OUTH HORE SKIMMER

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 7 — SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 1999

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Doreen Remsen

Once again, my favorite time of the year has arrived! Most who know me well will knit their brows together and say, "Wait a minute! Didn't you just get through raving about the beauty of winter, with its moments of quiet wonder and biting fury?" Or they will quip, "You always go on and on about autumn! The colors, the leaves, the refreshing winds, the sounds of migrating geese and ducks -how many times did we have to listen to that?" Yes, yes, yes! I admit that I do wax poetic about many aspects of nature and the environment. However, with the return of warm breezes and the vernal equinox comes an event that, if given a chance, makes calm, mild-mannered, sane, "let's-go-to-one-place-for-an-hour" bird-watchers turn into frenzied, competitive, "I-know-we-can-hit-22-hot-spotsthis-year-if-we-give-up-sleep" mad birders... THE BIRDATHON!

For me, there was a gradual evolution into this blood-pumping, adrenaline-gushing, wildly alive Birdathoner. The first years, when the Birdathon was on a Saturday and started at the somewhat late hour of 7 A.M., I was wiped out by 1 P.M., though the rest of the team carried on till dusk. Hot, tired, and muttering that I was the only sensible one, I'd hit the shower, grab a lemonade, and head out to the yard to "meditate" (sleep) in the sun. As our teams grew, along with the numbers of birds we were finding, so did my endurance, thanks to ample doses of encouragement, good-natured ribbing, Advil, and BenGay. Having generous sponsors proved to be an added incentive to stay out there to find "just one more bird than last year" (Joe Grupp's war chant).

Finding that elusive "one more bird than last year" has the team leaders plotting already. They begin by taking out the stack of checklists and locations from all the previous Birdathons. This includes places, numbers of species seen over the years, core birds, bonus birds, time spent at the locations, and average of birds-per-hour seen, and then they finalize their strategic plans for this year. All

NEXT MEETING

Tom Torma

DATE:

PLACE:

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

TIME: 8:00

B:00 p.m. 🕗

Freeport Memorial Library

144 W. Merrick Rd. (at S. Ocean Ave.)

SPEAKER: Barbara Levine

TOPIC: Audubon Ecology Camp In Maine

Tony Bennett might have left his heart in San Francisco, but this month's speaker says she left hers on Hog Island, "that magical place with a funny name." Hog Island is located just about one half-mile from the mainland, in Muscongus Bay. Established in 1936 as a pioneering experiment in nature education for teachers and other adult leaders, the Maine camp occupies the 333 acre Todd Wildlife Sanctuary, a wild paradise that seems millions of miles away from the rest of the world. On the five minute boat ride across, you might be treated to the sight of harbor seals frolicking between the hundreds of colorful lobster pots. In addition to seeing the Parula, Nashville, and Magnolia Warblers in early summer, boat trips are taken to study the Common Eider, Black Guillemot, Osprey, and Atlantic Puffin. A pair of Bald Eagles chose Hog Island for their nesting spot when Barbara was there. You might even be lucky enough to see the heavenly show of the aurora borealis some evenings. Learning about the natural beauty of the Maine coast from knowledgeable, enthusiastic instructors is exhilarating.

At our March meeting, over 110 people enjoyed a program on Costa Rica; join us this month for a slide show about Audubon's not-so-far-away Maine Camp. Next year, apply for SSAS's annual youth scholarship or biennial (this summer's was to Connecticut) adult scholarship to Hog Island, which cover all expenses except transportation.

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

of this occurs in the utmost secrecy — the C.I.A. would be envious! And let me tell you, time is a major factor. You hear reminders of it throughout the Birdathon. For example, we ran into Lyman Langdon/North Shore Audubon at Muttontown Preserve. It's always fun bumping into other teams. You compare notes, moan over the bird you just missed, and give tips on where to find that Blue-winged Warbler nest. Then suddenly a voice booms, "WE ARE RUNNING THREE MINUTES AND THIRTY TWO SECONDS BEHIND LAST YEAR! WE HAVE TO PICK UP THE PACE!" A more subtle form of timekeeping is when at Jamaica Bay I was astounded by the number and variety of warblers literally dripping off the trees. I was admiring the Worm-eating Warbler pointed out by Jim and when I lowered my binoculars to ask a question, I found myself alone on the trail!

