
THE GOLDFINCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

MARCH 2004

MEETINGS EACH 2ND MONDAY SEPTEMBER THRU JUNE

AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 7TH & J.R. MILLER BOULEVARD

EDUCATION COMMITTEE IS IN DEMAND

THE ONE THING THAT SETS AUDUBON APART FROM MOST OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IS EDUCATION.

Mother Nature made it verrrry difficult for Education Chairmam Mary Kissel to gather her band of volunteer teachers this past month. This committee has members who travel across 3 counties and February is notorious for making roads treacherous. After the ice and snow melted, Mary's next hurdle was finding a day and time when her do-gooders could work a meeting into their schedules. Although it is a fact that the busiest people get the most accomplished, none of them has yet managed to be in two places at once.

Springtime is when requests begin to come in for our Education Committee to take part in events such as Earth Day, International Migratory Bird Day, Backyard Habitat classes, and Nature Walks. Even before a program is booked, Mary begins to review last year's environmental education offerings to gauge what might be good ideas for the upcoming months.

In March the Girl Scouts have asked that we conduct classes at Pennyroyal Camp using the Powell Bird Blind as part of our curriculum. They are also interested in our input about improving the campground's wildlife habitat.

Also in March, Triplett School will have an afternoon of Spotting Scope and Binocular Basics, Microscopic Feather Study, Beak Mechanics 101, and a Neighborhood Bird Hike including Elmwood Cemetery's Historic Section. You may think that the Education Committee volunteers are selfless, hard working, and committed. All this is true, but each of the leaders will tell you that even though they are exhausted at the end of each class or outing, they have every bit as much fun as the ones with whom they share their love of nature.

March 20th Field Trip Targets Higginson- Henry WMA

When one goes birding, there are no guarantees. The leaders of the field trip to Union County this month will not promise that there will be waterfowl waiting for us because no one knows if we will have adequate rainfall to fill the shallow water impoundments. The Department of Fish & Wildlife has planted native grasses at the Wildlife Management Area and it is expected that we will have a good selection of sparrow and grassland birds to watch, waterfowl or no. The WMA has trails and bridges across streams, and the terrain is flat to gently rolling. Walking is medium-to-easy in degree of difficulty. The gathering place for carpooling and driving in caravan fashion is the GRADD parking lot next door to the Joe Ford Nature Center. Departure time is 8 AM and the return trip is expected around noon.

March Calendar

Saturday, March 6th

9 AM Beginning Birding at Pennyroyal Girl Scout Camp

Saturday, March 6th

7pm on KET. *Kentucky's Last Great Places* with Dave Shuffit. Must See TV.

Monday, March 8th

1-3 PM Triplett School Birding Class

Monday, March 8th

7 PM Wildflowers by Michelle Webber, Botanist at Mammoth Cave. Bring your checkbook for purchasing **Girl Scout Cookies** from the troop that is providing refreshments.

Saturday, March 13th

11 AM-2 PM EST Kentucky Audubon Council Spring meeting at Nolin Electric Cooperative, 411 Ring Road in Elizabethtown, KY. Lunch provided.

March 15-30th

Get your Hummingbird feeders set up. They are on the way to your yard.

Wednesday, March 17th

St. Patrick's Day. Try to appreciate the reptile so unfairly reviled through his story. Let our mantra of the day be '**We know better**'.

Saturday, March 20th

8 AM-1 PM Field trip to Higginson-Henry WMA. Steve Hahus 733-9342.

Saturday & Sunday March 27-28th

Evansville's Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden Earth Days at the Zoo

www.meskerparkzoo.com

The zoo is collecting old cell phones as a fundraiser for a new lion exhibit.

Birds & Bees Cont'd from page 2

The penguins' keeper had an egg in need of incubation and so he gave it to Roy and Silo. They were diligent in incubating the egg. They successfully raised 'their' female chick and were exemplary parents. The zookeeper who gave them the chance to have a family was full of praise for the birds. Roy and Silo are not unique. Many other same sex pairs of almost all different types of animals have been observed both in confinement such as zoos and in the wild.

People who support gay, lesbian, bi-sexuals and trans-sexuals' (GLBT's), as simply being a minority with different sexual attractions, argue that animals with same sex attraction are proof that being homosexual is not a choice. To them, sexuality is not a decision made by each of us but rather is something that is with us, part and parcel, beyond our control, from birth. In other words it is natural, not at all queer.

