

SOUTH SHORE SKIMMER



VOLUME 21, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 1992

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGES

Joan Butkerei

Earth to Earth / Metal to Metal / Help for Brookside. Brookside Preserve is a special place. It could be described as a jewel in our midst. It is 20 acres of freshwater wetlands owned by Nassau County and managed by South Shore Audubon. We take our role very seriously. It is due to our efforts that the County bought back the property, and it will be with our efforts that it is maintained in its pristine beauty. One goal whose time has come is the removal of two 40 ft long steel water tanks on the property. To have these physically cut up, carted away, and recycled seems fitting. The cost will be approximately \$2500, and to earn this money we are having a Collectible Sale on April 26th along the perimeter of the preserve on Brookside Avenue in Freeport. We need your tax-deductible donations of any of the items listed on page 3 of this newsletter. We also need you to spread the word and come to this event. We need your help on April 26th (raindate May 17th)!

Looking Up / Looking Down. The sky always held fascination for my friends and me when we were growing up. The nighttime sky revealed islands of light that were the markers of our universe, but the blue daytime sky showed our atmosphere to be a place of substance with properties that could be determined as well as imagined by children. We learned our cloud types with awe— cumulus, cirrus, stratus, and the interesting combos of cirrocumulus, cirrostratus, cumulonimbus, and nimbostratus, among others, which revealed the dynamics of our visible atmosphere. Layers of our atmosphere stretched miles into the sky, surrounding our planet with gases essential for life. We watched everything from weather balloons to Sputnik penetrate and explore the thin air around us, and were fortunate to have school districts ripe with funds to help us in our quest for knowledge. We looked up and imagined exploring space, while those who got up looked down and saw how unique home really was. Our planet, viewed from space, inspired the following quotes by these explorers: "The peaks were the recognition that it is a harmonious, purposeful, creating universe. The valleys came in recognizing that humanity wasn't behaving in accordance with that knowledge" — Edgar Mitchell, U.S.A. "When we look into the sky it seems to be endless. We

NEXT MEETING

Sandy Brenner

DATE: Tuesday, April 14, 1992
TIME: 8:00 PM
PLACE: Freeport Memorial Library
Merrick Rd. & S. Ocean Ave.

SPEAKER: Tony Manzoni
TOPIC: Portraits of the Birds Around Us

Many of us have had the pleasure of seeing a few of Tony's superb slides at our annual January members' night meetings. Join us for a chance to enjoy many more.

*IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE WASTE, PLEASE
BRING COFFEE MUGS TO OUR MEETINGS*

breathe without thinking about it, as is natural. We think without consideration about the boundless ocean of air ... The boundless blue sky, the ocean which gives us breath and protects us from the endless black and death is but an infinitesimally thin film. How dangerous it is to threaten even the smallest part of this gossamer covering, this conservator of life" — Vladimir Shatalov, U.S.S.R. "I have been in love with the sky since birth. And when I could fly, I wanted to go higher, to enter space and become a 'man of the heights.' During the last eight days I spent in space, I realized that mankind needs height primarily to better know our long-suffering Earth, to see what cannot be seen close up. Not to just love her beauty, but to also ensure that we do not bring even the slightest harm to the natural world" — Pham Tuan, Vietnam. The hole in the Earth's protective layer of ozone, which blocks harmful ultraviolet light, has been found to have led to a 12% decrease in the production of phytoplankton in the oceans near Antarctica's coastline. This was determined by a coordinated study of increased UV radiation and changing ozone by remote controlled submarine and shipboard measurements conducted by the National Science Foundation. Phytoplankton feeds krill, a major food source for ocean life. Prior to the discovery of the ozone hole over Antarctica in 1985, there was much debate.

Could ozone depletion occur, as first suggested by Sherwood Rowland and Mario Molina in 1974? Unfortunately, yes. The U.S. has since sped up its program to phase out harmful CFC production. There are 20 million tons of harmful CFCs already in the atmosphere. One must wonder if it is worth the risk to ignore intelligent, well-founded speculation. It doesn't take speculation to recognize that all air pollution is nasty business. Must we debate the problem of increased carbon dioxide levels and global warming until it proves itself true? Can't we take responsible preventive action?

