"Solar panels for everyone:

how new technology has made home-grown energy easy, safe, and cheap".

Robert Rosenberg

Flint Hills Renewable Energy & Efficiency Cooperative

June 7, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Manhattan Public Library Auditorium

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS 66505-1932

prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

Vol. 46, No. 10 ~ JUNE 2018

Inside

Upcoming Events

June 7 - Program "Solar Panels" see above

June 9 - Saturday Morning Birding 8 am-11 am
Departing from Sojourner Truth Park

June 10- Board meeting, Patricia Yeager home, see page 4

Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

The Volland Store stands nearly alone about seven miles SW of Alma on Old Hwy. 10 in Wabaunsee county (thevollandstore.com). The corrals of what once was a busy cattle shipping point are gone. And the building has been restored into a center for events ranging from art exhibits to open seminars. One of the latter I attended in April involved three speakers describing what they propose as ways to hold back the oncoming threats of a warming climate.

They included Judith Schwartz, author of the intriguingly titled book, *Cows Save the Planet,* and Gail Fuller, a rancher from the Emporia area, but for now *t*aking center stage was Walter Jehne, founder of an organization named Healthy Soils Australia dedicated to having those ways adopted globally by using facts and figures to demonstrate an urgent need to do so.

Actually, he begins about 450 million years ago when the agents of erosion began taking 100 million years to create from rock a substance called soil that could hold nutrients that in turn could give birth to life, that in turn now is keeping the Earth's average surface temperature 33° C (91° F) above what it would be otherwise. But that average is destabilizing.

So, he says, by all means do what you can to reduce our industrial and tailpipe emissions--but realize that they comprise only about 8% of the problem. The overriding factor, he declares, is the diminished ability of our soils to function as "a carbon sponge", caused by the interruption of "a water cycle".

This involves all the water we're under, the zillions of micro-droplets adrift in the troposphere, the layer of the atmosphere closest around the Earth. Each day, Mr. Jehne, reports, 342 watts of solar radiation per square meter arrives among those droplets, but we send out only 339. To stabilize our climate, he says, we need to radiate back those 3 watts more, and, he adds, a key to that is how we manage what happens when solar radiation reaches those zillions

The disrupting interruption involved, he explains, began with the start of agriculture 10,000 years ago, intensified around the year 1750 CE., with an impact greatly increasing through the last 50 years, and is something we must do something about to prevent the rise of global temperatures past 2° to an unsustainable 4° to 6°.

To close that 3-watt gap he sees significantly some things that can be directly addressed, such as reducing fires and forest clearing, and farming practices such as fallowing by which the bare ground absorbs more heat and allows its carbon to escape. Even no-till practices leave dead material on the surface to give off carbon as it disintegrates.

His answer, in regard to this latter aspect (as with the other two speakers), is not only to use post-harvest cover crops to provide reflection and shade, but also to graze-off of such crops so their carbon becomes entrapped in ground-absorbent manure, and hoof-strikes break up the soil surface aiding aeration and the entrance of water. There is a certain amount of energy, financial, and labor cost to planting and fencing in a cover crop, but the climatic benefits, he figures, are greater. More details on the water cycle approach next time.

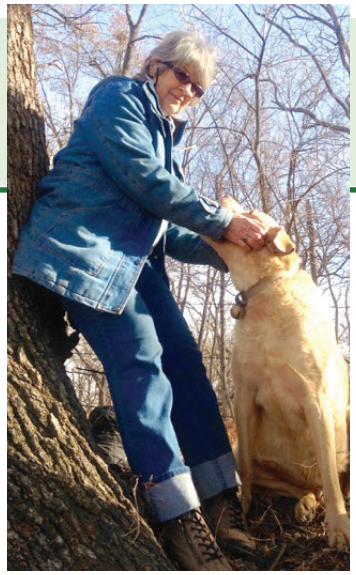
This June Venus keeps up its brilliant performances of setting as evenings move along, joining the Gemini Twins the 11th, and sparkling above the waxing Moon the 15th and 16th. Saturn will be putting on one of its best shows, with rings tilted to give us their best reflection as it moves notably along the southern sky within Sagittarius, as the Archer trails behind the more identifiable Scorpius. It rises about an hour before midnight to start the month, in mid-evening by month's end.

Jupiter, bright as usual and awake at sunset, then later, seems rather alone amid the dim stars of Libra, just ahead of Scorpius, and ducks out ever earlier through the wee hours. Mars, growing ever brighter, rises near the Moon shortly after midnight the 3rd and 4th and pulls the same act a little before midnight the 29th and 30th and keeps playing to the sleepless crowd in between, vying with the star, Antares, in Scorpius for being the reddest natural twinkle in the sky.

