



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

P.O. Box 391037, Solon, Ohio 44139-8037 Ph: 216 556 5441

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

October, 2015



ASGC trustee wins prestigious art award

Every September the City of Mentor's Wildwood Cultural Center hosts The Dorothy McNamara Malone Memorial Art Show at the Mentor Senior Center. The show consists of various medias (watercolor, oils, photography, etc.). Our long-time trustee and former president, John Lillich, who just happens to be my husband, entered in the show his latest hand-carved work of a full-sized Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus Pileatus*) sitting on a log. This is a juried show and John won first place in the 3-dimensional art category.

The wood he used was a combination of butternut for the Pileated and black walnut for the log. The combination of these two woods made for a very striking piece. Last year his carving of a Northern Shoveler in black walnut was awarded second place.

John has always loved the natural beauty of wood. He has been carving since he received his first pocket knife at the age of 8, and has been perfecting his craft ever since. He not only hand carves all kinds of wildlife, but uses a wood lathe to turn vases, candlesticks, small decorative boxes, gavels and old fashioned nut bowls with a center

pedestal of hammered copper and matching hammer. All of John's hand carvings and turnings are done to reveal the natural beauty of the wood.

John donates many of his pieces to different organizations for their fund raising events. This year he donated a hand-carved Great Horned Owl, done in black walnut sitting on a log with a Chipmunk peeking out of the log, to the Holden Arboretum, as well as a hand-turned bowl of burr oak. After the bowl was turned, he hand carved a tree into the bowl and then filled the carving with a black inlay to show off the tree.

John is a very talented artist, and if it sounds like I am bragging about his talents, I am because I am very proud of him.

—Carol Lillich



Northern shoveler in black walnut.

Photo: J. Lillich



Final Project ¿QUÉ? almost a wash-out

On Wednesday, July 15, 2015, twenty-two sleepy eighth-graders and their counselors from John Carroll University walked through the doors of the Novak Education Center not knowing what to expect.

Project ¿QUÉ? is a multi-faceted JCU initiative to raise the educational aspirations of middle school Hispanic children from Cleveland's west side. Due to budget cuts, this will be the program's final year.

Some of the girls' heads picked up when I said we were going to have a fashion show, until I showed them that they would be modeling for the group a very stylish pair of waders!

My overall concept for the day was that "everything in nature is connected." What better way to demonstrate this than

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From the Nest...

I want to thank those of you who have answered our call for assistance and offered to help advance our organization and promote conservation of our natural resources. We are very excited to begin developing a plan to educate the public, survey the birds, and protect their habitat in our area through a program from National Audubon called **Important Bird Areas (IBA)**. We have a large area to cover (the drainage



system of the Chagrin River) and we are just getting started. We will need lots of help! Now is your chance to get in at the start to help us plan. Please contact us to inform us as to what you can do.

Have you seen the wonderful new ASGC website? It can be reached at www.clevelandaudubon.org. Thanks to your board of trustee members: Alison DeBroux, Carol Lillich, John Lillich, and yours truly we have an up-to-date, easy to navigate and service website.

But by far the biggest gratitude is extended to ASGC member, Sharon Swaney, who volunteered hours and hours to the design and architecture of the site. Her expertise and ability to organize and keep us on task got it done. This website was two years in the making and was pretty much stalled until a few months ago when Sharon took the lead. She and Stephen Cassidy, as the website builder, deserve a "Bravo Zulu" for a job well done! Thanks to all of you!

—Jim Tomko, President

A bobwhite's tale

It was the beginning of fall when we noticed three unfamiliar birds taking a dirt bath close to our house. We were surprised at how close they allowed us to get to them. It turned out they were Northern bobwhites, one female and two males.

Of course, we started to feed them and against my husband's advice I named them Wilma, Fred and Barney. Within a couple days Wilma was eating birdseed from my outstretched hand. Our daughters looked forward to helping feed them every day.

On the coldest days of winter they huddled under our deck to stay warm. One time Wilma jumped onto the deck railing and "talked" to me as if to say, "It's lunch time!" She would even stand on the metal garbage can where we keep all the bird food for our five different feeders.

Our daughters learned to "talk" back



Wilma, Fred and Barney, Northern bobwhites.

Photo: K. Cochran

to the bobwhites and would mimic their sound hoping to have the birds answer them. They tried to feed them, but the birds would only come to me. They knew who the Momma was in our family!