CHICKADEES AT MORTON

Tom Torma

You enter the woodland path. Songbirds gather around, looking for handouts. Chickadees feed on sunflower seeds out of your hand. The path leads you to an unspoiled beach. To your left, Loons call out in the bay. To your right, an Egret feeds in a marshy lagoon. Beyond the marsh, an Osprey hunts above a small harbor. Are you in paradise or on an exotic island? No — you are at Morton National Wildlife Refuge right here on Long Island.

The sanctuary is located at Jessups Neck on Noyack Road, just west of the village of Noyack, which is west of Sag Harbor. Morton NWR offers several different habitats, including both wetland and upland environments that combine to create opportunities for an excellent outdoor wildlife experience. When visiting Morton, be sure to bring some sunflower seeds, for when the Chickadees feed out of your hands you will have superior opportunities to observe and photograph Chickadees.

Chickadees are among the most enjoyable of birds to watch. They are acrobatic, bold, perky birds that allow close proximity to the point that they seem tame. During the summer, individual pairs maintain breeding territories of up to a quarter mile square. Each pair will defend its territory against other pairs. With the onset of winter, Chickadees' social lives change. Mated pairs form small flocks of up to ten birds. They defend a territory about two to three times larger than the breeding territory. Within the flock there is a pecking order. The dominance is determined by pair. The alpha pair gets preference to favored perches, they feed first, and in the spring claim the most desirable breeding territory. Since the winter territory is only about two to three times larger than the breeding territory, the lower ranking pairs must leave the area or, as is most likely, not breed at all.

Unmated pairs do not belong to a flock. Instead, they float from flock to flock. These floaters are waiting for an opportunity to move into the hierarchy of the flock. If one of the alpha pair should die, a floater will pair up with the alpha mate and will become an alpha bird itself. Since Chickadees mate for life (till death do they part), the other pairs will not split up and remain in their pecking order position. If both alpha birds should die, then the beta pair will move up. If a lower ranking bird should die, its mate will most likely remain alone, for the floaters are only interested in mating into a high ranking position.

When my children were young, I would take them to Morton to feed the Chickadees. It was here where they learned to observe and care about the natural world around them. Some of my fondest memories are of my children at Morton. The lessons they learned there they carry with them to this day. For this reason, I find it hard to believe that anyone would consider selling a National Wildlife Refuge. Yet a recent federal audit recommended the sale of 24 "underutilized" sanctuaries [Editor's note: details were in the February *Skimmer*; 7 of the 8 NWR's on Long Island, including Morton, are threatened]. If we allow the sale of these sanctuaries, their dramatic locations demand that they be developed into luxury resorts or exclusive housing. The sanctuaries will no longer be for Egrets, Osprey, or songbirds, but for the wealthy. Future generations of children will not have the opportunities to learn about nature firsthand while feeding the Chickadees.

SSAS ANNUAL DINNER

Shirley Kutner & Diane Singer

We would once again like to invite all our members to a wonderful evening of fun at our second, beautiful, home — Pompei Restaurant, 401 Hempstead Ave., in West Hempstead. This year's dinner will be even better, if possible, with a new exciting menu at a rolled-back price of \$17. The date is Tuesday, June 9th; cocktail hour starts at 6:30, followed by dinner at 7:30 PM. The entrees will be roast beef, filet of sole arreganata, chicken marsala, eggplant rollatini, and broiled chicken or fish. The reservation form will appear in next month's *Skimmer*.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marion Yavarkovsky

It is with great pleasure that we welcome so many new members to South Shore Audubon Society. You will find that we have many things to offer. Please come to our weekly bird walks, monthly meetings, and other special events. We would like you to be active participants in our chapter.

[For information on joining the South Shore Audubon Society, please call our Membership Chairperson, Marion Yavarkovsky, at 379-2090. The best time to call is after 4 PM, Monday through Friday.]

