



Fresh start builds enthusiasm

Club to meet on first Tuesdays

With a new officer team in place, members of the Daviess County Audubon Society have their eyes squarely fixed on the future.

At the Sept. 14 meeting, Brenda Little agreed to serve as the DCAS president, bringing as much passion for the Audubon mission of conservation through education as anyone in the state. Along with the passion comes a lifetime of Audubon experience, ranging from stints as local chapter and state Kentucky Audubon Council president to one of the lead drivers to make Sloughs Wildlife Management Area an Important Bird Area to working to establish a Junior Audubon Society at Wayland Alexander Elementary School in Ohio County.

Bylaws are being changed to eliminate a president-elect position in place of a vice president for programming, which allows a member to spearhead club programming without committing to a term as president the following year. Mike Henshaw has agreed to fill this important post.

The main office team is rounded out by Judy Adams as secretary and Charles Morris as treasurer. The club remains without an education chairperson.

The meeting date also has been changed. Because of conflicts with the 2009-10 RiverPark Center subscription series, meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of the month, beginning with the Oct. 6 meeting at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church.

Much of the discussion in the early club year has been focused on ways to make meetings more appealing to members. Regular board meetings, featuring officers and directors, will be held to tackle much of the business side of Daviess County Audubon, so the emphasis can be shifted to dynamic programs about the environment – and the creatures which dwell within it – and encouraging participation in field trips and education programs for which the groundwork has already been laid.

At the first of these board meetings, Sept. 23,

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Monarch miracle subject of meeting

Tracking the migratory miracle of the monarch butterflies will be discussed by Julie McDonald, Audubon State Park naturalist, at the Tuesday, Oct. 6 meeting of the Daviess County Audubon Society.

The park spent much of September hosting area organizations which helped with Monarch Watch, an outreach program which uses tagging stickers to help track the butterflies 1,500 miles from their final destination, 12 mountain peaks just west of Mexico City, Mexico. The meeting will be 7 p.m. at First Christian Church, J.R. Miller Blvd. and Seventh Street, with dinner at 6 p.m. at Moonlite Bar-B-Q.

From the president's perch



Brenda Little

I'm happy to take the reins

By Brenda Little

At our September meeting, I was elected to serve as president of the Daviess County Audubon Society for a term of one or two years.... depending upon whether or not there is a coup which may oust me from office. Even with the realization that some of my ideas may be so radical that there is indeed the risk of an uprising, I am nonetheless very happy to have the opportunity to serve in a capacity of leadership. I promise to do my best and to try to keep from ruffling too many feathers.

At this stage of the game, I freely admit that I don't know if I'm coming or going and thus I ask for your patience as I look for guidance and input from Mike, Carolyn and Rob, indeed even from Bill, my spouse, all of whom have served in the capacity of president in years past.

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October Calendar:

Monthly meeting, 7 p.m. Oct. 6, First Christian Church; Moonlite dinner at 6 p.m.

Directors' meeting, 10 a.m. Oct. 21, Judy Adams, 2245 Canonero Loop.

Bird classes at Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, 9 a.m. Oct. 15 and 8:30 a.m. Oct. 16

Field trip: Horse Fork Creek trail, Greenbelt Park, 8 a.m. Oct. 17.

A tale of two Sept. 11s



Daviess Audubon's Paul Bunyan, Tony Eaden, puts the saw to a tall oak in front of the Powell Bird Blind. (Bill Little photo)



Rose Ann Radzelovage and Brenda Little remove leaves from the roof of the blind. (Mary Kissel photo)

2001 brought sense of mission on day of tragedy

By Brenda Little

Everybody remembers where he was and what he was doing on Sept. 11, 2001. Laura Morris in thinking back eight years said she has good memories about what she and husband Charles were doing on that fateful day. "I'm glad that we were doing something to make the world a better place."

As they arrived to the work of adding a layer of adobe at the Powell Bird Blind, they broke the awful news to Bill and Brenda Little about the story of the unthinkable attacks they'd heard on the news before leaving home. The four Audubon Society volunteers chose to stay the course through the day as Bill kept shoveling sand, lime and water into a borrowed cement mixer and wrangled wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow loaded with the goop down the hill to the mud doobers on the scaffolding. It was a car radio that told the bird blind builders all during the day about the unfolding related tragedies hundreds of miles away.

