birding experts at Cornell University say that we should scrub them out regularly and sweep up the rotting seed hulls on the ground as these can spread disease in birds.

Commercial seed mixes usually contain buckwheat seeds, milo, millet, oats, wheat, flax, and sunflower. Songbirds like the sunflower and thistle seeds the best and kick the rest to the ground. I have tended to avoid those mixes myself because the people we bought our house from advised me that the "yellow seed" attracted grackles, starlings and crows which scared away the smaller prettier song birds. And just as I write this a flock of grackles has attacked the feeder with sunflower seed and devoured most of it.

Some birds love suet – beef tallow. You can get this from the butcher in your grocery store. As a kid my job was to cut the suet into small cubes and stuff it into the holes of a slender log with branches that birds ate from. Now you can buy metal wire cages for the suet. Not everyone cares to put out suet, though some birds love it. Fresh cut fruit is another popular item for some birds. Traditionally people have put out stale bread and cake for birds also. But this can attract pests like rats and raccoons and should be avoided.

Here is a list of seeds and birds in our area which they attract:

\* = Will Eat \*\* = Preferred

	SUNFLOWER	SAFFLOWER	CORN	MILLET	MILO	NIJER	SUET	CUT FRUIT
Chickadees	**	*					**	
Titmice	**	*					**	
Nuthatches	**	*					**	
Finches	**	*		*		**		
Cardinals	**	*						
Grosbeaks	**	*						
Sparrows	**		*	*				
Blackbirds	**		*	*				
Jays	*		**		*			
Woodpeckers	*						**	
Orioles						*		**
Tanagers						*		**
Pigeons	*		**	*	*			
Doves	*		**	*	*			
Indigo Buntings	*					*		
Painted Buntings	**							
Robins								**
Thrushes								**
Bluebirds								**
Waxwings								**
Mockingbirds								**
Catbirds								**

Visit these links for more information about feeding birds:

- [http://www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/bird\\_feeding/index.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_feeding/index.html)
- <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/netcommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1142>
- <http://www.birdfeeding.org/bird-identifier/east/>
- [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/abtbirds\\_index.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/abtbirds_index.html)

### Rhythms' & Tides

Hunting season ends for most this month and very few people are still fishing. But there are plenty of birds to see. Abundant resident Canada geese are joined by their migrating cousins, and the snowies are here in force. They will be around for awhile. They are always a striking site as they come in for a landing on area farm fields. Flocks of starlings which swarm without fear just about everywhere are another common site.

On or near the water the usual herons, mergansers, sanderlings and sandpipers can be seen. Birds that I don't see as often include this meadowlark I spotted recently in Wicomico County. This tufted titmouse, along with some other birds, visits my feeder. (See the Garden of Good Living.) Also skulking around my feeder were a pair of raccoons the other day. They ran off before I could get their picture. If they come back I will have to take measures to keep them from being attracted to the feeder. All wild critters are neat to look at but as raccoon carry rabies they are not too welcome in my yard.

### **Sunrise & Sunset**

Sunrise at the beginning of the month: 7:09am  
Sunrise at the end of the month: 6:36am  
  
Sunset at the beginning of the month: 5:20pm  
Sunset at the end of the month: 5:51pm

### **Moon Phases**

New Moon: February 14  
Full Moon: February 28  
  
Moon rise at the beginning of the month: 8:43pm  
Moon rise at the end of the month: 6:14pm  
Moon set at the beginning of the month: 8:18am  
Moon set at the end of the month: 6:13am

### **Other Sky Events**

February 12 - Catch the thin crescent moon and Venus near the eastern horizon at dawn. This is best seen over the ocean.

February 16 - The conjunction of Jupiter and Venus can be seen slightly above and to the left of the setting Sun.

February 26 - The Delta Leonid Meteor Shower is due to appear, though the almost full moon may make the sky too light to see many of these slow moving meteors.

