

# Lancaster Herpetological Society

Husbandry, Education, Conservation, Community

The Lancaster Herpetological Society is a small club that meets once a month to discuss herps and herp-related issues. The club meets at the North Museum ([www.northmuseum.org](http://www.northmuseum.org), 400 College Ave., Lancaster, PA 17603) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month. Meetings are open to the public, free of charge, and begin at 7pm. Please feel free to attend by entering through the back door (ring bell if locked). The membership requests that all children under the age of 16 be accompanied by an adult. For more information, contact Chad Arment ([lancwildlife@verizon.net](mailto:lancwildlife@verizon.net)). *Hope to see you there!*

## Upcoming Meetings

Date	Speaker	Topic	Comments
10/17/2008	Field Trip	"Creatures of the Night"	**At Zoo America in Hershey, PA
11/20/2008	Dr. Walter Meshaka	TBA	-
12/18/2008	Chad Arment	Mystery Reptiles	coachwhipbook.com herper.com
1/15/2009	Members' Night	Sharing Our Own Herps	Bring Your Own Herps

**\*Meeting for Board Members at 6PM prior to club meeting in November.**

**\*\*Please note special meeting place for October Meeting. LHS will go on a field trip to Zoo America's "Creatures of the Night".**

**Upcoming Havre de Grace Herp Shows:** Nov 8<sup>th</sup>, Dec 20<sup>th</sup> (No '09 dates posted yet)

**Upcoming Hamburg Herp Shows:** Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, Dec 6<sup>th</sup>

## Club Happenings

In July, the world renowned herpetologist Carl Ernst gave a presentation on copperheads. His celebrity led to the best attendance of the year with lots of new faces in the audience! One interesting fact revealed by Dr. Ernst was a number of documented deaths directly attributed to *Agkistrodon contortrix*. Dr. Ernst hinted that he would be willing to make additional presentations in the future, so hopefully LHS will host him again in '09.

Both August and September were excellent meetings as well. Gregg Feaster presented a powerpoint on subocs and included some information on the genus *Pituophis* as well. Being a breeder, Gregg also brought a variety of living snakes to compliment his presentation. Considering the five hour round trip that Gregg had to endure to present to our humble club, LHS is extremely grateful.

Our original plans for a reptile veterinarian during our September meeting got cancelled due to a scheduling conflict. We will try to host a herp vet in the future, but luckily Jesse Rothacker and Roy Mellott were able to fill in with a presentation on field herping. Jesse's pics were from his recent trip to Costa Rica, and Roy's photos were of local herps within our region. Both were excellent and informative! It is great to have members able and willing to step in at the last moment.

## Community Outreach

The planned community outreach at Park City Shopping Center was cancelled when Park City officials became concerned that LHS did not have adequate insurance. Park City did not elaborate as to whether herpetophobia or liticaphobia primarily drove their decision. Though LHS members were understandably disappointed, a last minute field trip to Zoo America's "Creatures of the Night" was substituted instead.

## Website

The website continues to be a work in progress. If you have ideas for the website, or wish to contribute something directly (photos, etc...), please contact Chad Arment ([lancwildlife@verizon.net](mailto:lancwildlife@verizon.net)). Chad has recently added a Past Speakers List (including contact information where appropriate) and plans to add a newsletter archive, native PA herps galleries, and more... .

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## In the News

Tired of line-breeding? Bored of seeing varieties of genetic abnormalities? Sick of the same old color and pattern morphs? Try breeding an extinct species!

According to HerpDigest, that is exactly what Dr. Gisella Caccone is trying to do with an extinct species of Galapagos tortoise. After careful DNA research of museum specimens, Dr. Caccone believes that selective breeding of the Isabela tortoise (*Geochelone becki*) could lead to the reestablishment of Floreana tortoise (*Geochelone elephantopus*). Though they had occupied different islands, both species have a high degree of genetic relatedness. Dr. Caccone believes that line-breeding the Isabela tortoise and selecting only those individuals who are most related to the Floreana tortoise will, after several generations, lead to an actual Floreana tortoise. Not bad for a species which went extinct in the 1800's. The Floreana tortoise is of particular historical significance since Charles Darwin personally watched the harvest of this species for food by sailors on their long journeys.

Recent articles about a variety of scientific topics, herps or otherwise, can be found at Science News, <http://www.sciencenews.org/>. A better source for exclusively herp news can be found at HerpDigest, <http://www.herpdigest.org/>. HerpDigest will email you directly an electronic newsletter twice a week. Both services are free, though you must subscribe to Science News to read archived articles.

## Forgotten Friend Reptile Rescue Update by Jesse Rothacker

### Reptiles for Adoption

The Reptile Rescue has been busy as usual, with plenty of critters coming through the rescue doors, and others being placed through ForgottenFriend.org's Adoption Forum ([www.forgottenfriend.org/forum](http://www.forgottenfriend.org/forum)). At the rescue we've had a lot of the usual species, like Ball Pythons, Burmese Pythons, and Red Tail Boas. We had one Red Tail Boa come from a Delaware family that had raised her for 17 years, also known as "middle-age" for a healthy boa. We had a Ball Python come in from Lancaster Humane League and a few other snakes come in from young adults who were moving on to college or careers. Over the summer we were able to pick up several alligators in the region and meet up with John and Laura Paner from CrocEncounters ([www.crocencounters.org](http://www.crocencounters.org)) who drove them down to their Reptile Rescue in Tampa, FL.