Spring arrived and we looked forward to seeing Wilma, Fred and Barney with baby birds following behind them. Then one day we noticed Wilma walking strangely and falling down. We put her in a box and took her

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Critter Corner



Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*)

Here is an angler that dives into its work! Most often a kingfisher will perch over a river, pond, or lake until it spies aquatic prey. It then flies over its quarry, sometimes with a short hover, before diving headfirst into the water to nab the delectable delicacy! How they are able to judge the depth of the stream bottom is simply amazing, but I have never seen one hit the bottom no matter how shallow the water is. They usually feed on fish, crayfish, salamanders, frogs, large tadpoles, and large aquatic insects.

Belted kingfishers are solitary and vigorously territorial throughout most of the year, noisily driving off any intruders in their territory. For a few weeks of the year they tolerate a mate and together they excavate a three- to seven-foot tunnel in a steep bank, digging with their bills and pushing the soil out with their feet. At the end of the tunnel they lay five to eight glossy, pure white eggs on the bare soil. Both parents share in the incubation but when hatching occurs, only the female does the brooding while the male provides food.

Belted kingfishers are large (11-14 in.), chunky birds with a slate blue-gray head, back, wings, tail and shaggy crest. They have a white collar, chest and belly with a slate blue-gray belt. They are an example of reverse sexual dimorphism, in that the females are more colorful than the males. The females have a rusty-red belly band in addition to the blue-gray breast band.

Kingfishers in our area are somewhat migratory as they need open water to earn their living. We have regularly recorded belted kingfishers on our December Christmas Bird Counts but they must move south as the ice-up commences. Now is your chance to get out and wish them safe travels.

—Jim Tomko

Project ¿QUÉ?

(Continued from page 1)

by learning about watersheds and macro invertebrates?

Dr. Jenn Clark from Hiram College and her students were to assist us in the afternoon at the streamside. Dr. Clark and her students would be electro-shocking a section of the stream and the kids would be gathering the stunned fish in nets for identification (the fish would be fine) and using a micro net to look for macro invertebrates. Oh, and yes, they would be in the "fashionable waders". The health of a stream can be determined by the number and diversity of its inhabitants. Which affects the food chain, which affects the... Remember the everything-is-connected idea. I scouted the area Tuesday morning and everything was falling into place. What I didn't count on "falling" was two-plus inches of rain. In a few short hours my plans were literally washed away.

The morning seemed to go well. After the kids woke up, they were attentive, funny, and excellent students. They began to understand how everything is connected and were eager to get into the stream. When I met Dr. Clark at the stream around noon, however, it was obvious that it was too dangerous for anybody to be in the stream. So we enacted plan B.



Joe Malmisur leads Project ¿QUÉ? students through a soggy Aurora Sanctuary.

What do you do with 22 middle school kids and their counselors, many of whom have never been in the woods? Well, of course we went on a hike! A two and a half mile hike through the mud, muck and mire of the Aurora Sanctuary. Some kids learned about bald faced hornets on a personal basis. After telling the kids what stinging nettles were and to avoid them at all costs, of course one girl had a "burning sensation" and found out what it actually felt like to touch stinging nettles.

At the end of the hike we were wet, covered with mud, and all laughing. Everyone learned that everything in nature is connected and made some memories that will last a lifetime. And yes, much fun was had by all!

—Joe Malmisur

In case you missed it!

On August 21 we celebrated the height of summer with an evening hike in the Aurora Sanctuary. We heard and saw white-breasted Nuthatch, black-capped chickadee, and tufted titmouse settling in for the night. Some wood duck were flushed from Fulton Pond just as we arrived and an American beaver swatted its tail on the water's surface warning all of our arrival. Annual cicadas had been strumming their sound but quickly quieted as twilight fell. Then

the green frogs and bullfrogs let loose a few calls as the katydids began their sounds in earnest. It was quite dark by the time we reached the last leg of the trail and due to the heavy leaf canopy and the moon not yet rising we had to slowly "feel" our way along the trail as the bats captured insects high above the pond and river. It was an excellent time and superb company.

—Jim Tomko

The Squawk



Send your comments, questions
or complaints to
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A Bobwhite's Tale

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to Penitentiary Glen where they tried for four days to save her, but she had suffered a severe head trauma and had to be euthanized.