Atlantic Beach	Ernest A. Scinto
Baldwin	Ralph R. Roennau, J. C. Sasportas, Mr. Peter Van Hensbroek
Bellmore	Margaret Rao, Mr. J. L. Romm
Bethpage	Mr. Cliff R. Franklin, Beth Rogoff, Mr. Robert G. White
East Meadow	Joseph Dellatorre, Ms. C. Hottendorf, Mr. Ricardo Mejia
East Rockaway	Mr. James R. Crockett, Mr. John Lyttle

Farmingdale	Patricia Cella, Beatrice Hackenberg, Irene Kislowski, Nancy J. Lisk, Mae McGuane
Floral Park	R. Griffing, Iris Heit, Miss B. Zimmermann
Franklin Square	Mr. Edward Mannato
Freeport	M. Cook, Leonard Thomas
Garden City	Ruth Cloos, S. Gelberg, Tom Kirby, Bruce & Terry Klein, Georgia Skiadas, Mr. Ron E. Thiem
Hempstead	Ms. Annette Blackwood, Eileen Fitzgerald, Ruth Formanek
Hewlett.....	Miss J. Pardy
Hicksville	Mrs. Budischewsky, Mrs. Lynda J. Coumou, Mrs. Bernadette Doherty, J. Galgano, Mr. Michael W. Gregory, Mrs. Olga Peterson
Levittown	J. Gorman, Liliane Kopplin, Katharine Mc Neill
Long Beach	Diana Collins, Ms. Anne P. Colson, Gladys Foster, Myra Goeller
Lynbrook	Mrs. Agnes Saunders, Mr. & Mrs. M. Toby
Malverne	Ira Bernstein
Massapequa	Mr. Steven B. Adams, Bruce Cummings Jr., Mr. William Hichborn, Charles B. Smith, Otto Wartberg
Massapequa Park	Ms. Marie Penozich
Merrick	Mr. & Mrs. Donald Abrams, Regina Cushmore, Ms. Eleanor Fay, Pat & Nat King
Oceanside	Mrs. Ellen S. Green, R. E. Newsom, Philip Swedlow
Old Bethpage	Robert Binder
Plainview	Bradley Broder, Eve V. Werfel
Point Lookout	Jane Campbell
Rockville Centre	Brian McShea, Lois Montalbano, Daniel F. Ryan, Barbara Willhoft
Roosevelt	L. Theys
Seaford	Mr. Walter H. Ludwig
Syosset	Natalie Kohler
Uniondale	Albert P. Ackerman, Mr. Bob Uihlein
Valley Stream	Mr. & Mrs. K. Pyle, George W. Schieck
Wantagh	Alice Blaustein, Maria L. Petito, Brooke H. Schmearer, Mrs. Elaine M. Smith, Ms. Gloria Zaragoza
West Hempstead	B. Althaus
Woodmere.....	Dr. & Mrs. Martin Rudolph, Debbie Schockett, Irv Sitzer

COLLECTIBLE SALE FUNDRAISER FOR BROOKSIDE PRESERVE

Betsy Gulotta

On Sunday, April 26th (raindate May 17th), from 9 AM to 3 PM, South Shore Audubon Society will hold a giant Collectible Sale at Brookside Preserve, Brookside Ave., Freeport, to raise funds needed to remove two large unsightly tanks from the Preserve.

You can aid us by bringing and helping us to sell the following kinds of items (we'd like to thank Sylvia Springer for providing this list):

Antiques	Vases
Books	Pictures and Frames
Records	Bric-a-Brac
Pottery	Laces and Doilies
Toys	Comics
Dolls	Baseball Cards
Trains	Postcards (old)
Jewelry (old and costume)	Stamps
Glassware	Coins
Silverware	New Unused Gifts
Dishes	Clocks
Lamps	Small Working Appliances
Figurines (animals, birds, etc.)	Plants
Bird Seed	Baked Goods
Bird Feeders	

Please bring your price-marked items by 8 AM and plan to remain there with us as long as possible. Some table space will be available; bring extra display tables and chairs if you have them. Any items remaining at the end of the day must be removed by the owner. Refreshments will be available for donors.

All proceeds go to Brookside Preserve (SSAS).

