

FEB. 16, 2007 BIRDFEEDER OPEN HOUSE



Saturday FEB. 16th starts out with breakfast and birds 8:30 a.m. at Marge Muenzenberger's home at Grand Mere. After breakfast we will leave Marge's residence to view other bird feeders at homes of fellow birders. We will end up at Doris Burnett's home at about 11:30-12n to eat lunch together and enjoy her spectacular view of the birds at Tuttle Creek Lake. NFHAS is picking up the tab for breakfast and lunch so we need you to RSVP! Please bring your whole family and call your birding friends. This will be a good way to comfortably see lots of birds in the winter and to get acquainted with the "birder" population of Manhattan as well. Marge and Doris have lots of room so don't be hesitant for any reason. We will attempt to carpool as much as possible for the tour. An address list, however, will be available at Marge's should you prefer to drive.

Please RSVP by Feb. 12th, the number in your party to Marge Muenzenberger 537-1076. Directions to Tom and Marge Muenzenbergers home, 2711 Heartland Dr., are: Go to the Kimball Ave. roundabout. Then go west on Grand Mere Parkway for 1/2 mile. You will come to a sign that says "THE HEARTLAND" at the intersection. Turn right and take the first left which is Heartland Valley Drive. Continue downhill and go to the second cul-de-sac, which is Heartland Dr. Muenzenbergers' home is the first house on the left, it is a tan house.

NORTHERN Flint Hills Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 1972, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1972



PRAIRIE FALCON

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Vol. 36, No. 6 ~ FEBRUARY 2008

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Upcoming EVENTS:

- FEB. 2 BIRDSEED SALE PICKUP 9-12N UFM
- FEB. 7 NFHAS BOARD MTG.
TOM & MJ MORGAN'S HOME
- FEB. 9 SAT. BIRDING
8 A.M. MEET AT SOJOURNER TRUTH PARK
- FEB. 9 GLOBAL WARMING WORKSHOP, SEE PG. 4
- FEB. 16 - BIRDFEEDER OPEN HOUSE SEE ABOVE
- FEB. 15-18 GREAT BACKYARD BIRDFEEDER COUNT
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- FEB. 16 BRUNCH & BIRD FEEDER WATCH
SEE ABOVE
- MAR. 6 NFHAS BOARD MTG
- MAR. 8 SAT. BIRDING
8 A.M. MEET AT SOJOURNER TRUTH PARK
- MAR. 15 CHEYENNE BOTTOMS DAY TRIP
SEE PAGE 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION



SKYLIGHT PLUS PETE COHEN

This being a leap year with its folk tradition of granting women assertive powers, last month I began taking note of women historically involved with sky matters, largely forgotten now, though some were indeed recognized in their time.

Reference was made to Caroline Herschel (1750 - 1848) who became one of the first two women admitted to Britain's Royal Astronomical Society. The other, almost as long-lived, was Scottish Mary Fairfax Somerville (1780-1872). Inclined toward the scientific from the start, she read before the Society the second (after Ms. Herschel) paper by a woman. It was titled, *The Magnetic Properties of Violet Rays of the Solar Spectrum*. She then began, as a number of women historically did, to write the works of other scientists in more commonly understood prose, undertaking such works as *Laplaces Mecanique Celeste* and Newton's *Principia*. She received a variety of other honors including a 200 pound/year pension from the King of England.

A generation later there was Maria Mitchell (1818-1889), born in Massachusetts. Assisting her banker father's astronomy hobby, she discovered, in 1847, a comet passing by Polaris, thus qualifying for the King of Denmark's offer of a medal for the first comet discovered by means of a telescope. An Italian cleric discovered the same comet two days later, but his report reached Copenhagen first. Delicate negotiations resulted in Maria receiving her medal the following year, and the comet being named for her. She, too, went on to more honors in the field.

Out of the next generation came another Scottish-born lady, who later emigrated to America, (Willia) Mina Paton Stevens Fleming. Starting as the maid of Harvard professor, Edward Charles Pickering, she showed herself more adept at doing tedious astronomical calculations than the males the professor had employed for the purpose. She proceeded to devise a system, later named for her, to classify stars according to their spectra. In 1906, she became the first American woman elected to the Royal Astronomical Society, and in 1907 published a catalog of 222

variable stars she had discovered.

