Wilderness Not Monotonous
By Renee Shenk
Staff Writer

“We hiked to a peat bog, saw old beaver dams, got our feet wet walking through cranberry bogs, and almost got blown off of Bear Rocks.”

This sounds like a great way to spend a Thursday, and it’s exactly what Jim Yoder’s Ecology class did on Sept. 25 when they visited Dolly Sods Wilderness Area. Dolly Sods is a plateau about 10 miles north of Seneca Rocks, West Va.

“The field trip was a nice break from the monotony of classroom learning,” said senior David Landis.

Yoder said, “The steep road up to the plateau is like taking an ecological journey north through New England and Canada with plant species gradually changing as you increase elevation.”

The top of the plateau is an experience similar to northern Canada or Alaska with harsh weather conditions and high winds. The plant life is also very unique to this southern plateau and includes red spruce, bog plants such as sundews, sphagnum moss, and cranberries and reindeer moss, whose range extends all the way north to the Arctic Circle.

Landis said, “I think that my favorite part of the day was when we were given a couple of hours to explore the place on foot. A group of us hiked across this large meadow, splashing around through a few bogs, jumping through the scrub brush, and ended up in this spread of rocks on the other side of the plateau. I really enjoyed the intensity of the weather, with strong gusts of wind constantly blowing from the west.”

Yoder took the students to this plateau to show them “how weather and climatic conditions affect plant and animal communities,” he said.

The class saw evidence of the flagpole effect, which is when branches can only grow on one side of a tree because the winds are too strong on the opposite side, and trees that are stunted more than they would be in more forgiving weather conditions.

After observing the trees and other plants, the students visited a bird-banding station. This station captures and tags up to ten thousand migratory songbirds a year.

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After Jag Jivan graduates, she plans on returning to her job in Pakistan. Her goal is to take the information she has learned and train other people she works with."

Fulbright Scholars Come to EMU From All Over the World
By Jenna Martin
Staff Writer

Drawn to EMU’s Conflict Transformation Program, recipients of the Fulbright Scholarship from around the globe are choosing to come to Harrisonburg to further their education.

Jennifer Christine Jag Jivan was working for Catholic Relief Services in Pakistan when she found out about the Fulbright Scholarship opportunity. She read about the program in a newspaper ad and was encouraged by her peers to apply.

After going through a rigorous hour and a half long interview, she was happily notified that she had been awarded the scholarship. Now she finds herself living in Harrisonburg and taking classes through EMU’s graduate Conflict Transformation Program for free.

Her story is much like that of a group of individuals from Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Pakistan who are the lucky few to be awarded a Fulbright Scholarship. Most applicants have degrees and careers involved with conflict resolution and desire to improve their skills.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs launched the Fulbright Conflict Resolution Program in 2000. Its purpose is to teach people in conflict-stricken areas how to build peace. Applications are sent to the Fulbright office in Washington, D.C., prospective recipients are interviewed, and finally the most qualified are selected for the scholarship.

Fulbright scholarship-holders travel from their homes to EMU’s campus and begin crash CTP courses that last from August to December of the next year. Students take core classes, restorative justice classes, and join in the Summer Peacebuilding Institute. Also, they must participate in a practicum located outside Harrisonburg that deals with global peace, political affairs, hunger, or development.

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Before entering the program, she says the classes are conducted in a relaxed manner. “The faculty go out of their way to accommodate us.”

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“It is important to create links with organizations like EMU and CTP,” she said. “I feel that I have been blessed by getting the scholarship.”

Kamal Tipu is also from Pakistan. At home he works as a police officer. Like Jag Jivan, he saw the ad in the paper, applied, and was selected for the scholarship. He finds the learning environment at EMU “safe and very comfortable,” but realizes he lacks the computer skills most students take for granted. Kamal is hoping to gain much from the program through exposure to new culture, learning about different lifestyles, and gaining new ideas.

Other highlights have been traveling to D.C. and touring the city. “I’m happy to be here, but it is difficult to live without my family,” he said. In December his family hopes to join him for a visit.