For more information or to volunteer to help, please call Joan Butkerei (623-0843) or Betsy Gulotta (546-8841).

NOMINATIONS FOR 1992-1993 OFFICERS

Elliott Kutner

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting in May, officers will be elected for our next fiscal year. All members attending that meeting may nominate candidates from the floor and vote. The SSAS Nominating Committee [Elliott Kutner (Chairman), William Hollweg, and Nora Lourenco] has recommended the following candidates:

President — James Remsen, Jr.
Vice President — Mark Phillips
Treasurer — George Popkin
Recording Secretary — Louise Hillen
Corresponding Secretary — Doris Pirodsky
Honorary Corresponding Secretary — Ruth Grossman
Director (to 6/95) — Paul Devendittis
Director (to 6/95) — Bruno Leporati

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY TIME

The League of Conservation Voters is the 21-year old, nonpartisan, political arm of the environmental movement. Its Board of Directors includes representatives from National Audubon Society, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Wilderness Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, National Parks and Conservation Association, and other environmental organizations. In addition to publishing the 1991 National Environmental Scorecard that rates every member of Congress, they issued detailed Presidential profiles for each of the candidates. The following are the summaries from LCV for each of the major candidates still in the running as the *Skimmer* goes to press. For further details, contact LCV at 202-785-8683.

George Bush. In 1988, the League of Conservation Voters released a Presidential Profile on candidate George Bush. At that time, Vice President Bush earned a letter grade of "D," based on his performance as congressman and as Vice President, as well as on his statements while seeking the Republican nomination. During the 1988 general election campaign, George Bush distanced himself from the anti-environment policies of the Reagan Administration and pledged to become the "Environmental President." At the same time, Bush lambasted his opponent for the environmental neglect of his home state.

In 1990, LCV rated Bush's first year in office, and concluded that his record "needs improvement." As President Bush passed the halfway point of this term, his environmental policy moved away from the promises of the '88 campaign and the progress of the first year, toward the neglect and indifference that characterized White House environmental policy from 1981-88. In March of 1991, the League assessed Bush's record at midterm. His grade reflected a mixed picture of success, inaction, and failure; once again, he received a "D."

Pat Buchanan. If his public statements are any indication of where he stands on environmental issues, Buchanan can be expected to promote an anti-environmental agenda. He bemoaned the hostile public outcry that forced James Watt from office in the mid-1980s. Buchanan characterizes the environmental movement as "militant." He has been outspoken in his fervent opposition to environmentalism and environmental legislation.

In his book *Conservative Votes, Liberal Victories*, Buchanan states that "the environmentalists have had their movement institutionalized in the Environmental Protection Agency, the President's Council on Environmental Quality, and draconian federal laws for cleaner air and water." As a remedy to this disagreeable turn of events, Buchanan suggests that "we should terminate liberal programs and turn the nation rightward in domestic, social policy."

Buchanan has never held an elected office; as a result, any assessment of his record on environmental issues will be incomplete, at best. Environmentalists must rely primarily on his writings and public statements to assess his conservation positions. Even as an ideologue and as a political commentator, his public ideas on the environment have been limited.

Buchanan's policy toward the environment would be to support aggressive attempts to deregulate industry and the underfunding of important environmental programs.

Jerry Brown. In the words of California historian Kevin Starr, Brown succeeded in replacing California's old devotion to growth with "an iconography of scarcity." Prior to 1974, many Californians thought that growth was the key to success. Most saw no foreseeable limit to that growth. Brown convinced people that there were limits and that many of those limits were already under considerable strain. California's population has continued to increase, and the state's resources continue to be exploited beyond their capacity for renewal. However, under Brown's leadership, Californians substantially changed their perceptions of the future and how much they could demand from their land, water, and air.

During his tenure as governor of California, Brown was on or near the cutting edge of many issues important to the environmental movement.