You know this event is thoroughly in your blood when you will run into that oozy, iridescent mud to see the Whip-poor-will for a brief moment before he takes off. Or when you have just arrived in the parking lot, opened your iced tea, and enjoyed a bite of a sandwich when someone yells, "THERE IS A COMMON NIGHTHAWK SLEEPING IN THE SAPLING!," and your lunch becomes bird food as you run to the sapling. Or, as Jonathan did last year, the very first time we had to use our rain date, go out in the rain anyway and later say, "but it really wasn't raining that hard!" Or driving the twisting, dark (and I do mean dark!) roads of the North Shore to arrive at a preserve, wait while the gate is unlocked, and have a caravan of cars directed in by waving flashlight like at a drive-in movie theater. The feature presentation? Eastern Screech Owl.

It is my favorite time of year, and we all have memories that will last a lifetime. You don't have to take my word for it. Ask any of the team captains... if you can find them. SIXTY FIVE DAYS AND COUNTING!!!

On **Sunday, April 11th**, beginning at 1 P.M., SSAS will have its annual spring cleanup at Brookside Preserve. Brookside is a 20 acre freshwater wetland, woodland, and upland area owned by Nassau County and managed (and rescued from oblivion) by SSAS. With help from a state grant, we have published a trail guide, educational freshwater wetland guide, and video; we continue to add plantings for wildlife. An Eagle Scout candidate plans to add benches to Brookside in time for the cleanup.

The Preserve is located on the Freeport-Baldwin border, along Milburn Creek; park at the main entrance on Brookside Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway (turn north at the traffic light that's just east of Freeport High School). Bring gloves, rakes, bags, and friends of all ages.

WEB PAGE www.audubon.org/chapter/ny/southshore

SSAS TWELFTH ANNUAL BIRDATHON!

James Remsen, Jr.

This year, SSAS will conduct its twelfth annual Birdathon. SSAS raises funds through the Birdathon by having members get cash pledges for each species of bird identified during a 24-hour period in May, when the spring migration is at its height. This year, everyone who brings even one pledge will be entered in a drawing for some spectacular prizes (see the March *Skimmer* for full details).

Mark the dates on your calendar — **Friday, May 7th** at 5:00 P.M. until **Saturday, May 8th** at 5:00 P.M. (a week later if it rains on Saturday) — and join one of our intrepid leaders (or go it alone, in which case you choose the turf). Our schedule of starting places and leaders is as follows:

Friday, May 7th at 5:00 P.M.: Meet leader TBA at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore; Paul Butkereit at Jones Beach's Coast Guard Station; or Joe Grupp and Jim Remsen at Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot).

Saturday, May 8th: Meet Elliott Kutner at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge at 8:00 A.M.; Paul Butkereit at the Ryan Building behind Mercy Hospital at 5:30 A.M.; or Jim and Doreen Remsen at Mill Pond, Merrick Road, Wantagh/Bellmore at 5:45 A.M. If you need directions to any meeting place, call me. Also please try to notify the team leader of your choice so that they will know how many people to expect (all phone numbers are on the back page of the Skimmer).

If you aren't going with a team, why not try your own Birdathon? Do a variation on the usual theme of seeing as many species as you can during the count period. Use your imagination. Limit yourself to your backyard, a favorite park or preserve, or even a "couch potato" Birdathon. (For this one, you count as many bird species as you can on television during the 24 hours. Yes, people have really done it, but we suggest you make it clear to your sponsors if you decide to give it a try!)

Sponsors are the heart of the Birdathon. These are people who agree to give you 25¢, \$1, or any amount for each species you see (they may also give you a flat pledge not based on number of species). Ask anyone you know, and don't forget yourself!

Pledges are due no later than Monday, June 7th to be eligible for prizes, which will be awarded at our annual dinner the next night. You can submit them to me on bird walks, or mail them to me (3264 Park Avenue, Oceanside NY 11572). If you have questions, call me after 8 P.M. or speak to me at meetings or bird walks. If you need extra pledge forms, I can supply them, too. Let's make the twelfth Birdathon special by raising more funds than ever! Good luck!