In between these generation skips, it seems a number of women were employed as human computers, doing the precise, repetitive math with the huge numbers innate to astronomy, for which the males of the species seemed innately maladroit.

Another who rose above those anonymous ranks was Henrietta Swan Leavitt (1868-1921). Becoming another of "Pickering's Harem," she re-focused from music to studying the relationship of brightness and periodicity of variable stars, publishing in 1908 a paper titled, *1,777 Variables in the Magellanic Clouds* (of the southern sky). And went on to formulate the Period-Luminosity Law that is used today in the measuring of stellar distances.

Looking ahead folks, the main event for the evening this month will be the full eclipse of the Moon on the 20th, starting about a quarter to 8 p.m. with totality lasting from 9 p.m. till 10 p.m. The show ending about 10 minutes after 11 p.m. "Total" meaning the Moon at full will be but a dim, maroon glow, escaping a totally black wipe-out because of light bending through our atmosphere to find it.

Meanwhile, bright Mars will be in Taurus, overhead about 9p30, where it will resume its nightly eastward movement as we pass it, and therefore also begin losing its brightness. Saturn will be at its closest for the year, reaching opposition (i.e., that is being on the opposite side of us from the Sun) on the 24th. It will be in Leo, appearing about 9 p.m. and reaching its highest point in the south about 3 a.m.

So, on to the menu for the morning crowd, a couple of bright eyes will be Venus and Jupiter (Venus, of course the brighter) having breakfast close together in Sagittarius (at the SE end of the Milky Way) on the 1st about 6a30, about an hour before sunrise. The crescent Moon could slip in below them on the 4th. Then at the end of the month (from the 24th on, according to *The Old Farmer's Almanac*) it'll be Venus and Mercury for the breakfast klatch, barely half the width of an extended fist above the horizon about 6 a.m., with dawn soon growing and sunrise just before 7a.m.

The Moon will be new on the 6th, 10p44, and full amid the eclipse at 10p30.

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BIRDING



THE NEXT TIME YOU GO WEBSURFING, CONSIDER THESE:

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/birds/>

EUROPE -- <http://www.fatbirder.com/>

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/>

<http://www.birdsource.org/>

FIELD GUIDES -- <http://www.enature.com/home/>

<http://www.americanbirding.org/>

COOL VIDEOS OF BIRDS -- <http://www.birdcinema.com/>

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO BIRDING? -- <http://www.camacdonald.com/birding/birding.htm> *(This site tells you the hot spots of the area you pick)*

GREAT FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS -- <http://www.wildbirds.com/dnn/>

FIND A BIRD -- http://identify.whatbird.com/mwg/_/0/attrs.aspx

HEY! Surely someone out there is seeing something of interest!!

Got a good birding story/encounter? Please share it with us - in "Bird Tales"

WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU! Send me your "tales" photos welcome! e-mail cin-raney@ksu.edu, or mail them to me at 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520

FYI

THANKS Gloria Juhl-Raney for assisting Carla Bishop, our treasurer, with our financial responsibilities to the IRS.

Everyone needs a NFHAS T-shirts

Only \$10!! You can buy one at our Birdseed Sales, our programs, and birding events.

WISH LIST:

Tripod for the NFHAS spotting scope

Members willing to serve on the Board (for 2008-09)

Howie's Recycling: Remember Howie's will credit the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society for the aluminum cans you bring in for recycling - just sign the sheet.

**GLOBAL WARMING ACTION TRAINING
DR. WES JACKSON, KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

WHEN: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2008, 9:00-3:30

WHERE: ANITA GORMAN CONSERVATION DISCOVERY CENTER, KANSAS CITY, MO.

Participants will hear briefings about global warming, its impacts, and the public policies that can fight this crisis head on. Come and learn how to meet with your members of Congress, get a letter to the editor published, and organize in your own community to truly make a difference at the local, state, and federal level.