Bill Clinton. In terms of the environment, the old adage "better late than never" may apply to Bill Clinton. While conservation leaders have questions regarding Clinton's style and timing in his past support of conservation issues, many people take heart that his recent efforts — including an ambitious, pro-environment legislative package — demonstrate a forward-thinking commitment to address many conservation challenges. In Clinton's current term, the Governor and the Arkansas legislature enacted one of the most wide-range legislative programs in the state's history. Major education, health, and environmental packages were included in the program.

Most complaints about Gov. Clinton's environmental record involve his appointees to commissions and his record on issues like clearcutting, water quality, and hazardous waste incineration. Citizens' groups criticize Clinton for his hesitancy to use the prestige of his office to bring about constructive change in Arkansas. Expressing the frustration felt by many in the state, one environmentalist noted that "Clinton has had over a decade to formulate environmentally sound policies for the state of Arkansas. Unfortunately, in this long span of time, relatively little headway has been made."

Less critically, local environmental leaders classify their governor as a "latecomer" to the environmental movement. They appreciate Clinton's effort to actively promote the recent environmental package.

Paul Tsongas. Tsongas had an excellent pro-environment voting record during his Congressional career, as evidenced by his lifetime LCV score of 88 percent. But for absences, Tsongas might have approached the 100 percent mark.

Most environmentalists in Washington and Massachusetts have favorable opinions of Paul Tsongas. Most call him an environmentalist. Many praise him highly. One person said that "in the seven years since he left the Senate, he has been perhaps the most popular political figure in Massachusetts; he has used his political capital more to advance environmental and energy issues in the state than on any other public policy matter. He's done it effectively and made a difference."

Many people said Tsongas is extremely well-informed, particularly on energy issues and global warming. Environmentalists who worked with him on the Alaska Lands Act and the Cape Cod Commission gave him strong praise for his forceful leadership on those measures. Others, even if they disagreed with Tsongas over nuclear power or other issues, felt that overall he was a friend and someone with whom they could work. A number emphasized that "on the issues you know he's with you on, you can really count on him." On the other hand, some groups were very upset with his stand on nuclear power and his involvement in some controversial local projects.

Tsongas has a consensus approach to environmental matters. He cares deeply about many environmental problems, but a "pro-business" agenda is also an important part of his platform. Consequently, he is always trying to find ways to bridge the gap between environmental and business interests and to devise mutually agreeable solutions. Many environmentalists see this as a good way to achieve environmental goals in the real world.

BIRD INFO FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Consumer Information Catalog issued quarterly by the Consumer Information Center, P.O. Box 100, Pueblo, CO 81002 includes "free" 16-32 page booklets titled "Attract Birds," "Backyard Bird Feeding," and "Homes for Birds" (all available for a \$1 service fee), plus other publications or maps costing \$1 to \$1.50 each that might interest SSAS members. Write for a free 16-page catalog.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT SANCTUARY

134 Cove Road
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-3200

Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bird Sanctuary is owned by the National Audubon Society and operated by the Community and three local Audubon chapters, including South Shore Audubon. The following programs are open to the public. Space is limited and registration is required. All program fees are required at the time of registration.

Sunday, April 5th (1 to 3 PM, all ages) – Birds of Prey. Join us for an interesting and up close introduction to our resident raptors. Learn the natural history and behavior of some of Long Island's local birds of prey. Program fee \$3 for TR members, \$5 for nonmembers.

Sunday, April 26th (10 AM and 1 PM, all ages) – Environmental Awareness Day: Long Island Salt Marshes. Come to the sanctuary for a slide presentation and lecture/discussion about salt marshes and their importance to Long Island. A marsh exploratory walk will be included. Free.

WILDLIFE POISONING HOTLINE (800) 356-0560

AUDUBON HOTLINE (202) 547-9017

1992 SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON BIRDATHON

Doreen Remsen and James Remsen, Jr.

On May 9, 1992 (raindate May 16th), the South Shore Audubon Society will take part in the 1992 Audubon Birdathon, organized by the National Audubon Society. Our members will use their birding skills to raise funds for South Shore's local programs here in Nassau as well as national environmental research, education, and action programs by getting sponsors who will pledge a certain amount for each species they see on Birdathon day.

South Shore Birdathons will be held on May 9th, starting at the following locations:

Team 1. Leader: Elliott Kutner (486-7667). Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Start time: 8:00 AM.

