
THE GOLDFINCH

DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2004

MEETINGS 2ND MONDAYS SEPT-JUNE AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 7TH & J.R. MILLER BLVD

Forever is a Very Long Time

Dave Cooper quit his day job and took up a life on the road for the purpose of reaching as many people as possible trying to educate communities about the utter devastation of a coal mining method known as mountaintop removal. Utter means a mutilated flat rock, devoid of life, setting beside spoil-filled valleys and streams, which can never be resuscitated, reclaimed, or restored. Such devastation has happened and is proposed by the Bush administration to continue happening for the sake of abundant and cheap energy. So just when you thought that every industrial misdeed possible has already been dumped on eastern Kentucky and Appalachia, think again. It is easy to turn a blind eye because, after all, this is not in our back yard. Or is it? As environmentalists, we know that nowhere is not in our backyard. The intentional bad grammar, the double negative in the last sentence, seems appropriate for

such a backward and stupid abuse of our planet. Cooper's presentation is a 20-minute slide show that illustrates the ugliness and shortsightedness of mountaintop removal. Some of you may remember the first time you saw the ugliness of strip mining in our region, especially before the days of reclamation. In the local vernacular, you ain't seen nothin' like this. Scenes of mountaintop removal will turn your stomach. If you love Kentucky, if you love America, if you love the earth, this program is essential. You have to see it to believe it.

It is not every day that you have the opportunity to meet a crusader. Everyone is invited to meet this one at **Supper with the Speaker**, 5:30 PM before the meeting, at the MoonLite.

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Pulitzer Prize Goes to Audubon Biography

Ritchie Kessler asked at lunch the other day if anyone had read the new book by Richard Rhodes, *John James Audubon: The Making of an American?* Kessler listed as intriguing for him the familiarity with the places described in Audubon's life, places that are known to many of us Kentuckians to this day.

Kessler is with The Kentucky Academy of Science and The Nature Conservancy. He is also a person who emphasizes the **fun** in the fundamentals of being an environmentalist. His recommendation of this book is one that is duly noted. We will see that a copy is on the shelves at the Public Library.



Father Pat's Fears for Haiti in the Aftermath of the Hurricane

Attitude Adjustment Needed Regarding Poverty and the Environment

A piece echoing Father Pat's observations appeared in *Audubon Magazine* in June 2003: *The Real Environmental Crisis: Why Poverty, not affluence*, is the environment's Number One enemy by Jack M. Hollander. Conventional wisdom tells us that a richer populace consumes more. Apparently not, says the Professor Emeritus of energy and resources at UC Berkeley. Impoverished people plunder their resources, pollute their environment, and overcrowd their inhabitants. Billions are chronically malnourished and survival is key; conservation planning is not possible. The truth is that there can be global sustainability only when affluence and democracy replace poverty and tyranny as the dominant human condition.

You may remember that one of our flock spent some time doing volunteer work in Haiti a couple of summers ago. Father Pat Connell, who is an Episcopal Priest, shared his experiences with us through *The Goldfinch* when he came home. I phoned him to ask his thoughts when Haiti was hit so terribly hard late this summer by one of the hurricanes that filled the news reports day after day.

Before we look at Pat's thoughts about Haiti's worsened plight, it might be good to remember a couple of the points made in his "What I Did on My Summer Vacation" interview in September 2002:

About the politics: *(Following a coup in the early '90's during the Clinton Administration), the U.S. sent soldiers. When there was no democratic election, we put an embargo in place. We made a problem much worse.*

About the environment in Cite` de Soleil:

The deforestation is overwhelming. There is not a twig, not a leaf, not even a weed growing anywhere. The mountainsides are stripped bare. These people cook with charcoal and they have cut all the trees for fuel.

The horrible images shown over and over on television late in Summer '04 of lines of human corpses lined up waiting for mass burial and animal carcasses floating in the flood waters prompted this question to Father Pat: **Can you think of anything that can fix Haiti's problems after such a massive natural disaster?**

2004 Father Pat: The only solution that I can think of is not possible to do. The only way that I can imagine that island healing itself is to remove every man, woman and child and relocate them elsewhere in the world. Then, and only then in my opinion, maybe the land can recover. Maybe after 100 years or so humans would be able to return and resume life there.

From their island neighbor, the Dominican Republic, to Cuba, to Jamaica, to Miami, nobody wants the Haitians. They are people who cannot save themselves and the U.S. has its hands full in Iraq. Can the rich get richer and the poor poorer forever?



December Calendar

Monday December 13th

Monthly Meeting of the Daviess County Audubon Society at 7 PM at First Christian Church. Use the portico entry on J.R. Miller Boulevard.

December monthly bird census at Ben Hawes Park day and time had not been set when the newsletter went to press.

Saturday January 1st

Janet Howard is hosting a bird count from her home at 3534 W. Parrish Avenue. Meet at 8 AM.

Saturday January 8th

Christmas Bird Count

Assignments will be given to teams at 8 AM at Mike and Sherry Henshaw's. Lunch will be served midday when census takers return after their morning count is complete.

www.daviessaudubon.org

Christmas Bird Count January 8th

Part of the magic of the holidays is the traditional aspect. For many years Daviess County Audubon Society's winter bird census had a tradition of sorts. After the count, people gathered at the Ray's for vegetable soup and other delicious treats. Three years ago, the count added a new tradition when guidelines (in compliance with the National Audubon Society's) allowed our data to be entered as part of the largest and oldest Citizens' Science effort in history. At the end of the day, our numbers are tabulated and entered on-line to the huge databank of entries from Christmas Bird Counters all across the U.S., Canada, into Mexico and Central America.

Everyone is welcome to take part in our young tradition. Even non-birders are welcome to ride along with a team to learn, observe, and assist. We will meet at Mike and Sherry Henshaw's on Saturday morning, January 8th, at 8 AM for dividing the census area pie into assigned slices. We will return to the Henshaw's for lunch after a morning of counting birds. Some people opt to go back out after lunch for another period of searching the fields, hedgerows, and woodlots in our designated count area.

Driving directions to the Henshaws: Follow Hwy 231 S to the Pleasant Ridge Volunteer Fire Station. Turn R onto Kentucky 140 for approximately 3 miles then L on Maxwell-Redhill Road. Turn R again onto Fields Road South. The Henshaw home is at 11201 on the left.

See you there!

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