Dr. Wes Jackson, President of The Land Institute, will be the keynote speaker, discussing, "What Will the Ecosystem Require?" A pioneer of sustainable agriculture as well climate protection, Life magazine named Wes Jackson as one of 18 individuals they predict will be among the 100 "important Americans of the 20th century." In the November 2005 issue, Smithsonian named him one of "35 Who Made a Difference." He is a recipient of the "Right Livelihood Award" (Stockholm), known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize" (2000). Karen Orenstein, National Outreach Coordinator at Audubon's Washington, DC Policy Office, will also be speaking.

Global warming and its devastating effects on birds and other wildlife have taken center stage as the biggest environmental threat of our lifetime. We must act now. Be a part of the solution!

The training will take place at the Anita Gorman Conservation Discovery Center, Lewis and Clark Room, 4750 Troost, Kansas City, MO 64110. **The event is free and open to the public. Lunch will be provided.** Contact Audubon's Missouri Global Warming Coordinator Jill DeWitt jdewitt@audubon.org, 816-333-3293, for more information. To register go to: <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/workshop.php>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



TENTH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FEB. 15-18, 2008

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/get-involved/citizen-science-guide>
To learn more about the results for the 2007 count, and to see the GBBC online photo gallery featuring images taken from across the continent. Visit www.birdcount.org.

MARCH 15, 2008: ROAD TRIP!

NFHAS is planning a full day of birdwatching at **Cheyenne Bottoms & Quivira National Wildlife Refuge**. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 15, and join us for a trip to the central plains of Kansas as the birds, especially the sandhill cranes, move north. Maybe we will even get to see a whooping crane.

Tentative plans include an early morning start, leave Manhattan about 7:00 am, visit Cheyenne Bottoms, lunch in Great Bend, the afternoon at Quivira, and return to Manhattan in the evening. Please let Carla Bishop know if you are interested in going, 785-532-1858 (w), 785-539-5129 (h), or cbishop@ksu.edu. Initial plans are to carpool but NFHAS may rent a van if there is enough interest in the trip.



“PRAIRIE CHICKEN BOOMING” March 15 - April 20, 2008

It is almost that time of year – when the Greater Prairie Chickens return to their leks and find a mate. The dancing and prancing is a “must see” for any birder and you don’t have to travel far to see them! They are right here in the Flint Hills. The Konza Prairie Biological Station has a blind on a lek, and visitors (accompanied by a docent) are invited to watch this display. You must make a reservation as space in the blind is limited. You will meet early, before sunrise, to be in place in the blind before the birds come in and stay until they have flushed (approx. 3 hrs. so dress warmly and please use the restroom before joining the group).

Again this year, the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society is sponsoring the first 20 members to make a Greater Prairie Chicken viewing reservation through the Konza Prairie March 15 through April 20. You read correctly - the NFHAS will pay the reservation fee (\$15/person) for the first 20 members (including guests - if you want to bring a friend). Reservations must be made in advance and are first come, first serve, so please call as soon as possible to reserve your spot. To make a reservation, call the Konza Prairie Education Office, (785)587-0381 or e-mail keepkonza@ksu.edu. Visit the Konza Environmental Education Program website for detailed reservation information and observation guidelines: <http://www.k-state.edu/konza/keep/visit/blind.htm>

APRIL 25-27, 2008:

BI-ANNUAL KANSAS BIRDING FESTIVAL

Wakefield, Kansas (Home of the Wetlands). More information will be forthcoming.
www.kansasbirdingfestival.org



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Subscription Information: Introductory memberships - \$20/yr., then basic membership is \$35/yr. When you join the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the National Audubon Society and receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the Prairie Falcon newsletter. New membership applications may be sent to Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS 66505-1932. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are handled by the National Audubon Society and should not be sent to the NFHAS. Questions about membership? Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society join@audubon.org.

If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in our local activities, you may subscribe to the Prairie Falcon newsletter for \$15/yr. Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, and mail to: Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS, 66502-1932.

RARE BIRD HOTLINE: For information on Kansas Birds, subscribe to the Kansas Bird Listserve. Send this message <subscribe KSBIRD-L> to <list_serve@ksu.edu> and join in the discussions.

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