JOIN THE FUN AT SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON'S POST-BIRDATHON DINNER!!

Doreen Remsen

After the excitement, thrills, and nonstop action of our twelfth Birdathon, we hope you will come join your fellow team members for some good food, good fun, and good company as we share our stories of "the one that got away" and the ones that didn't at our annual Birdathon dinner! It is an opportunity for all of us to compile our chapter's total-species-seen list and relax as we celebrate what is sure to be another successful year for South Shore and the Audubon causes we support. If you are an independent Birdathoner, a backyard Birdathoner, or a sponsor of the Birdathon, please consider joining us!

When? Where? At the conclusion of the Birdathon on Saturday, May 8th at 5 P.M. (or Saturday, May 15th, the rain date), by popular demand, we will make our way to The Super Buffet on Merrick Road in Rockville Centre, located behind the Twin Theaters. The Super Buffet is an all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet and they can accommodate a good number of us at their family-style tables. Seating is on a first-come basis (the lines can be long!), so if you are the first to arrive, save a family table up front and watch for our "migratory wave" to pass through! The cost for the buffet is \$9.95. Hope to see you there!

Jackie Richichi

We are pleased to welcome this month's large group of new members; spring is here, a great time to enjoy the outdoors while meeting fellow South Shore Auduboners and learning something about Long Island's natural world.

To receive an application for membership in National Audubon Society and SSAS, please call our Membership Chairperson, Jackie Richichi, at 691-1855. Membership for the first year costs \$20; \$15 for students and senior citizens.

Baldwin	Charles Gifford, James Gillette, Thomas Rohrer
Bellmore	Doris Dennis, Harriet A. Heuser,
4	Coby J. Lichter, Margaret
7 C	Mc Innis, Joseph Pearsall,
	Jackie Tabacco
Cedarhurst	Ruth Greenwald
East Meadow	Susan Ahearn, Deirdre Bendit,
	Myrtle Bergeman, Robert
	Gambitsky, Michael Mc Carthy
East Rockaway	
Farmingdale	Joseph H. Bannon, C. Delalio
Floral Park	
	Clirio Pellegrini, Kathleen Quini

William Wallace

Franklin Square Judith H. Wachtel,

Hauswirth, Jitka M. V. (?), Jim Pratt, R. D. Zinke Hempstead Theodore W. Jackson Hewlett Morton Haves Hicksville Anne Browning Inwood Juan Perez Island Park Michelle Phillips Levittown Mr. & Mrs. Oswald Brett, Hedy Esposito, Victoria A. Linzie, **Ethel Sailor** Long Beach Jennifer Chimienti, Lynn Feinson, Eileen Hennessey, Abraham Kirschenbaum, Dorothy L. Thoung Lynbrook The Kaplans, Alma Aquinto Tavco Malverne Mr. & Mrs. Harold Olson, Francis X. Tully Massapequa Joe Ademski, Ann Dinstell, Anne Mehlinger. Diane Schultz Massapequa Park Ernest Begun, Harry Volz Merrick Douglas Thomas Oceanside Sari Golds, Jessica J. Kaufman, Terrie Zinkofsky Old Bethpage Albert J. Hilber, Joseph Mehlman Plainview Stanley E. Handman Rockville Centre...... Anne Rothman, Earl H. Shatzkin Seaford Coreen Gelber Stony Brook Joseph A. Vanderbilt Uniondale June Sada Valley Stream...... Robert Coyle, S. Ferranti, Ruth Green Wantagh Eleanor Kohler, Margaret Shaw, V. Thruston West Hempstead Mollie C. Huang Woodmere...... Verne Getreu, Lauren Heid **** SSAS Mission Statement — The mission of South Shore Audubon Society is to promote environmental education, and preserve and restore our environment, through responsible activism, for the benefit of both people and wildlife. SSAS Post Office Statement — South Shore Skimmer is published monthly from September through December and February through June by South Shore Audubon Society,

P.O. Box 31, Freeport, NY 11520-0031.