Vesta, the only asteroid that becomes naked eye visible, might be seen on clear nights to the upper right of Saturn from the 5th to the 15th. The Moon is new the 13th at 2p43, full the 27th, at 11p53 when Saturn will also be at its brightest. Official summer comes at 5a07 the 21st.

A Sea of Flowers

Dru Clarke



"… I take passage overland, in the footsteps of brave Kelso, where "his sea of flowers" began..."

So, wrote Stan Rogers in his "Northwest Passage", his lyric homage to Canadian explorers who opened the west of that land. Kelso was Henry Kelsey, apprenticed in his teens (in the late 1600's) to the Hudson 's Bay Company to attempt to develop trade with the First Nations peoples. For a while he and a befriended First Nations boy delivered mail for the Hudson's Bay Company after which he was hired to navigate the Nelson River to trade with other tribes he encountered. He was the first – as far as we know – European to sight buffalo and 'silver-haired' (grizzly) bears and to note how abundant beaver were, especially in the aspen parklands. He explored what is today the prairie provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, environs strikingly similar to our Great Plains states. This was before the horse culture reached Canada, yet these tribes regularly hunted buffalo. They (the prairie bands) also had no knowledge of canoes, traveling nomadically on foot.

When in the 1970's I, my young son, and some friends did a trans-Canada road trip (in British Columbia, a cinnamon bear climbed into the back of my Rambler station wagon and made off with a loaf of Jewish rye bread – it left the honey and butter!), we, too, encountered a "sea of flowers" in Saskatchewan: Yellow-flowering Birdsfoot trefoil, a plump-flowered, low growing legume, deliberately planted to enrich the soil with nitrogen and to later harvest as it doesn't cause bloat in cattle, stretched to the horizon like a bright chenille quilt.

Now, in early May, it seems that our native blooms are coming on later – our redbuds, some sporting fairy-size bouquets sprouting from the trunk, are just now showing off in the arborscape-, but we're alerted to their emergence by a delicate and often fleeting fragrance on the shifting breeze. Grateful pollinators attend the immigrant dandelions who flower early and help sustain them until our fruit trees choose to open their petals. Henbit creates a purple haze on worked ground, existing in such wide swathes that it seems intended by farmers. Everywhere in our grazed native grass meadows, wild strawberries are in full bloom and will yield fruit in June. Fringed puccoon, dainty in its lacy yellow blooms, an early sunny yellow hawkweed, tiny, ground-hugging sky blue speedwell, Oxalis (wood sorrel) with its tart leaves reminiscent of rhubarb, fuzzy pussytoes (the politically correct term eludes me), and an array of mustards – pennycress and shepherd's purse among them – impart early color and symmetry to our native grass prairie, while primrose, wild false indigo, and yarrow are leafed out, suggesting to us to return again to enjoy their blooms.

In hunting for the amber-hued, unmistakably crenellated spires of morels, we navigated around shrub islands and brushed with a shoulder one bush with clusters of tiny lime green flowers timidly opening. The name fragrant sumac must refer to these blooms as the leaves are simply aromatic, but not delicately, sweetly perfumed as these modest flowers are. A Russian olive tree we had never noticed before buzzed with attendant bumblebees – a joy to encounter as they are rare now and so necessary for certain plants' pollination. The tree was never deliberately planted where it grew at the edge of a neglected native grass plot, so its presence is a mystery.

As the seasons slide from spring into summer and into fall, our 'sea of flowers' will grow in passing waves of forbs, like whitecaps, though colored, on an ocean of grass that seems to flow when the wind touches it. Like Kelsey, we can explore and discover new or seldom appreciated finds in our native lands, then share what we've discovered with others. And maybe turn off and put down our phones for a while, munch a sorrel leaf, and sniff the blooming air.

HELP Wanted!

THANK YOU SUSAN BLACKFORD FOR AGREEING TO BE A MEMBER-AT-LARGE ON THE NFHAS BOARD!!!

Want to find out more about being a board member before you commit? Show up at the next board meeting. No obligation. We will introduce you to the behind the scenes workings of NFHAS.