Team 2. Leader: Paul Butkerei (623-0843). Start time: 7:00 AM at Forest Park, Queens. Meet at 6:20 AM at Hempstead Lake State Park, Peninsula Blvd. parking lot, to carpool.

Team 3. Leaders: James Remsen (764-5168) and Joe Grupp (481-4208). Participants may join this group at either of two times: at sunrise (5:45 AM) at Mill Pond, Wantagh; or later at Muttontown Preserve, parking lot on Route 106 (not the main parking lot!). Start time at Muttontown to be announced; should be approx. 8:00 AM.

People wishing to participate should notify either the leader of their chosen team or the Birdathon chairpersons in advance of the event. The teams will move, at their discretion, from location to location throughout the day. Participants may leave at will. Members unable to attend on Birdathon day should feel free to seek pledges and count whatever birds they see, wherever they happen to be that day, and forward their pledges and bird lists to the Birdathon chairpersons.

We would like each member to be an active Birdathoner, a sponsor in his/her own right, and a recruiter of additional sponsors from both *within and without* the South Shore Audubon Society.

Sponsors will be expected to pledge the amount of their choice (suggestions 25¢, \$1, or other amount) per species identified by the Birdathoner and his/her team. A preselected sum, pledged regardless of number of species seen, is also acceptable.

Birdathoners will be responsible for notifying sponsors after the Birdathon, collecting their checks (made payable to the *South Shore Audubon Society*), and forwarding them with their sponsor pledge form(s) to the Birdathon chairpersons by *May 31, 1992*. Those bringing in the largest number of sponsors, as well as the largest dollar amount, will be recognized and awarded prizes at our June dinner.

Sponsor pledge forms and information will be available at meetings, bird walks, or by contacting either of the following: Doreen Remsen, 865 1-2B Broadway Ave., Holbrook, NY 11741 (phone 472-6830), or James Remsen, Jr., 3264 Park Ave., Oceanside, NY 11572 (phone 764-5168 evenings).

RARE BIRD ALERT (212) 832-6523

CONSERVATION REPORT

Annie F. McIntyre

Democracy Needs You! There's an expression that goes "just ignore it & it'll go away." As much as we'd like that, it's not the case with these nasty bills in Albany and Washington. Each one of us needs to take a personal responsibility to help make them go away. I can't do it alone — you can't do it alone — but all our voices together would have a greater impression than you may imagine. I've been advised that a mere 100 letters to your federal representative will make him sit up and pay close attention to an issue. This newsletter reaches over 2000 members. We could make quite a ripple, maybe even a wave, in the calm waters of constituent apathy.

Issue #1. Wetland Destruction (House bill H.R. 1330 and Senate bill S. 1463). These sister bills would be disastrous for wetlands. Ironically called the "Comprehensive Wetlands Conservation and Management Act," this would allow for anything but conservation. It would:

- * classify wetlands as high, medium, or low value, allowing low value wetlands to be developed with no Army Corps of Engineers' permit;

- * redefine wetlands to eliminate millions of acres from protection (similar to the proposed EPA manual revisions); and

- * remove the EPA's veto power over Corps' permits (such a veto prevented the destruction of the Platte River).

Conversely, H.R. 4255, the "Wetlands Reform Act of 1992," has recently been introduced by Rep. Don Edwards. It will strengthen wetlands protection and has been endorsed by National Audubon.

Please write to Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, 405 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10174, and Senator Alfonse D'Amato, 7 Penn Plaza, Suite 600, New York, NY 10001, asking them to oppose S. 1463.

Please write to your Congressman. Representative Norman Lent, 2280 Grand Ave., Suite 300, Baldwin, NY 11510, is still listed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1330 — urge him to change his mind. Representative Ray McGrath, 203 Rockaway Ave., Valley Stream, NY 11580, is uncommitted; urge him to support H.R. 4255 and oppose H.R. 1330.

