

THOUGHTS, NEWS, AND REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CONSERVATION CHAIR

Nature Is Healthy for You!

Jim Brown

A recent issue of the *National Geographic* magazine (January 2016) highlights the importance of parks in the United States. Noting that 2016 marks the centennial year of the creation of the National Park Service during the Woodrow Wilson administration, the well-known, iconic magazine will this year be focusing on U.S. National Parks and parks around the world. The magazine has given the phrase “The Power of Parks” to its planned series of relevant articles that will appear in the coming months.

I found one of the initial park-related articles in the January issue especially interesting. Entitled “This is Your Brain on Nature” (by Florence Williams, photographs by Lucas Foglia), the piece explores the positive effects of nature on the human brain and human psychology. Numerous studies from around the world, including Finland, Japan, Holland, England, Sweden, Korea, and the United States, demonstrate the calming, healing, and restorative effects of nature on humans. Modern life seems to require periods of what is termed “directed attention,” which can, over time, create “mental fatigue, loss of effectiveness, and stress.” Fortunately, getting out into nature (walking in a park for example), by emphasizing what has been termed “involuntary attention,” can eliminate fatigue and stress, thereby improving mental health. Struggling through Midtown Manhattan at rush hour is very different from a quiet stroll through the woods!

It is reported that experiencing nature can increase creativity by up to 50% and that forest walks can decrease



a particular stress hormone by up to 16%. People who live near green spaces tend to have lower incidences of anxiety, depression, heart disease, diabetes, and other ailments. Even virtual nature is helpful; if one is exposed to pictures and photographs of nature, there is a notable calming effect,

measurable in positive changes in brain chemistry.

Unfortunately, the attendance at U.S. parks, and at parks in other places in the world, is declining. In general, people are not involving themselves with the outdoors, with nature, as in years past. It is reported that Americans spend less time outdoors than in their vehicles! Children do not play outdoors as children did years ago. All of this has a cost in physical and mental health, as we avoid nature to engage in indoor technologies and amusements. Our South Shore Audubon Society’s Vice President, Paul Stessel, often advises people: “More Green, Less Screen!” That solid recommendation underscores a crucial necessity in today’s stressful, technological world: It’s important for us to get out and experience nature, and to develop

the love of the outdoors in future generations. Not only is it important from the standpoint of conservation — experiencing and learning what has to be conserved and saved on this planet — it is also necessary and good for human health!



Phone: (516) 931-1445
 Fax: (516) 931-1467
 E-Mail: lgk1cpa@aol.com

LEONARD G. KONSKER
 CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

Konsker and Company, LTD
 550 W. Old Country Rd., Suite 101
 Hicksville, New York 11801



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wendy Murbach

One of the wonderful perks that you get from an Audubon membership is the chance to be a part of your local Audubon chapter, South Shore Audubon Society.

You are automatically a valued member of this active and friendly chapter, so please come out to the next meeting at the Freeport Memorial Library from 7:30–9:30 P.M. on the second Tuesday of the month to hear what you can do to help preserve your local environment’s health and viability, to hear about local issues that you can help to solve, and to see an interesting program.

Whether you are a beginning birder or someone with a large life list, you will enjoy our weekly Sunday bird walks. Check out the special events that are mentioned in this *Skimmer*. Attend them yourself, and bring your family and friends too.

You are warmly invited to be an active participant in this vibrant all-volunteer organization comprised of persons who, like you, care about the earth we live on, about our local environment, and about the creatures that live alongside us.

Our new members since the last *Skimmer* are:

- Baldwin..... Marcia Galletti, David Monoson
- Bellmore..... Denise Sklar
- Elmont..... Linda Baldwin
- Floral Park..... Kathy Mactiernan
- Hewlett..... Lin Fisher
- Levittown Donald Delgiorno; Robert Kernahan; Joseph Shay, Jr.
- Lynbrook Joseph Henn
- Massapequa..... Joseph Pascale
- Merrick..... Laura Pellechia, Michael Sullivan
- Oceanside..... Diane D’Alessandro, Sandra Perri
- Point Lookout..... Ellen Cimino
- Seaford Nicole Pedisich
- Wantagh Judith Martin





South Shore Audubon Society's
45th Annual Dinner

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

at

Pompei Ristorante

401 Hempstead Avenue

West Hempstead, NY 11552

(516) 485-8620

Cocktail Hour 6:30 PM

Dinner 7:30 PM

*

Honoring Dennis Fleury and Isabel Fernandes

Tackapausha Museum and Preserve

*

Raffles & Scholarship Awards

*

Dinner Price \$40.00 (please register by June 6)

Includes hot and cold hors d'oeuvres during cocktail hour (cash bar), house wine and soda, salad, penne filetto and tomato, entree (eggplant rollatini, roast beef, salmon, or chicken marsala), dessert, coffee, and tea.

Mail your dinner registration and check payable to South Shore Audubon Society, to South Shore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520.

Directions: Southern State Parkway to exit 17N, north on Hempstead Ave. for 1.2 miles.



Dinner Registration Form

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Number of people _____ Amount enclosed _____

