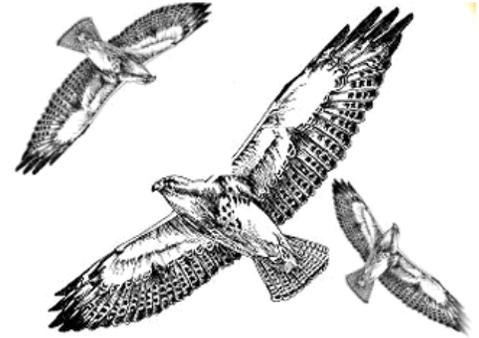


The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



November 2009

Vol. 10 No. 8

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Meetings: PLEASE NOTE that SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, starting at 6:30 pm.. We thank the Library for providing this space at 100 S. Bailey St.

November Meeting—Saving Starlight

by Jim Bricker

"Saving Starlight" will be presented by outdoor lighting expert and activist Mary Lou Tanton from Petoskey. Join us on November 11 at 6:30 pm at the Cheboygan Area Public Library to learn about protecting the night sky. Mary Lou co-founded and chairs the Outdoor Lighting Forum. It offers information to people in Emmet, Charlevoix, Antrim, and Cheboygan Counties about achieving safety objectives with night-sky-friendly lighting. The Forum offers annual awards to individuals, schools, businesses, and communities that install lights that are energy-efficient, cost-effective, and, most importantly, preserve the night sky for the benefit of wildlife and human health. Mary Lou's program will offer some solutions other than dark curtains for anyone bothered by neighbors' lights or city glow that dims the night sky.

Refreshments after the meeting will be provided by Linda Baney and John and Jim Bricker. In addition, we will offer a door prize and a raffle.



Photo of the Inverness Dairy entrance by Kathy Bricker.

The Cheboygan Yacht Club will present a program at the Cheboygan Area Public Library on November 18th at 6:00 pm. Grenetta Thomassey from the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council will present "Great Lakes Protection and Restoration Initiative." This will cover economic and environmental issues for protecting the Great Lakes. Open to the public.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Straits Area Audubon Society is to educate the community, including its children, about conservation and enjoyment of the natural world with emphasis on the local natural communities of wildlife. This will be accomplished through regular seasonal meetings and by sponsoring fieldtrips, classroom studies and field studies.

Jr. Birders of Northern Michigan

by Allison Falldin

SEE-North's new program, Junior Birders of Northern Michigan, began in May 2009. We now have 25 families participating and we continue to grow. We have monthly field trips to great birding spots all over northern Michigan. So far these

young birders have seen over 40 species of bird and have learned about plants, habitats and more along the way.

The Jr. Birder logo was designed by a young birder, Ana Wemigwase. SAAS is happy to co-sponsor Jr. Birders.



Grants Given by SAAS

by Kathy Bricker

Last May, SAAS members voted on how to spend money raised from the Spring Bird Count. We collected the most funds ever, \$561.76.

The SAAS executive committee has decided to make grants to each of the five top topics in proportion to the number of votes they received.

In November, we will award \$150 to the owl banding research of Ed Pike.

We will set aside the following amounts for expenses incurred for:

- Dark-sky friendly lighting education (\$135)
- Field trip leaders for gas money (\$100)
- Field trip bird tally forms and binoculars (\$80)
- Trail and coastal cleanup supplies (\$80)

Thanks to all who supported these ef-

orts. Added donations toward these topics can still be accepted, of course!



Photo of Jr. Birders by Allison Falldin

Photo of a hawk owl by Steve Baker

What You Missed at the October Meeting

by Substitute Secretary Kathy Baker

Did you ever find birds to be deceivers? Evidently someone did because one general name for a group of birds is a dissimulation. Also there are a deceit of lapwings and a charm of finches (subtle deception perhaps?)

How about moody birds like a brood of hens or a dole of doves?

Suspicious behavior? A murmuration of starlings or a muster of storks or a company of parrots. What are they murmuring and mustering about?

And then there is downright nastiness like an unkindness of ravens or a murder of crows.

Maybe the saying should be "Bird with a buddy" instead of only "Swim with a buddy."

Submitted by Alice and Roy McFarland

The rich baritone of Robert Redford enthralled the 52 attendees (34 members and 18 guests) in the pleasant meeting space donated by the Cheboygan Area Public Library. Redford proved a perfect narrator to the film about the proposed Red Rock Canyon Wilderness Area in southern Utah. In fact, in contemplation of the Canyonlands (or maybe Redford?), I closed my eyes a few seconds just to bring the presence closer.