Opponents of GLBT's argue that same sex mating behaviors, bonding and pairing in animals is just proof that such behavior is animalistic. Infanticide is widely practiced among animals and we don't consider that normal human behavior. To many religious fundamentalists GLBT's need help, treatment to overcome their tendencies. My friend described his efforts to live the life of a straight man as living a lie every minute of every day. He does not believe that any amount of any kind of treatment would make him act or feel like a straight man.

The recent controversy about what rights GLBT's are entitled to, such as adopting children, marriage, and employee benefits has caused many people to think about whether or not animal behaviors have any implications about what is normal behavior and what is not. Most experts in the field of behavior are reluctant to extrapolate from animals to humans.

I think that even before the release of my fury at the homophobe on my school bus, I was on the side of those who would like for all of us to have the same rights, privileges and benefits. To marry whomever we love, to parent children if we wish, the same benefits as are now afforded to couples of opposite sexes. I also like to think that the majority of us, both the tolerant and the intolerant regarding sexuality, will see the idea of changing our Constitution to isolate any group as a very bad idea.

Do The Birds & The Bees Define Queer?

by Brenda Little

Aside from scuffles with my younger sister, I've only been in one fight in my life. It happened during my high school years when an effeminate male friend seated beside me on a school bus was mocked and humiliated by bullies who hardly knew him. I cannot remember any of the taunts from that day, but I think they called him a queer. Whether they used the word or not, they were targeting him because he fit the stereotype of a homosexual. I remember how I lost control in hurt for him when one of the creeps in a seat behind us stood and dumped a large brown grocery bag full of popcorn over my friend's head. My friend sat very still with downcast eyes as the greasy, smelly food landed on his head, down his collar, in his lap and on the seat between us.

Without so much as a pause to think about what I was doing, I leaped up and spun around. In one rapid motion I planted my knees on the seat and used the back of the seat to launch the full weight of my body into the startled face of the jerk who quickly changed from smirking and grinning to wide-eyed shock. I slapped his face, twice I think, as hard as I could and followed that by shoving him full force back down onto his seat, giving his neck some serious whiplash. I hurled insults about his mother, the religion that I associated with the area of his bus stop, his physique, his complexion, his intelligence, his style of clothing, his relative status in society, [sack of sh___, scum and trash are descriptive terms that I remember using]. I even included put-downs about everyone associated with him. He did not defend himself, more I believe, due to shock than fear or deference to my sex. He just sat there very, very red faced and told me I was going to be sorry for what I'd done.

When the bus arrived at my school, I stormed to the front and told the driver not to bother reporting the incident because I was on my way to do so myself. The vice- principal did not punish me for the retaliatory attack. After hearing my rant about what incited my momentary loss of control as well as the punchee's side of the story, Mr. Lee did not tell me that I was wrong in what I did, only much too tomboyish. That was fine by me.

I suppose that all my life I've been tolerant of people with sexual orientation that is different from mine. I've never felt any reason, Biblical or otherwise, to disapprove of the same sex attraction felt by about 10% of us since the beginning of time. For many people their first sexual experience is same sex, and that too is fine by me. In my young adult life I was blessed by friendships with three people whom I suspected were homosexual. They all chose to comply with what society expects from most of us: a spouse of the opposite sex, 2.5 kids, a dog, a cat and a mortgage. One of these friends raised his kids and then managed an amicable divorce so that he could come out of the closet to live, love and work alongside the man he loves to this day. My husband and I were blessed to have our friend and his partner as houseguests recently and all I could say over and over after they left was, "They are just like us." It was my first experience with being able to talk with someone about being gay

An article in The New York Times last month stated that homosexual behavior has been documented in 450 different animals. I've chosen a Penguin pair at the Central Park Zoo in Manhattan as my favorite gay birds. Roy and Silo, two chinstrap penguins, went through all the courtship, bonding and mating behaviors of their species' opposite-sexed pairs. They've been inseparable for 6 years. They tried to incubate an egg together by putting a rock in their nest where they sat on it and kept it warm in the folds of their bellies. *Continued on page 3*

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Please check the address label above to determine the expiration date of your membership. To renew your membership, please send a check for \$10 to Charles Morris, Treasurer 1400 Woodbridge Trail, Owensboro, Kentucky 42301. Include this page with your check so that your old address label can be used to update your newsletter subscription which is part of your local membership dues. Thank you.

We strongly urge you first to keep your membership current on the local level and then if you wish you may renew your membership in The National Audubon Society as well. The National Audubon Society has sent a small amount of money to our chapter the past two years, termed a 'Safety Net'. The amount is not enough to pay for our newsletter. We need your local dues.

Officers 2003-2005

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