2009 offers chance to renew after icy natural tragedy

By Brenda Little

It was Brenda Eaden who sat pensively inside the blind last year, seeing it for the first time since its dedication, and said, "I know we did this, but I still cannot believe we did it." What we accomplished in 2001 is hard for all of us to fathom, from raising the funds to dobbing layer after layer of mud on the walls inside and out.

Fast-forward eight years to Sept. 11, 2009, when eight Audubon Society volunteers gathered to tackle a punch list of chores at the bird blind: sweeping, window washing, pond mucking, limb wrangling, path clearing, roof repairing and wood duck box setting. Ranger Lisa Leonard met with us to assess the dangers of limbs dangling over the paths to the blind, staring up at the splintered crown of a 60-foot oak. We stood pondering how we were going to afford professional tree climbers and how we could possibly get them out to do the job in time for the upcoming birding programs. Tony Eaden suggested to Rose Ann Radzelovage that she cease window washing because, "This tree has gotta go. And if I drop it on the blind, we won't have to worry about washing any windows." With all the rest of us still wringing our hands, Tony clamped some ear protectors onto his head, gave a tug on the rope of his chain saw and cut a watermelon wedge shape out of the oak. We all stood back, waaaay back, as he stepped to the other side of the tree and felled it perfectly between

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Right: Brownies bravely handle a harmless king snake during their Adventure Day. (Brownie photo by Winny Lin)

Left: Tony Eaden, helps a Deer Park fourth-grader with a guide at Camp Pennyroyal. Right: Jared Handley discusses feeder birds in the Powell Bird Blind. (Handley photo by Winny Lin)

Nature provides delightful lesson plans

A triple play of education opportunities greeted the start of the school year for the Daviess County Audubon Society, with events at Girl Scout Camp Pennyroyal and the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden.

A rainy Sept. 24 greeted 80-plus fourth-graders from Deer Park Elementary, but so did a lot of activity at the Powell Bird Blind. Brenda and Bill Little, Mary Kissel, Tony Eaden and Mike Henshaw rotated between the blind and the shelter house to teach birding identification using both fake and real birds.

“This is soooooo cool,” one boy exclaimed as the class got its first look at rows of binoculars.

So was what they saw through the lenses. Goldfinches crammed onto tube feeders, showing off the clash of gold and olive plumage that comes with the change of seasons. Tufted titmice piled onto tray feeders, when they weren’t being occupied by squirrels. A female red-bellied woodpecker delighted kids when she lit on the suet feeder. An eastern phoebe showed up above the frog pond, where bullfrogs were holding court throughout the day.

There was even a new bird for the Powell blind – a pine warbler.

The biggest squeals came when chipmunks gobbled up spilled seed.



Ken Hurm teaches binoculars use to Foust students.

No wonder many kids were reluctant to leave the bird area – one kid stated: “I want to keep doing this.”

More than 40 Foust Elementary third-graders made their trip to the botanical garden Sept. 25. Ken Hurm brought his spotting scope to give kids a multi-lens perspective, and Mary Kissel led kids around the grounds to discuss common backyard birds. It was a fairly slow bird morning out at the garden, but a mockingbird perched on the top of the playhouse, seemingly interested in songs being played from the bird call book. Kids also were eager to track visiting cardinals and house sparrows.

The busy week ended Sept. 26 when Winny Lin and Jared Handley led a program for Brownie Adventure Day. The blind was an excellent classroom to discuss backyard birds, but Handley also delighted the girls and parents with his knowledge of reptiles. Lin said Handley was “fantastic” and praised his preparation for the program. She also said she loved her first experience at the camp.

More volunteer opportunities are coming up this fall at WKBG. Changes in the rotation of the “fun” activities in the biotech program have reduced the number of bird days. Volunteers are needed from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15, for East View students; 8:30 to 12:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16 and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, Nov. 6, for Burns third-graders. Come join the fun! Contact Mary Kissel, 926-3321, mjksissel-chirp45@bellsouth.net

Tree problem being studied

The tree planted last spring at Texas Gas in honor of Daviess County Audubon co-founder Bert Powell may need to be replaced. Charles Morris said staffers at Integrity Nursery have examined the tree and given it a “50-50” chance of survival. The club is contacting the nursery about its guarantee and possible replacement.

Questionnaire shows strong travel, education support

Members are ready to travel and ready to put their muscle behind education efforts, according to results of a questionnaire sent to Daviess County Audubon members last month.

