

# How to live clean and green

Students learn new appreciation for wildlife via program

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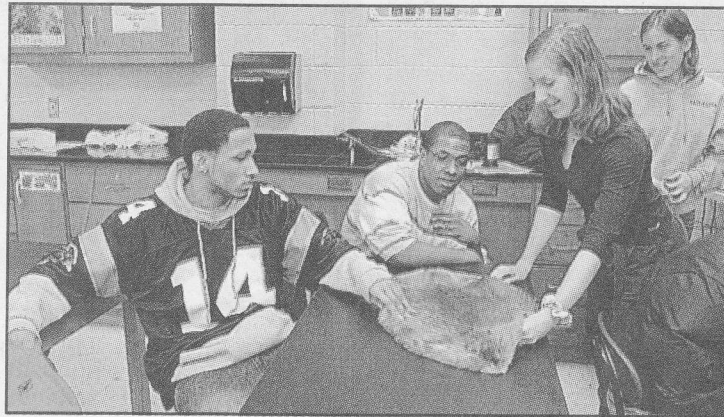
Three science classes Wednesday at Austin-East Performing Arts and Sciences Magnet High School learned that the chance of seeing a coyote, a bobcat, a groundhog and a flying squirrel – even in an urban area – is extremely high in the Knoxville area.

These are some of the animals that claim the valley as their home and are examples of animals that have adapted to the area as development increased.

Naturalists Peg Beute and Lyn Bales of Ijams Nature Center presented a workshop on urban wildlife conservation at the school.

The visit is part of a monthly program called Living Clean and Green. In cooperation with KUB and WBIR-TV Channel 10, Ijams' environmental education initiative is a series of 12 programs and workshops designed to inform the public and to improve the local environment.

Varying in length, the programs are presented for civic organizations, garden clubs or neighborhood associations for free. The program at Austin-East was the first school program.



J. MILES CARY/NEWS SENTINEL PHOTOS

Reggie Jones, left, and Edward Marsh look at a beaver pelt as AmeriCorps team member Nicki Cagle discusses it.

Two of the high school's AmeriCorps volunteers invited the Ijams representatives who made presentations in three classes, including David Newvine's environmental science class of juniors and seniors.

"I grew up in the woods; I grew up with this stuff," Newvine said minutes before his class filled with students who walked slowly past covered cages and a few animal skulls and pelts.

Minutes later, students were quiet as Bales gave an energetic presentation on the components of wetlands and the benefits they provide.

As he carried a small turtle around, students leaned closer as he passed them.

"You know what he's saying," Bales asked as he walked around with a small

painted frog. "Please don't squeeze me.' ... I wouldn't advise you to try to pick up a frog. You have to pick them up very gently because they do not have a rib cage to protect their hearts and lungs."

Several students, including Ashley Underhill and Jamie Gibby, recoiled, squealed and squirmed when he walked past their desks.

Across the aisle and a few seats back, other classmates also wanted to get as far away as possible when Bales walked past carrying a black rat snake.

Michael Myers, 17, who said he was interested in animals, repeatedly gave correct answers when the naturalists asked his class about wildlife and their habits. Sitting nearby, Willis Eleby also gave great answers

to the naturalists' questions.

He passed around pelts and a stuffed raccoon and stuffed groundhog.

Students were very quiet when Beute walked around the room with a small predator: a screech owl.

"She can turn her head 270 degrees," she said. "You and I can turn ours 180 degrees. ... Their best sense is hearing. They can hear a mouse three football fields away, even if it's underneath snow. It can see a mouse one football field away."

"I think humans have moved away from understanding the importance of nature because many of us do not rely upon it directly for our existence," said Beute, who is also a water-quality specialist.

The school is about to embark on a paper and cardboard recycling program in partnership with the Knox County Solid Waste Department, Newvine said, explaining to the students the importance of diligence in separating paper products.

Shortly before students exited the classroom, 18-year-old senior DeBrea McMillian said, "It was a nice presentation because it gave me a pretty good understanding of local wildlife and about protecting it."

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## Books can help kids worried about war

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The president's State of the Union speech and Secretary of State Colin Powell's recent appearance before the United Nations may have sparked

books parents and teachers may use to help young people understand what is going on and to facilitate family conversations or classroom discussions about local military deployments overseas and military action in Iraq.

their feelings toward them.

■ Allow young people to maintain a journal and document their feelings.

■ Check out works such as "Best Books for Children" by Valerie Lewis and Walter Maves, which provides

"My Father Is Far Away"; and "Daddy, Will You Miss Me?" by Wendy McCormick; Jane Yolen's "All Those Secrets of the World," which is about a four-year-old whose father leaves to fight in World War II; "I Miss You, Stinky Face"