### Happy Endings

Recently we were able to help a couple more elementary school teachers to adopt reptiles as classroom pets. We have been doing our best to help bring reptiles into the classroom environment with qualified teachers, so they can start giving reptiles a P.R. boost for their students at a young age. Another Happy Ending involved our old pal (and LHS member) Jan Cooper, who moved to AZ a couple years ago. Jan adopted a few rapidly-growing Sulcata Tortoises from New Jersey for her Arizona ranch just this week. As you can imagine, these dry-climate tortoises couldn't be happier, now that they have several acres of desert to roam all year long!

### Reptiles Currently for Adoption

Currently at the rescue we have a Ball Python, Corn Snake, and large Red Tail Boa for adoption, with others scheduled to come in. The public adoption forum has seen Argentine Tegus, Blue Tongue Skinks, Tortoises, Wood Turtles, and lots more, with new listings going up all the time. So if you're interested in Reptile adoption, check out ForgottenFriend.org!

### Forgotten Friend on PetFinder.com

In addition to listing our reptiles for adoption through our own website, ForgottenFriend.org, we also list them for adoption on Kingsnake.com's Adoption Classifieds, to gain valuable exposure from a great herp website. However, we have been getting so many commercial inquiries for our adoptions that we've decided to try a more adoption-focused website. PetFinder.com is the biggest and best pet adoption website in the world, and they deserve a lot of credit for their hard work. In order to sign up with PetFinder, we needed to provide nonprofit documentation and a letter from our primary veterinarian (Dr. Harris at Smoketown Vet), and also go

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through an extended interview process! As you can see, PetFinder.com is very careful to make sure they have the best rescue members to provide an excellent adoption community. We are excited to be one of their newest rescues!

## **Educational Outreach at Forgotten Friend**

LHS and Forgotten Friend teamed up to provide a great reptile room experience at a September wildlife festival in Philadelphia, hosted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This was our third year providing herps to an amazing festival that includes raptors, parrots, porcupines, large cats, and a long list of other critters and wildlife/conservation agencies. Thanks to Samuel, Brandon, and Roy for helping me this year!

Our After-School Program contracts were renewed for the 08-09 school year in Lancaster and Lebanon School Districts. Once again we will be providing positive reptile afterschool activities for inner-city youth five days a week. Although we are visiting some schools for the first time, we did have a few returning students and I was happy to see they remembered a couple things about reptiles from last school year! You can check out our afterschool highlights at [www.forgottenfriend.org/afterschool](http://www.forgottenfriend.org/afterschool). We have also provided well over 100 other community reptile programs this year. Our outreach programs fulfill our educational mission, and they are also our top fundraiser, since we get paid for invading many places with educational reptile programming. To schedule a reptile program for an event in your area, check out [www.forgottenfriend.org/learn](http://www.forgottenfriend.org/learn) or talk to Jesse. Great fun for schools, churches, scouts, birthdays, holiday events, and more!

The Central PA Reptile Expo ([www.centralpareptileexpo.com](http://www.centralpareptileexpo.com)) held its first of several shows on October 11, with several more shows scheduled for 2009. Kelly Kordek, the show organizer, donated free nonprofit tables at the show to Forgotten Friend, LHS, and our friends from New York, the Metropolitan Herp Society ([www.metroherpsociety.org](http://www.metroherpsociety.org)). I was in another part of the state doing outreach programs on that day, so Samuel, Brandon, Mark, and Roy held down the fort at both tables. The show was a great success for their premiere expo, and the next one will be Jan 24, 2009.

## **National Reptile Awareness Day - October 21st**

I'll leave you with one final reminder: October 21st is National Reptile Awareness Day. Forgotten Friend is doing our part to give reptiles some extra positive P.R. that week with Reptile spots on Harrisburg CBS 21 Saturday morning 10/18 at 8 AM, and FM97 (96.9) and WJTL 90.3 (both out of Lancaster) on the morning of the 21st, starting at 7 AM. If you haven't planned anything yet, I encourage you to think of something fun you can do for your friends, students, neighbors, or coworkers! Celebrate responsibly.

## **Requests**

LHS exists solely as a volunteer organization. The club would not survive without the constant and continual input of its members. Arranging speakers, organizing field trips, and producing the newsletter take volunteered time. If you have ideas for and are willing to take the lead in arranging speakers or field trips, please contact Chad Arment ([lancwildlife@verizon.net](mailto:lancwildlife@verizon.net)).

If you wish to contribute to the newsletter, please contact Zach Barton ([zbarton@ycstech.org](mailto:zbarton@ycstech.org)). Possible original contributions include: book reviews; species care sheets; notes from a field herping trip; herp news summaries; and opinionated essays. The deadline for the Winter 2009 Newsletter is approaching fast!

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