

NOTES FROM ANNESDALE SNOWDEN



Where the sun is warm, neighbors smile, children play, cats purr and dogs wag their tails.

April 2011

<http://www.annesdale.com/index.html>

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Know your Neighborhood Plants and Critters:

Winter Honeysuckle

The next time you stop for the light at West Snowden and Lamar, roll down your passenger's side window and take a deep breath.

If you are lucky, you will smell the sweet fragrance of *Lonicera fragrantissima*, the winter honeysuckle.

Lots of these grow on the grounds of Annesdale House, and have been in flower the last couple of weeks. This American Native shrub blooms in winter (and early spring), hence its common name. The blossoms are small and pale

yellow, but very fragrant, and cover the bushes in January, February, March, and (hopefully) sometimes even April.

If you are out walking or running along Lamar, you will really notice the fragrance. Drought-tolerant and easy to grow, this native shrub would be great in your garden if you have the space for it—it gets 5 or 6 feet tall.

It's bird friendly too: red berries form



in summer, but they're so well-hidden behind the leaves that they usually go unnoticed except by our feathered

friends.

- Stanton Thomas (Agnes Place)

Clue for Next Month's Plant or Critter: Don't look up! (Or down)

ASNA EVENTS AND DATES OF INTEREST

APRIL FOOLS' DAY

APRIL SATURDAYS 5PM-7PM - NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN UP DAYS

SUNDAY, APRIL 19 - FULL PINK MOON

APRIL 22 - GOOD FRIDAY

APRIL 24, EASTER SUNDAY, 3 PM, ANNUAL ANNESDALE SNOWDEN EASTER EGG HUNT - LIPINSKI FIELD

SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2011 - ASNA HOME TOUR - 1:00 PM TO 5:00 PM

TICKETS AT THE GAZEBO



© William L. Newton/CLO

<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>

Regal Seasonal Neighbors

You can't miss the white-washed sidewalk and street at Sledge and Snowden Circle in the spring and summer, but have you had a chance to lay eyes on the creators of this yard art? These tall crowned jewels of the neighborhood are yellow-crowned night herons (*Nyctanassa violacea*), and they are not a common sight in the urban landscape. Why have they chosen our little oasis as their own for breeding?

These large wading birds are common on the Gulf Coast and are found less commonly along the southern Mississippi River Valley. While they prefer to breed near water, large patches of old trees reminiscent of the swamp will do. Welcome to Midtown. Colonies of nests have also been seen nearby in Central Gardens on Rembert near Harbert and on Goodbar near Roland causing fascination for the human natives. These smaller nesting colonies are likely dispersers from our Annesdale-Snowden colony.

The adults wear a clean-cut outfit of slate grey with stark black and white faces and a yellow crown, but the young have a more mottled appearance (as many young birds do) to camouflage them from predators. Many fledglings have been documented at these Midtown nests, which are messy, large flat baskets of sticks that look a little tenuous in the tops of the trees.

In their more typical marsh habitat these birds prey mostly on crabs and crayfish but also snails, tadpoles, frogs and other small vertebrates, and insects. In these urban settings they may shift their diets somewhat based on availability.

While we may be miffed from the mess, we are lucky to be graced with the presence of such unusual regal seasonal neighbors. Let's keep our eyes out for their return this spring!

Fields Falcone - Research Associate, Memphis Zoo (Sledge Ave resident)



HOUSE HOPPING AT MARIA FURHMANN'S MARCH 25TH

**NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS HAD A
WONDERFUL TIME!
SIGN UP TO HAVE THE NEXT EVENT
AT YOUR HOME.
CONTACT
MARY ANN CALDWELL
726-1937**



ASHD Memory Corner

Velma Lake

**Scene 1: San Joaquin Valley, panoramic view sweeping over fruit trees combed into rows under burning rays of California sun. WWII era. Velma, young and tan in a halter top and shorts, and her brother, Leslie, lean against a fence, chewing on blades of grass and admiring the countryside where their father is foreman on what in California is called a ranch. Velma, obviously the adoring sister, listens intently to her brother:*

-Velma, there's a war going on, and I want to do my part! I'm going into town tomorrow and join the Navy! And ya know what else? I'm gonna see the WORLD while I'm at it.

(Velma frowns and looks at the ground.) Suddenly she makes a decision. Her eyes flash as she tosses the blade of grass away and dusts off her hands.

-Leslie? (She looks up at him and shades her eyes from the sun) You're not going off and leaving me out here on this ranch! I'm gonna join up, too! I'm gonna join the Navy. If you can do it, I can do it! (She does a Popeye swagger. Popeye theme music plays. Velma and Leslie turn and race to the ranch house, laughing.)