### **Celestial Navigation**

by Valerie Morrissey

Aquarius is highlighted this month. This is a masculine air sign, even though the Water bearer would suggest a water sign. Traditionally ruled by Saturn, today this sign is considered to be ruled by Uranus. This is a human sign, represented by a man pouring water from a vase. One of the most outstanding characteristics of a Water bearer is his love for humanity and devotion to causes. He or she pours out his energies raising funds and awareness, marching in protest demonstrations, speaking against injustice. Even if not out making a scene and more of a stay-at-home type, they are concerned with doing good for their fellow man and changing the world for the better.

Aquarius is highly intelligent, curious, inventive and has a knack for coming up with a better mouse trap. A perfect example of this sign is Thomas Edison, inventor of the light bulb, as well as many other useful devices that revolutionized the way we live.

Aquarians are basically cool and detached emotionally. They are more platonic than passionate. The friendship aspect of relationships means more to them than romantic sentiments. They don't get all torn up by love affairs and prefer to keep their independence. Even when they marry, they want to pursue their various interests and won't stand for being ordered around. They are set in their ways, but not jealous or possessive. They are sometimes eccentric and march to a different drummer.

In spite of these things, they like making new friends and are very good at it. An Aquarian has friends of all races and creeds, from all walks of life. He or she will join easily in any cultural event, and likes being involved in clubs or group activities.

Aries (*Born between March 21 - April 19*)

You may be restless, bored and looking for trouble. Saturn retrograde is the reason for the slowdown of things. Aries does not like getting held up. Whatever you are doing may be put on hold. It just means this is not the time to move forward, and you should review your plans and make changes. Do these things now, not later when you are at the launch pad. Because of Mars some Rams could be carrying on heated love affairs. Hmm!

Taurus (*Born between April 20 - May 19*)

You may get some attention or be in the news this month. At work the higher authorities will notice you, and there could be a lot of talk. Make sure you've been doing a good job so everyone will say good things about you. If a decision is necessary, don't procrastinate. Secrets, mysteries or scandal could be uncovered, to the inconvenience of some. You could get some help or career advice from women in fashion or the arts.

Gemini (*Born between May 20 - June 20*)

You will focus on getting out more, taking a vacation or studying a new subject. You want a change of scene and are bored with your present recreations and usual entertainment. You ought to take skiing lessons, join

a networking group or take a cruise, if it's in your budget. You need to recharge your batteries. Gemini folks need variation and lots of mental stimulation and are always looking for new fields to conquer.

Cancer (Born between June 21 - July 22)

You, like Gemini, would also benefit from a winter vacation, after the 12th. Because of Saturn, things at home may be rather stagnant. If projects are stalled, or if nothing is happening at all, you should get away, and when you return, new solutions will present themselves. You could get a lucky break of some kind from a distance, or from a foreign person. Any time this year is a good time to apply for grants and school loans.

Leo (Born between July 23 - August 21)

With Mars retrograde all month, you are hot and bothered about everything. You may lose your temper over nothing. You could be wildly in love, or fighting with your partner. Don't try to accomplish much, unless it's busy work like sorting out papers. Chop wood, carry water. If you're in love, great, but if you can't get along, invest your energies in some vigorous physical chores. Or get to the gym and a kickboxing class!

Virgo (Born between August 22 - September 22)

Now that Jupiter is in Pisces, your marriage or partnership may see changes this year. If things have broken down, one of you may go looking for greener pastures or simply want your freedom. Business partners might want out. Venus with Jupiter in February helps a lot. If your relationship is solid and affectionate, try new activities or take a second honeymoon. Conversely, chances are good that singles will marry this year.

Libra (Born between September 23 - October 22)

Retrograde Saturn and Pluto continue to sit on you like slugs. But you are philosophical and patient, and won't let your problems get the better of you. During the first half of the month, your social life should be pretty good, perhaps you'll be invited to a big Super Bowl party. On the New Moon of the 14th, Valentine's Day, a new romantic partner could appear. Creative or humanitarian projects could be initiated at this time.

Scorpio (Born between October 23 - November 21)

Many of you continue to be preoccupied with career and advancement concerns. Even obsessed, as Scorpios frequently are. Someone might make a scene in public, or try to provoke you. But you don't let anyone push you around. You yourself must control your temper. This is not the time to make moves. Work behind the scenes. Get plenty of fresh air and exercise to keep the stress levels down. Romance beckons after the 13th.