Freeport John E. Davies, Arthur Haganes,

Garden City Kathleen Derrico, Doris

R. Heiman, Sylvia Lesser,

Lorraine Rosenberg, Linda Siani

CONSERVATION REPORT Population and Diversity

Betty Borowsky

We hear a great deal about biodiversity these days. Biodiversity has become an ecological catchword for several reasons.

First, there are undoubtedly many as-yet-unidentified natural compounds that would be useful for us. There may be substances that have not been tested in species that we already know about, and there may be species with useful substances that we haven't even discovered yet. There may be drugs that can cure diseases, or perhaps there are nontoxic but effective pesticides or other substances that await scientific discovery.

From an ecological standpoint, biodiversity is absolutely critical because of the interdependency of species. For example: if one species relies on another as a food source, or as a specific nesting site, and this other species is eradicated, well, then the first one will be also. And, of course, the reduction of biodiversity generally occurs because of encroachments into undeveloped locations, so the loss of biodiversity is an indicator of a reduction in open space.

All of these ideas are well-described in a new, arresting exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History called *The Hall of Biodiversity*. It is a crowded exhibit; overwhelming, really, because of all its detailed information. It is meant to impress us with the richness of the diversity of living things, and to stimulate our desire to protect it. The exhibit is a wake-up call. We are destroying the rain forest and other natural habitats at an unprecedented rate, and we are eliminating some species before we even get a chance to know they exist.

On one wall, the entire spectrum of living things, from viruses to humans, is depicted; another area has a life-sized panorama of a typical rain forest; and a case in between all this contains examples (replicas I hope) of endangered species. And tucked way in the back, away from the main flow of visitors through the room, on the last monitor in a bank of monitors mounted on a wall, there is a very special video.

That video should be the first thing you see when you walk into the hall—the video starts with a picture of a map of the world on a blue background, with a white dot for every 1,000,000 people at every location where there were that many people in the year One. You can see that the greatest number of people were in equatorial Africa, in Southeast Asia, and arrayed around the Mediterranean at that time. Then the video begins to scroll forward through time, adding a new dot to each place when and where an additional 1,000,000 people had accumulated (the time between 1 A.D. and 2025 is compressed into three minutes or so). The pace of the addition of dots is leisurely at first, but then dots begin to appear with greater and greater speed as the video progresses. Soon whole areas of the

earth are filled with dots, and by the end of the video most of the land of the planet is white. The human population of

the earth is expected to reach six billion souls by October 1999. Is it any wonder that we're pressed for resources to sustain all of these people? How can we expect someone who has little to eat to refrain from cutting down the rain



forest to plant crops or from poaching in protected areas?

It is extremely important that we understand the direct relationship between population growth and the loss of biodiversity. We need to craft a global strategy for containing population growth while protecting what remains of our undeveloped environments. We owe this to our children.

Editor's Note: National Audubon's Population & Habitat Campaign's free bimonthly newsletter is available from them at 3019 28th St., Boulder, CO 80301; if you have Internet access, send e-mail to population@audubon.org or browse their web site, http://www.earthnet.net/~popnet.

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NOMINATIONS FOR 1999-2000 OFFICERS

At South Shore Audubon Society's general meeting on May 11th, 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, chaired by Dolores Rogers and including Jim Remsen and Bill Hollweg, has recommended the following candidates:

President — Jonathan Staller
Vice President — Toby Announced
Treasurer — Nancy Frame
Recording Secretary — Christine Schmitt
Corresponding Secretary — Alice Blaustein
Director (to June 2002) — Sandy Brenner
Director (to June 2002) — Scott Oglesby

EARTH DAY 1999 AT TACKAPAUSHA MUSEUM AND PRESERVE

Doreen Remsen

The Nassau County Department of Parks and Recreation will celebrate Earth Day on Sunday, April 18th from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. on the grounds of Tackapausha Museum and Preserve on Washington Avenue in Seaford. South Shore Audubon is the proud sponsor of this event and will be joined by other environmental and community groups in an ongoing effort to educate and increase of the planet. Weather awareness to the needs permitting, there will be outdoor events including Native American dancers and nature walks through the preserve. This would be a wonderful opportunity to pack a bag lunch and picnic outdoors under the trees and simply enjoy the return of spring to our world! Inside the museum, you can catch a nature film and visit with the wildlife. We hope to see many of you there! The Earth Day event is free; however, there is a nominal charge for admission to the museum: \$1 for adults, 50¢ for children.