Issue #2. The Adirondack Park Agency, the only body that lies between the wilderness and development, is being threatened. In the NY State Assembly, bill A6543 would abolish the agency, incorporating it into the already overworked and understaffed NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Please write to your Assemblyman and ask him to oppose this bill. Assemblymen's addresses are in the phone book's blue pages; there are too many to list here.

Through democracy, we have the power to steer government in the direction we desire. Individually, collectively, we can make things change. Please exercise your power — write today!!

Another Victory for the Arctic Refuge. On Tuesday, February 18th, Senator Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) tried to reintroduce an Arctic National Wildlife Refuge drilling amendment into the Senate energy bill S. 2166. There must have been quite

a debate, because after two hours he withdrew it! (I would have loved to have heard that one.) While there's no doubt we've not heard the last on this issue, the score is 2-0 so far! Many thanks to all who've contacted our Senators — it's working!

CLEANUP AT TWIN LAKES

Dolores Rogers

Spring cleanup at Twin Lakes Preserve in Wantagh will be held on Saturday, April 11th at 9:30 AM.

Welcome spring by helping keep a beautiful preserve free of debris. If light rain, it's on; if a downpour, raindate is Sunday, April 12th at 1:00 PM. Please — let us have a good turnout!

Directions: Sunrise Highway to Old Mill Road north (one block west of Wantagh Parkway); meet in school parking lot.

BIRDING IN ARIZONA

Michael Higgiston

[Editor's note: Last month's *Skimmer* contained the first half of this article, which brought us from Tucson to Nogales to Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Nature Conservancy. We now resume our journey. Anyone interested in back issues of the *Skimmer* is invited to contact me.]

We drove on to Douglas, passing flat grasslands that seemed to go on forever or at least until they brushed up against a mountain range. The expanse of sky was enormous. Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, Northern Harriers, and Ferruginous Hawks were our neighbors in all the fields we passed. Quail, both Scaled and Gambel's, showed themselves occasionally along the road as Loggerhead Shrikes stood on fence posts surveying the north forty. Thrashers, sparrows, doves, roadrunners, and blackbirds were all spotted along the way. This was Sulphur Springs Valley, which regularly produces a large variety of sought-after birds, as well as one of the largest diversities of sparrows anywhere in North America.

Our last full day in Arizona had us up early, heading into the country. We found Lark Buntings feeding as a flock and were then treated to a Bendire's Thrasher on a fence post. We drove up and back dirt farm roads, searching for Sandhill Cranes which winter here. We spotted a few overhead and stopped to take a look. We didn't leave for about 30 minutes as row after row of these magnificent birds passed overhead, flying from their night roosting spot to their latest feeding area. Easily some 5000 cranes were part of this wave through the sky, honking as they went. We watched as they landed, and the area there was covered with cranes as far as one could see. This was surely the highlight of the trip. We continued our tour and noticed a Great Horned Owl in a tree by the road which was the only tree for miles. We stopped at one point and hiked down a fence row to a spot which afforded us views of a river and its surrounding valley. One birder excitedly pointed out a lone Bald Eagle flying along the

river. All binoculars were focused on it as it settled in a cottonwood on an island in the river to survey its territory. American Pipits foraging on the ground near our vantage point drew our attention. Usually these birds are either flying high or hunkered down in the grass. This time, they were out in relatively open space and we could study their field marks at our leisure. We continued birding as we drove out of Douglas toward Willcox, where we intended to turn west to Tucson. We spotted a White-throated Swift along the road, but it was our only interesting sighting until Tucson. We skirted the city along its southern edge and motored on to Saguaro National Monument, a protected area of mountains, scrub, and desert that hosted countless numbers of saguaro cactus that even grow up the side of mountains.

We finally came to a halt outside a field that was filled with short creosote bushes. Our quarry were the denizens of sagebrush, Sage Sparrow and Sage Thrasher. We had to walk quite a while before we spotted any movement at all, but were rewarded with many Sage Sparrows running along the ground in and out of the bushes. Some cooperated and held a position to allow us good looks at this very elusive bird. We were unable to locate a Sage Thrasher, though not for lack of trying.