The next week we found Fred in the middle of the road, beyond our help. Then only Barney was left but we saw him just a couple more times. We hope that he left in search of a mate and didn't suffer the same fate as the rest.

The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland told us that Northern bobwhites are very rare this far north and haven't been seen in the area for over ten years. We were truly blessed to have been visited by these birds that brought such pleasure to us during the cold winter months. It was a winter we will never forget.

—Kathy Cochran



Science teacher to speak at Novak Education Center

Mike Sustin grew up in Geauga County, Ohio and currently teaches science at his alma mater, West Geauga High School. In addition to teaching, he directed the creation of a rain garden and outdoor learning venue on the high school campus.

He was recognized in 2010 as the K-12 Educator of the Year by the North American Association for Environmental Education. He was also the recipient of a Toyota TAPESTRY Grant to develop a bobcat and black bear

population study project with his students in partnership with the Ohio Division of Wildlife. In April of 2011, Mike and some of his students were honored with a National Conservation Achievement Award by the National Wildlife Federation for their work on wetlands education and conservation. Most recently, Mike was chosen from a national pool to lead a group of ten high school students to wild Alaska to participate in the National Park Service's inaugural Climate Change Academy in July, 2014.

Upcoming Events

The Backyard Naturalist

October 3 3:00—5:00pm

"A Journeyman Birder's Retrospective"

Mike Sustin, National Geographic
Grosvenor Teacher Fellow

In 2012 Mike was chosen by the National Geographic Society to be one of 14 Grosvenor Teacher Fellows. He acted as ambassador for geography and environmental education while aboard the ship, *National Geographic Discovery*. They cruised the waters of the Barents Sea and hiked the shores of the Svalbard Archipelago roughly 600 miles from the North Pole. Since then, he has introduced teens from northeast

Ohio to the birds of Wyoming, Costa Rica and Maine. This summer he was a student in a marine science class in Australia. Even though the focus of the course was coral reef health, he always had one eye on the sky.

November 7 3:00—5:00pm

"The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail"

Jeffrey Hall, President, Bartramian
Audubon Society

The Backyard Naturalist is held at our
Novak Education Center,
382 Townline Road, Aurora.

Chagrin River Bird Quest

4pm Friday, October 9 to 4pm Saturday, October 10

Join our first ever team birding event in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks! Get your team together and have a really BIG DAY—of birding! Beginners encouraged to participate. Team check-in and awards at the incomparable Look About Lodge. See page 4 for details, or visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

Field Trips

October 17 3:00pm

"Nature's Own Palette and Brush"

Aurora Sanctuary

This is such a fantastic time of year to appreciate all the wonderful colors and textures of our natural world. Depending on the weather we should see purplish-red and scarlet to golden yellows and many shades of brown. All over our region there will be "masterpieces" of landscapes! Join us and be in that masterpiece. The fall migration is on. Let's see which species are recent arrivals and catch up on our old familiar year-round residents. Meet at the Bretschnieder Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Road in Aurora.

November 14 3:00pm

"The Leaves Are Down..."

Molnar Sanctuary

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Or send an email to info@clevelandaudubon.org

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A Wry Smile



“If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else.”

—Yogi Berra
(1925-2015)

Chagrin River **BIRD QUEST**

4 pm Friday, October 9th to
4 pm Saturday, October 10th

There's still time to register!

Join the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland and Cleveland Metroparks for our first team birding event! Get your team together and explore the Chagrin River Valley from Lake Erie south to Audubon's bird sanctuaries in Aurora in search of fall residents and migrants. Start in your own backyard, bird on your own, or join naturalists for a guided hike. How many species can your team check off in 24 hours?

Teams

Share the day with family, friends, co-workers and classmates! Teams can be two or more, young or old, experienced birders or never birded before! One team member must be 18 or older with a valid driver's license. Win a prize for the most creative team name!

Schedule of Events

October 9

Team check-in and final registration. Pick up maps, checklists, t-shirts (free with early registration!), and talk strategy with teammates and naturalists. 4-6 pm at Look About Lodge, South Chagrin Reservation.

October 10

Checklist Turn-in 4-5 pm and
Awards and refreshments 5-6:30 at Look About Lodge.

Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org for a list of optional guided hikes and registration information.

This event is in support of the Chagrin River IBA.



Go for an Owl Prowl!

DATED MAIL