Attention South Shore Auduboners: Once again, your help is needed to make this event a success. Museum Curator Carole Ryder has a commitment until noon that day, so our help setting up and coordinating the participating groups is greatly needed and appreciated. We also need you for hosting our tables and greeting the public when the event begins. We will be meeting in the parking lot at 9:45 a.m. to begin setup. Any time you have to share with us and the community that day is most welcome! As always, thank you!!

LAST WEEKEND IN MARCH

In case you don't have last month's *Skimmer* and it isn't April yet, here's a couple of things we're doing:

Morton National Wildlife Refuge. On Saturday the 27th at 11 A.M. we'll be hand-feeding chickadees and titmice while birding in this 187-acre refuge. Afterwards, we'll head into Sag Harbor to do some less-natural sightseeing. For directions and details, contact leader Joanne Del Prete (433-0739 evenings, jdp4@erols.com) or Michael Sperling (541-0805 evenings before Friday, mssperling @compuserve.com; I'll be upstate at an Audubon Council of New York State meeting that weekend).

Extra Birdseed Sale in Lynbrook: On Sunday the 28th, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M., we'll be selling leftovers from our last sale. Call Paul Butkereit at 599-0395 before arriving at the shop (Poodles in Blue, 10 Lincoln Place) to confirm that we still have 20 & 40 lb Premium Wild Bird Seed Mix (\$6.75 & \$12.75), 20 & 40 lb Special Mix (\$6.90 & \$13.00, no corn and 1/3 sunflower), 25 lb Sunflower Chips (\$17.75, no shells), 25 lb Peanut Splits (\$17.75), and 12 oz Pine Tree Peanut Suet Cake (\$1.75).

BIRD TRIVIA #3

Jonathan Staller

People tell me the questions are too tough. I'll make them a little easier but I need your feedback. Tell me what you think; are the questions too hard or not? Thanks.

- 1 How does a woodpecker reach its prey once a hole has been made in a tree?
 - What species of hummingbird is the smallest?
- 3 Where does the Northern Shrike keep its food supply until it is ready to ingest it?
 - What purpose is served by the yolk of a bird's egg?
 - (5) What color are a peacock's feathers?

refraction and reflection of light on the feathers.

ЛĹ

- period.

 S Brown; we see multicolored patterns caused by the
- thorns, and even fences.

 Nourishment for the embryo during its incubation
- (2) The Bee Hummingbird (see February's Skimmer).

 (3) It impales its prey of mice and insects on twigs,
- (1) With its tongue, which is long and has small barbs on

OUR ANNUAL DINNER

South Shore Audubon's 28th annual dinner will be held at Pompei Restaurant and Catering in West Hempstead (as usual) on **Tuesday**, **June 8th**, beginning with a cocktail hour at 6:30. Save the date for this always well-attended event (last year there were 119 of us). Cost is \$25 including hot hors d'oeuvres and a complete dinner. Smoking will be prohibited in the Banquet Room; please see next month's *Skimmer* for the registration form.



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THE BATTLE OF BETHPAGE Notes from the Front Lines

Michael Goldsmith

Often overlooked by nature enthusiasts, Bethpage State Park is a natural gem located in our own backyard. It is also a precious area of green that came perilously close to being lost forever. Even now, representatives of SSAS and other organizations are hard at work to preserve the integrity of this major environmental resource.

For those of you who tuned in late, the abbreviated history in Chapter I will bring you up to speed on the continuing saga of Bethpage State Park (BSP).

Chapter I: The Battle of Bethpage. The five golf courses at BSP constitute the biggest public golf complex in the country and include the world-class Black Course, site of the 2002 U.S. Open.

The 315 undeveloped acres surrounding the picnic area and softball fields is perhaps the largest wooded area in Nassau County and, as the State would later discover, heavily frequented by hikers, bikers, joggers, horseback riders, birders, picnickers, and other recreationists.

In 1996, the State Parks Department proposed the construction of a 130 acre sixth golf course in the wooded area. A coalition of 11 environmental and user groups organized to oppose the plan. The group came to be known as the Bethpage Trail Users Coalition (BTUC). The Battle of Bethpage had begun.