There was strong interest in taking an overnight trip to a birding hotspot, as well as having regular trips to local parks. Suggestions for trips ranged from winter trips to see eagles and waterfowl in western Kentucky to jaunts to see sandhill cranes in southeastern or northern Indiana.

Program ideas – which ranged from Ohio River mussels to the resurgence of the bobcat – have been forwarded to board members, who will be using this information as they plan future meetings.

Support also was overwhelming for participation in annual Christmas Bird Counts and continuing to support Audubon Adventures in local classrooms.

Joint education programs with community organizations such as Western Kentucky Botanical Garden and Pennyriple Girl Scouts

received more support than tackling in-school programs, and volunteers indicated they would be more willing to participate in Daviess County than Ohio County.

Several also expressed an interest in participating in Cash for Trash again.

They also indicated they wanted to continue meeting on a monthly basis.

It's not too late! If you only want to pass along field trip or program ideas, please e-mail them to president Brenda Little at litleredhen1@wildblue.net.

Club

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members explored ways to use radio, newspaper and TV to get the word out about upcoming meetings.

"Publicity, publicity, publicity. We want Daviess County Audubon's name in front of people," Little said.

Little also emphasized the need to make one-on-one contact with friends and past members and visitors to encourage their participation. The need for inclusiveness filters through everything from meetings to field trips. Even little things can have an impact on a

visitor's Audubon experience, and ideas ranging from the use of greeters to changes in room set-up were discussed.

Plans are under way to re-establish the Daviess County's online presence.

The chapter lost its domain name when its host billed the chapter by using an old e-mail address for webmaster Eric Williams. Williams has all of the information on a disk and is in the process of reacquiring the domain name. When it returns, board members stressed the need to post photos of club happenings online

Pamphlets also could be created for the local tourism office, Little added.

Reins

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This club means a lot to me. In the dozen years since I joined, I have learned a lot about our environment, the flora and fauna that make up the natural world around me. I have met some wonderful people and have made some great friends among the membership of our club and around the state as the movers and shakers in the environmental movement have presented programs and educated us about a wide range of topics.

As I look back on the past decade of my life, it is the Audubon Society that has had the strongest impact on my awareness and passion concerning the natural world. I hope that we can continue to look the world's problems in the eye and that we can

have fun as we do what we can to confront those problems. We've earned the right to bask in the glow of our past accomplishments as we go forward toward even more challenges and goals.

Even as some of us have temporarily burned out and the flame of our passion has flickered, I want to ask that as a group we remember how much fun we've had in our times together. I want us to remember the silly times, the good food, the "Oh! My God!" moments and to think about how much poorer our lives would be if it had not been for Audubon. I hope these memories will serve as fuel during the coming weeks when we reach out to people we've lost from our ranks as well as we seek new blood to keep our club healthy and happy. Come on and follow me for fun and adventure. Giddy up.

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other trees, and exactly where he planned for it to fall. He stole the show that day.

Even with six stitches in his still throbbing finger from a run-in with his fishing boat, Mike Henshaw repaired the ice storm-damaged roof and set a wood duck box over at the lake. Tony went on to

dredge up rocks, leaves and limbs from the bottom of the frog pond. We swept, dusted, washed windows and shared memories with Charles Morris, who came to be with us even as his slow healing broken leg won't allow him to do manual labor.

As Charlie expressed regret because all he could lend this year was moral support, we told him to look down the hill at what he'd accomplished 8 years ago, at what all of us accomplished. It was, and still is, incredible.

Come 'bird the Belt' on Horse Fork Creek trail Oct. 17

The biggest challenge for bird watchers may be trying to figure out fall warblers. Sometimes it seems as if every bird is a pale shade of olive as they blend in with the fall foliage around them.

The dying days of fall migration will be in view as we "bird the Belt" from 8 to 10 a.m. Oct. 17 on the Horse Fork Creek segment of the David C. Adkisson Greenbelt Park. Meet in the parking lot off Higdon Road – we'll walk at least up to New Hartford Road. Fall visitors have included Kentucky, black-throated green, black-and-white, magnolia, Nashville and Wilson's warblers, American redstarts and Northern parulas, as well as a barred owl. 2009 also has seen a rise in the deer population in the area ... and a coyote sighting.

To the rescue!

Three chirps from The Finch to Rose Ann Radzelovage, who rescued a stunned common yellowthroat at Wesleyan Park Plaza and released it in her yard.