Clayton Daughenbaugh was standing there when I came back to reality. Although not a Redford look-alike, this representative from the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance perfectly testified to the values of wilderness.

Clayton started with democracy. Did you know that the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence 'When in the course of human events...' names nature as a unique feature of the incipient United States, and frequently mentions natural resources? Designated wilderness benefits all of us, keeping the best areas of our nation from becoming the exclusive domain of those with the money to build mansions nearby.

The son of a Methodist minister, Clayton also extolled the spiritual and personal growth experiences awaiting us in wilderness, with Creation unblighted by roads or mines, homes or industry. He pointed out that you don't even need to be there; just knowing that these lands exist can be calming and uplifting. Clayton demonstrated the family values of sharing the beauty of the present and cherishing the future for coming generations by telling of his infant's first steps, taken deep in a Utah canyon.

Of course, we also seek wilderness designation for biological purposes such as preventing the extinction of vulnerable species. Aldo Leopold advises: "To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering." Daughenbaugh told how the cryptobiota (tiny plants adapted to living on the desert floor), help to seal in the red soil. When this growth is killed by vehicular traffic, the soil blows,

already creating 'red snow' in the Rocky Mountains that melts faster, leading to drastic declines in Lake Meade and other sources of drinking water for the southwest. Wilderness would also better safeguard the many cave painting and other archeological sites in southern Utah.

Many attendees knew Utah well, having vacationed at Zion or Bryce Canyon National Parks, hiked the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, or driven the state. All praised its solitude and scenic magnificence, and agreed it warrants additional protection. So, SAAS members voted unanimously (moved by Gary Williams, seconded by Roger Benter) to contact our elected officials both as a chapter and as individuals, to support co-sponsorship of the Red Rock Canyonlands Wilderness Act.

In other business, SAAS members voted unanimously (moved by Jack Kirby, seconded by Nancy Nowitzke), to elect Rosanne Rynerson as treasurer (filling the seat vacated by Nancy Nowitzke) and Amy Durant as secretary (filling the seat vacated by Vickie Lyon). Welcome to these new officers!

Kathy Bricker announced the upcoming Solar Workshop on 10/17 and 10/18 and the Night Sky Festival on 10/23 and 10/24. Steve Baker announced a re-scheduled Owl Banding with Ed Pike on 10/17 and the 10/30 Upper Peninsula waterfowl trip, and solicited trip and hike leaders. Unusual nature sightings included 10,000 turkey vultures seen last week by Bev and Jack Kirby, as the buzzards migrated south across Lake Erie.

Member Dorothy Woosley won the doorprize of the Utah poster, member Doris Buxton won the doorprize of the bird-nest wall hanging, and member Gary Williams won the raffle prize, the book *Sounds and Silence of Birds* by Bridgett Stuttsbury, which was donated by Art and Judy Frock. Thanks for Halloween decorations go to Dorothy Woosley and for the scrumptious treats to Alice MacFarland. Alice asks anyone who can help with future refreshments to call her at 231-597-8173.

Dreaming and Scheming

by Amy Durant

On 10/16/09, SAAS officers and volunteers met to scheme and dream about SAAS's operations and activities this year. Attending part or all of the session from 10 am to 1 pm at the Bricker Cottage on Burt Lake were Marie Bartlett, Jim and Kathy Bricker, Amy Durant, Gloria Cadwalader, Ben Lillie, and Roy and Alice MacFarland. First, we viewed a beautiful duck quilt that the Rivertown Patchworkers have offered SAAS for fundraising purposes. After Alice agreed to organize its raffle, we voted unanimously to accept the quilt.

We then discussed the offer of a feature wildlife film *Lake Superior: Land of the Woodland Drummer* by Tom Sterling as an additional fundraiser. It would be shown at the Cheboygan High School in March, 2010, with an admission charge. Our goal would be an audience of more than 100 people. There might be a daytime presentation at a local school. Kathy will look into how the income from both this and the quilt raffle could promote nature education in the schools. She will report to members at the November meeting so we can decide

whether to accept this offer.