Although technically not permitted by the State, mountain bikers are arguably the biggest users of the Park. Emily Kelly of CLIMB (Concerned L.I. Mountain Bikers) co-chaired the BTUC. Representing the L.I. Greenbelt Conference was Richard Schary. Jerry Licht appeared on behalf of the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). After then-president Carole Adams sustained a knee injury. I represented SSAS.

The BTUC lobbied the Parks Dept. and influential State politicians, and waged a public relations campaign that received a fair amount of local media attention.

On April 27, 1997, the BTUC planned to hold a large "Day of Support" rally at the Park to oppose the sixth golf course. On April 25th, surprised by the strong and well-organized opposition, Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro officially killed the plan. The protest rally turned out to be a victory celebration.

Chapter II: To the Victors, the Spoils. Jerry Licht and Emily Kelly proposed that the Bethpage user groups, concerned environmental organizations, and local citizens' associations develop a management plan for the Park to present to the State. The State agreed, and hence was born the Bethpage Trail Users Committee (BTUC again).

What was not understood by many of the participants (including yours truly) was that formulating a management plan for the heavily frequented wooded area, involving so many conflicting user and environmental groups, was unprecedented in NY.

At the first meeting, in June 1997, each group presented its "wish list." For example, CLIMB wanted an 8–10 mile continuous mountain bike trail. The State wanted an interpretive nature trail. Greenbelt wanted a dedicated hiking trail through the Park. On behalf of SSAS, I asked that any management plan be environmentally sensitive to the flora and fauna, prevent environmental degradation, restore damaged areas and processes, and maintain desired natural communities, populations, and processes.

However, before anything could be done, the area needed to be surveyed. Emily Kelly volunteered to prepare a map of the existing terrain. After making my impassioned tree-hugging plea, I was volunteered by everyone else to prepare an environmental inventory.

Realizing that I was totally ill-equipped for such an ambitious project, I immediately sought help. My wife Lorraine, with her M.A. in Environmental Science, would help to catalogue the birds; however, we still needed someone who could identify the diverse plant communi-

ties in the Park. Our good friend, the late and sorely missed Mary Richard of National Audubon's Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay, after chuckling over my plight, suggested I contact Dave Kunstler, a wildlife manager with

the NYC Parks and Recreation Department, and holder of an M.A. in Biology. Dave turned out to be a walking field guide with a wry sense of humor and provided reams of invaluable data for the project.

Emily's map confirmed what our field work observed — the Park has some high-quality environmental areas but is also being carved up by a huge amount of trails that spiderweb from the main trails. The user groups got together with Emily and picked out the trails each group wanted, and a new map was prepared. The habitat map that Dave prepared was then overlaid upon the proposed trails map. The State, after some delay, produced a new map combining the two.

While this proposed plan was a vast improvement over the chaos and destruction that currently prevailed, some of the user trails cut through sensitive, globally rare plant communities identified by Dave and fostered forest fragmentation identified by Lorraine.

As our environmental inventory showed, BSP has the only portion of the pine barrens located in Nassau County. The oak brush plains mapped out by Dave is ranked by rarity as S1 and G2; this means that it occurs only 1–5 times statewide and 5–20 times globally. Dave also located (and I even found some!) a few dozen blackjack oaks scattered throughout the Park. Although BSP is not a preserve, clearly these natural communities are deserving of protection.

Currently, the BTUC is trying to hammer out a trail map that is acceptable to all the groups. The State, in support of the SSAS position, is finally leaning on groups to abandon their trails in the sensitive areas. The target date for a workable plan is May 1999. Once the plan is submitted to Albany, it will have to go through the lengthy State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process. The State will also have to pass legislation concerning mountain biking.

Many of the groups comprising the BTUC feel that mountain biking is probably one of the Park's more destructive activities. While this may be true, I believe that without the mountain bikers we would now have six golf courses at BSP. Therefore, on behalf of SSAS, Dave, Lorraine, and I will insist that a strict trail enforcement system be devised to keep any environmental damage to a minimum. This will involve signage, policing, education, and the closing of many trails. Also, we will do our best to see to it that the approved trails are monitored for erosion and ecological harm. We will also insist that the plan be reviewed in light of the monitoring data and be subject to revision.