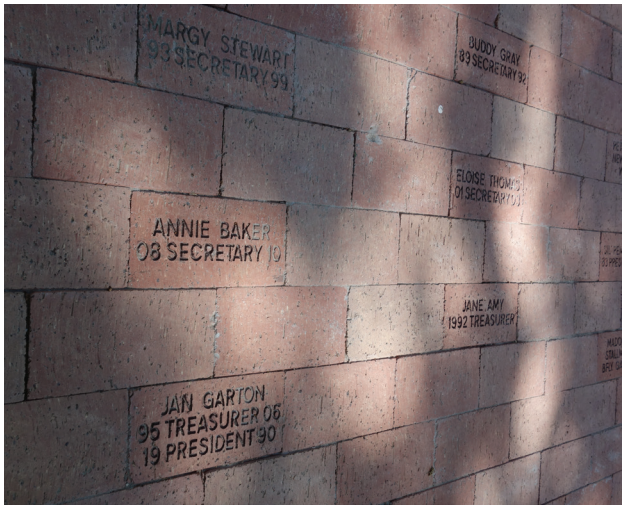
Place: Beautiful Birdy Lake Elbo, 5614 Bayers Hill, Sunday evening June 10th at 6:30 p.m. Directions: Drive east out of town and notice the big green highway sign indicating to turn north on Lake Elbo Rd (it is just past mile marker 321). Turn N here. When the pavement ends, turn into Lake Elbo. Ignore all right turns. This will take you across the dam. Immediately after you cross the dam turn right onto Bayers Hill. It is the 4th house on the right. Two story cedar-sided house.

Look forward to meeting you there.

ALSOP Bird Sanctuary

Things are happening at the Alsop Bird Sanctuary. Thanks to some quick thinking by Pat Brodersen, we now have a gravel parking place. It is now an approved parking surface as far as the city of Manhattan is concerned. Pat negotiated with contractors doing work at the hotel and traded to allow a top soil dump on to our yet-to-be-planted garden space for a gravel drive. Thanks Pat!

I am putting together our this summer's garden crew. Please call 776-9593 or pyeagerbirder if you are able and willing to help out. Weeding, planting, dead heading and watering are the big 4 tasks. Once you have been instructed by me, you can claim an area for yourself and work independently. If you want to spend an hour a week or 3 hours a day we will appreciate your contribution and so will the passersby and the birds.



Baltimore Orioles

Like all New World orioles, this species is named after an unrelated, physically similar family found in the Old World: the Oriolidae. "Oriole" ultimately derives from Latin aureolus, "golden".[3] The genus name Icterus is from Ancient Greek ikteros, a yellow bird, usually taken to be the Eurasian golden oriole, the sight of which was thought to cure jaundice. The specific galbula is the Latin name for a yellow bird, again usually assumed to be the golden oriole.[4]

Baltimore orioles forage in trees and shrubs, also making short flights to catch insects. They acrobatically clamber, hover and hang among foliage as they comb high branches. They mainly eat insects, berries and nectar, and are often seen sipping at hummingbird feeders. Their favored prey is perhaps the forest tent caterpillar moth, which they typically eat in their larval stage, and can be a nuisance species if not naturally regulated by predation. The larvae caterpillar are beaten against a branch until their protective hairs are skinned off before being eaten. Unlike American robins and many other fruit-eating birds, Baltimore orioles seem to prefer only ripe, dark-colored fruit. Orioles seek out the darkest mulberries, the reddest cherries, and the deepest-purple grapes, and will ignore green grapes and yellow cherries even if they are ripe. Baltimore orioles sometimes use their bills in an unusual way, called "gaping": they stab the closed bill into soft fruits, then open their mouths to cut a juicy swath from which they drink with their tongues. During spring and fall, nectar, fruit and other sugary foods are readily converted into fat, which supplies energy for migration.

How to attract Orioles to your backyard!

Start early. Your best chance of attracting orioles is when they first arrive in early spring.Use the same nectar recipe for orioles as you do for hummingbirds-four parts boiled water to one part sugar. Keep nectar fresh, and don’t use food coloring.

These birds are attracted to the color orange, so look for a sugar-water feeder specifically designed for orioles.

Make sure your feeder has large enough perches and drinking ports. It’s not unusual for orioles to try hummingbird feeders, but their bills are often too big. Orioles love the color and taste of oranges. Offer orange halves on a branch or feeder. Orioles will also eat grape jelly. Serve the jelly in an open dish or cup, and keep it fresh.

When placing the oriole feeder in your yard, think like a bird. Instead of hiding the feeder under an awning or tree, put it out in the open so the birds can see it while flying overhead.

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WE NEED YOU!

PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

The Board meets on the first Monday of each month. The meetings usually last about an hour.

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