Sagittarius (Born between November 22 - December 21)

If you are traveling this month, there could be some excitement. Take your time and drive carefully, and plan well ahead of time. If the weather gets bad, don't go. You might want to take off on the spur of the moment but you should wait. On the home front, you should buy new furniture or plan to redecorate. The aspects with Jupiter and Venus will be very good for house hunting and securing mortgages, so act now.

Capricorn (Born between December 22 - January 20)

Follow the advice given for Libra. Keep career aspirations to yourself for the time being, and work within limitations. Things will lighten up at month's end. There may be events or news from close relatives after the 13th, and activities with neighbors and school affiliations. Get reacquainted. This is a good time to sort out differences or past problems that were on the back burner. Communications improve now in all affairs.

Aquarius (Born between January 21 - February 19)

Venus and the Sun here during the first two weeks will bring in lots of social activity. Shopping bargains and trips to the hairdresser or the spa. Some of you might get a radical new haircut or a tattoo, Aquarius being a rebellious and original style maven. The New Moon on Valentine's Day could signal a new romance or creative inspiration. This is also a good day to start a diet or commit to a fitness plan. Turn over a new leaf.

Pisces (Born between February 20 - March 20)

Because of aspects between Mars, Saturn and Jupiter, Fishies may be faced with special challenges. This isn't as scary as it sounds. You must make sacrifices and readjustments, and eliminate the obsolete, but this results in soul growth. Possible health concerns followed by breaking bad habits, and a healthier lifestyle. Venus joins with Jupiter after the 12th. Your social life and finances should improve. You could get lucky!

## Holidays & Observances This Month

February 1 - Imbolic (Celtic)  
February 2 - Groundhog's Day  
Candlemas (Christian)  
February 8 - Ground Hog's Day  
February 12 - Lincoln's Birthday  
February 14 - St. Valentine's Day  
February 15 - President's Day (Federal Holiday)  
Parinirvana (Buddhism)  
February 16 - Carnival / Mardi Gras (Christian)  
February 17 - Random Acts of Kindness Day  
February 22 - George Washington's Birthday  
February 26 - Birth of the Prophet (Islam)

This is:  
African American History Month  
<http://www.loc.gov>  
American Hearth Month  
<http://www.americanheart.org>  
American History Month  
<http://www.loc.gov>  
National Wild Bird-Feeding Month  
<http://www.birdfeeding.org>  
February's Flower: Violet  
February's Birthstone: Amethyst

## Some Things To Do This Month

*Be sure to visit Delmarva Almanac online for an extensive community calendar which covers the entire peninsula, tide tables, original photography and much more: [Delmarva-almanac.com](http://Delmarva-almanac.com)*

### Friday - February 5

First Friday's Arts Walks  
Chestertown & Snow Hill, Maryland

### Saturday - February 6

Men of Color to Arms  
Salisbury University - Salisbury, Maryland

### Wednesday - February 10

Nature-friendly Valentine's Day  
Pickering Creek Audubon Center - Easton, Maryland

### Friday - February 12

27th Annual Seaside Boat Show  
40th Street and the Bay - Ocean City, Maryland  
Second Friday Art Stroll  
Downtown Berlin, Maryland

### Friday - February 19

Third Fridays  
Downtown Plaza - Salisbury, Maryland

### Saturday - February 20

Country-Bluegrass Celebration  
Rock Hall Firehouse - Rock Hall, Maryland

### Friday - February 26

I'm Not Rappaport  
Church Hill Theatre, Church Hill, Maryland

### Saturday - February 27

65th Annual National Outdoor Show  
South Dorchester Pre K-8 School, Golden Hill, Cambridge, Maryland

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Resources for some of the information contained in this publication include:

<http://archives.delaware.gov>  
<http://www.arksky.org>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org>  
<http://www.msa.md.gov>  
<http://www.e-referencedesk.com>  
<http://www.loc.gov>

<http://www.vahistorical.org>  
<http://www.noaa.gov>  
<http://www.earthcalendar.net>  
<http://www.skyandtelescope.com>  
<http://www.seasky.org>

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