Chapter III: The Empire (State) Strikes Back. Just when you thought it was safe to go into the Park, the concrete pourers announced their return. This time, it's the State Department of Transportation that wants to do the bull-dozing. In a misguided plan to reduce air pollution by encouraging bicycling, DOT proposed constructing a paved bike path through the Park as part of an ill-conceived scheme to link BSP with the Cold Spring Harbor train station (as if anyone commutes from Bethpage to Cold Spring Harbor!).

As noted in previous *Skimmers* (see last month's for who to write to), SSAS opposes the plan. Our chapter has signed onto a coalition of close to a dozen groups being organized by Rich Schary of Greenbelt. SSAS holds that the proposed bikeway provides no environmental benefit whatsoever. The unnamed coalition feels that it makes little sense to destroy one area of the environment to arguably preserve another. There are many less-destructive alternatives to the proposed bike path.

So, as you can see, beyond the beautiful tree-lined facade of BSP there lies quite a bit of controversy. Keep in mind, though, that vigilance and the hard work of many dedicated people was the price of keeping this section of Nassau County green.

ANOTHER THANK-YOU COLUMN

This month's thanks go to the people who collated, folded, stuffed, and sealed this year's SSAS Greening of Long Island letters and envelopes: Kathy Battaglia, hostess Betty Borowsky, Marge Jaeger, Therese Lucas, Doris Pirodsky, and your editor. We didn't have time to stick on the labels, so that was done by unsuspecting attendees of the Brookside Committee meeting a week later; your editor thanks the following for the overabundance of postmeeting helpers: Betsy Gulotta, Judy Hoyer, Linda Pickens, Vince Puglisi, Alvira Serdock, and repeat performers Betty, Marge, Therese, and Doris.



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

Mar. 28	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Apr. 4	Happy Easter & Passover - No Walk
Apr. 11***	Jones Beach West End #2, N.E. corner
Apr. 18	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
Apr. 25	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
May 2	Massapequa Preserve (LIRR N.E. lot)
May 9***	Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

***After these bird walks, everyone's invited to stay for a picnic; bring lunch! On April 11th, after the picnic, please head to Brookside Preserve for the cleanup that begins at 1 P.M. (see page 2) — we need you!

Directions to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge: Southern State Parkway to Belt Parkway to Exit 17 South (Cross Bay Boulevard). Drive four miles, passing through Howard Beach and over Joseph P. Addabbo Bridge; turn right at the Refuge entrance's traffic light and look for dozens of Auduboners in the parking lot.



Explore the coast with the

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

NEW YORK AQUARIUM (Sat., April 17th). A 2-1/2 hour behind-the-scenes tour of this wonderful facility in Coney Island. See walrus, sea otters, seals, sharks, sea turtles, penguins, local fish, and more. Cost: \$15 (\$8 kids).

FIRE ISLAND HIKE (Sat., May 8th). Visit the Sunken Forest during peak warbler migration. Hike the boardwalk trail through the holly maritime forest, dunes, and beach. Bring lunch. Cost: \$20 includes round-trip ferry and guides.

ASSATEAGUE SPRING WEEKEND (May 20-23). Visit Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge and Assateague National Seashore in Virginia. See nesting Bald Eagle and Osprey, wild horses, river otter, etc. Cost: \$260 includes 3 nights at Refuge Motor Inn, 3 evening programs and star watch, marsh boat tour, Safari bus tour, and all-you-can-eat seafood buffet.

JAMAICA BAY SUNSET BOAT CRUISE (Sat., June 5th). Enjoy a calm cruise aboard the "Dorothy B VIII" during peak bird nesting season. See Peregrine Falcon, egrets, herons, ibis, oystercatcher, terns, skimmers, and lots of shorebirds. Learn about the history & ecology of the refuge. Cost: \$35.

For information and free field trip brochure, call/write Don Riepe, (718) 634-6467, 28 West 9th Road, Broad Channel, NY 11693

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South Shore Audubon Society P.O. Box 31 Freeport, NY 11520-0031

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