So, with their parents' blessing, Velma and Leslie go to Merced to enlist in the Navy. Velma didn't say to her brother, "Anything you can do, I can do better," but Velma gets accepted by the WAVES, while Leslie (colorblind!), rejected, has to take second dibs. Velma, sent across the entire continent for training in the Bronx, has her first Thanksgiving and Christmas away from home. She spends New Year's Eve in Times Square where rooms cost \$5 a night. She and several other WAVES rent a room but can afford to pay for only two guests. The girls are excited and giddy. And giggly. After observing numerous gigglers going in and out of the room, the house detective knocks on the door. Velma and a co-conspirator stick out their heads and meekly vow they are the only two in the room. The house detective peers past them into the room and shakes his head--BROADS in the Navy!

Scene 2: Velma arrives on base at Los Alamitos Air Station in California. Velma is strolling around base with other newly-arrived WAVES. Navy men are everywhere, and they all notice the WAVES, who are a definite minority. Velma is intrigued, but not daunted:

-This is some assignment. All these men are BOYS! Homesick BOYS! None are over 20. I'm an old lady of 22! (Velma grins. All the WAVES grin.) Uncle Sam, thank you! I've got my work cut out for me!

Velma feels like she is at a resort. In addition to an inexhaustible supply of homesick boys, which helps keep *her* from being homesick, the base has a tennis court, bowling alley, handball court, shooting range, movie theatre and swimming pool. Velma loves to dance and has discovered a talent for winning jitterbug contests. And the base's tap room (as in beer keg) insures that WAVES over 21 like Velma are even more popular. Despite being in the WAVES, Velma never learns to swim in any pool.

This Navy base boasts the presence of celebrities. Bob Hope and Francis Langford broadcast their radio show every week from the base, and Velma gets to watch broadcasts and even talk to the stars. She adds their autographs to her collection which eventually includes Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, the Sons of the Pioneers, Clark Gable, Loretta Young, Jean Harlow and Max Baer.



Scene 3: Velma is in a large warehouse, filling out chits for parts and supplies. She chews on her pencil. Daydreaming, she imagines filling out a chit for her Prince Charming. She pretends to write: One homesick boy, in the Navy, naturally -- good looking, honest, hard working. Might as well ask for a "good dancer." She hears a cough and looks up. Her eyes grow big and round. Maybe this guy right in front of her....



Velma, however, meets her husband- to-be, Joseph, at the USO, the Match.com of World War II. They take advantage of all the base amenities. Joseph can dance so she jitterbugs to her heart's content. Two months into the whirlwind courtship, they are married. The Navy supplies the reception and the preacher. Velma's superior officer gives her away. Thus, Velma's Prince Charming order is filled by a sailor from Arkansas. After the war, the happy couple moves to what in Arkansas is called a farm and raises various crops, three sons and one daughter. Their marriage lasts over 50 years. Alone, Velma eventually joins her daughter in Annesdale Snowden.

Scene 4: Velma looks out her glass doors and sees her daughter's back porch. The sleeping garden promises a lovely spring. Velma rides her electric chariot up the stairs to get her cross stitch pattern and embroidery thread. She smooths the covers on the bed and puts a dust cover over her sewing machine. She hears her daughter's little dogs barking. She does the electric glide back down the stairs to see why. Oh, it's that darn squirrel again! Velma glances at the calendar. Only a few more days until her 90th birthday. She is excited about the grand party her family back in Arkansas has planned. Family and old friends. It will be a memorable event for everyone.

Velma tells me she had a good time in the WAVES. She says she was a party girl. But she worked hard, and her job getting parts to the mechanics to keep the planes in the air was important. She says proudly (justifiably so) she is a member of the Memphis Belles, the National Women of the Sea and a lifetime member of the American Legion. She retired as the Cafeteria Manager of an Arkansas school. When asked, Velma reports she took tap dance lessons and studied Interpretive Dance in high school. (No wonder she won jitterbug contests!)



Velma's cottage was refurbished by daughter, Jo Ann, and son-in-law, Henry. The ceiling is creamy tin; a gas heater cozily burns within a miniature fireplace mantle; and the kitchen is munchkin size. Velma's pig collection roots around on shelves and in corners. Genealogy record books, picture albums, Reader's Digest Condensed books, a cross stitch clock, crocheted afghans, hooked rugs, family photos, and a lifetime of memories lend a homey, country style clutter to the charming, hobbit-like space. Imagine a fairy tale cottage in a Disney garden with expectations of a happy ending -- or Velma's Thomas Kinkade painting in three-dimensions--well, you have Velma's cottage. Complete with an ASHD version of a Fairy Godmother.

Scene 5: Velma sits on her loveseat, embroidery hoop in hand, in the blue-tinted light of the gas burners. She laments, not for the first time, "I sure wish I had kept my autograph collection! My friend never fails to crow that she has kept it all these years. With all those original autographs!" She sighs and makes a perfect cross stitch.

-- Beverly Seaton

**Scenes Imagineered Courtesy of Magic Wand*



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