That night, after our last dinner together, we wished each other luck in all our future birding endeavors. This was my first trip to Arizona and I've been told that at least two more trips will be necessary to see all the birds Arizona has to offer. I imagine there will be another Arizona trip in my plans soon.

BIRD WALKS

Elliott Kutner

All walks start at 9:30 AM; no walk if it rains or snows or temperature is below 25°F. Any questions? Call Elliott at 486-7667.

Apr. 5	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Apr. 12	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Apr. 19	Zach's Bay Parking Field #4, N.E. corner
Apr. 26	Tobay JFK Sanctuary
May 3	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

COW MEADOW & BROOKSIDE CLEANUPS

Betsy Gulotta

Celebrate Earth Day this year by helping us to clean up Cow Meadow Preserve and Brookside Preserve. Cleanups are scheduled for May 2nd from 9 AM to 12 PM at Cow Meadow Preserve (South Main St., Freeport) and for May 3rd from 1 to 4 PM at Brookside Preserve (Brookside Ave., Freeport, north of Sunrise Highway).

Dress appropriately — wear heavy shoes and gloves; bring rakes if possible. For more information, call Betsy at 546-8841.

THE REFUGE AND US

Morton Silver

With great pleasure and interest I read B. Borowsky's articles on the history and ecology of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

For more than 25 years, my wife Lynne and I have trod the gravel paths of the refuge — a place of refuge for the avifauna and also a personal haven from the overwhelming sights and sounds of the "concrete" city.

On a cold clear winter day, with not a soul in sight, we have seen flocks of Snow Geese rise from the bay, wheel over the frigid water and then begin to make their landing descent onto West Pond. They pass directly over us — wings beating audibly in the wind; their cries mournfully echoing in the quietude; the sun shining on their black wingtips and resplendent whiteness — our hearts miss a beat. It is a wondrous sight of Nature.

One morning, years ago, when the spring migration brought large numbers of warblers to the refuge, we walked the path to the North Garden. We stopped to chat with a young woman confined to a wheelchair — relegated to birding from the sterile path. It was one of those perfect spring days — warblers were everywhere and the young woman was ecstatic. Her joy was infectious; we stayed and birded with her. That morning we saw at least 12 species of warblers from this one spot on the path — 20 years ago.

On a day in fall, we heard that a Saw-whet Owl had been sighted in the pines. We finally found the small "cuddly" hidden against a tree trunk. His soft feathery presence aroused the same feelings one experiences with his/her first teddy bear. From the sublime innocuousness of the Saw-whet we have also seen the regal Snowy Owl in the cold solitude of the refuge. A magnificent "independence" from the Arctic tundra — yellow eyes constantly keeping all interlopers in view and at a distance. One is awed by its presence.

One frigid wintry morning, in those days of our almost total birding ignorance, the stillness was repeatedly interrupted by cracking sounds. We stared into the pines and were rewarded with the sight of a large reddish bird industriously cracking open the pine cones to retrieve the hidden seeds. His obvious crossed mandibles enabled him to garner his fill — and gave us the perfect I.D. for the Red Crossbill. We are still waiting to this day to hear that distinctive sound again in the refuge.

Our best times at Jamaica Bay might be the spring migrations of wood warblers. This is not Pt. Pelee in Ontario, Canada or High Island near Galveston, Texas, but this is our refuge. Can anyone not be astounded by the fact that we bird in one of the largest cities in the world? We have seen the Hooded Warbler hiding in the brambles; the Blackburnian "fire-throat" flaring on an overhead branch; the Kentucky skulking in the underbrush; the Parula buzzing in the treetops; the Cerulean, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Black-throated Blue, and so many other warbler "jewels." Can anyone with seeing eyes not be moved?

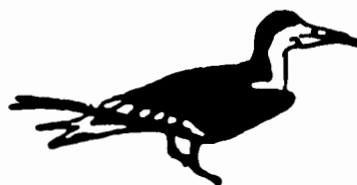
Thirty years of delight, and we owe it all to Elliott Kutner — for opening our eyes and ears to all this beauty around us; for his infectious exuberance and intensity; and for his patience, warmth, and encouragement to pursue this benign madness called birding.

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