One possible way to spend the income would be organizing an Earth Week to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day on 4/22/10. The group discussed collaborating with other local groups to offer several earth related events during Earth Week. If SAAS members agree to proceed with sponsoring Earth Week, Kathy will convene a planning meeting on 11/13 from 12 to 1:30 at Big Boy Restaurant, Cheboygan.

Please contact me for a full version of the minutes from the Dreaming and Scheming meeting.



Photo of quilt by Roy and Allison MacFarland

Presidential Chirpings

by Kathy Baker

Life and death, light and dark, a cycle of change where one half becomes and is the other half, both in sequence and simultaneously. Jim and I celebrated this June's summer solstice with Ranger Bruce and other new-found friends in the Northwest Territories, gathering on Prelude Lake to bid the sun farewell at midnight. We slept through its 3:30 am rising, although at the nearby country club, golfers played all night long in the famed Midnight Scramble. During the summer, children this far north have no bedtime, running and playing throughout the night, returning home to sleep whenever they get tired during the day.

By lingering on the tundra until late August, we also got to see a dark night sky (sunset 8:30 pm and sunrise 6:30 am). Overhead spread the full glory of the story-filled summer constellations, as well as the Northern Lights, a display that draws tourists to Yellowknife from around the world every winter.

From our campsite on remote Kathe-

wachaga Lake, neither city glow nor barnyard light glare dimmed the beauty. My journal reads: "From 1 to 2 am we enjoyed the most spectacular Aurora Borealis show of a lifetime. Its silver-green radiance covered nearly the entire sky at once, and all of it at times. All the words applied: pulsing, shimmering, flowing, dancing, darting. Banners, curtains, curls, question marks, streaks, swirls, shafts. The display changed constantly, arching high overhead near the North Star then dipping low to hug a horizon. We tried in vain to take pictures, then just reveled in it."

I shiver in remembering, in part because those clear nights brought frigid temperatures. While the aurora tempted me to stay out all night, the tent and warm sleeping bag felt really good afterward!

November's Audubon program, Saving Starlight, could help future Cheboyganites experience more Northern Light displays from here. Please join us to learn how to reclaim the wonders of the night sky.

SAAS on Utah's Red Rock Wilderness

by Kathy Bricker

"So get out there and hunt and fish and mess around with your friends, ramble out yonder and explore the forests, encounter the Griz, climb the mountains, run the rivers, breathe deep of that sweet and lucid air, sit quietly for a while and contemplate the precious stillness, that lovely, mysterious awesome space."

Edward Abbey

Thanks to Judy Vanderhart and Gary Lee Williams for joining me at the October 24 Town Meeting with U.S. Rep. Bart Stupak. Below are excerpts from a letter given to him and then revised by Gary Williams

for U.S. Sen. Carl Levin and U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (we thanked her for already co-sponsoring the bill). We will update you on their responses.

"On behalf of SAAS, I request you to co-sponsor and/or help pass America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (H.R. 1925/S. 799) to preserve vital Utah desert land. Many people from northern Michigan have vacationed in Utah and some know it quite well. Utah boasts famous national parks such as Arches, Zion and Bryce Canyon. The areas around most of these parks come under the Bureau of Land Management. Some of this land qualifies for wilderness designation, including the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument and fragile archeological sites.

Along with safeguarding scenic vistas and endangered species, wilderness designation here would stop off-road vehicular traffic on sensitive soil. Already, erosion has caused "red snow" in the Rocky Mountains, which reduces snowpack and water flow to sources of drinking water for the southwest. We fear to imagine the consequences of not caring for this water supply. Wilderness designation would help prevent and perhaps reverse this water loss.

Designated wilderness benefits all of us, regardless of political party, race or religion. One doesn't even need to travel there or ever plan to go there; just knowing that these lands exist can be uplifting.

The Red Rock bill recently had a favorable hearing in the House. We invite you to join other elected officials from Michigan in co-sponsoring and supporting it."

Photo of Arch Canyon by Vicki Allen



**Membership Application
For
Straits Area Audubon Society**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

Make checks payable to:
Straits Area Audubon Society

Please mail checks to:

Rosanne Rynerson,
Treasurer
10490 E. U.S. 23
Cheboygan, MI 49721

Single Membership: \$12

Family Membership: \$15.00

Kettle Contribution

Due Dates

In order to deliver The Kettle in a timely matter, please submit your photos and articles by the following due dates:

11/22/09	12/27/09	1/24/10
2/21/10	3/22/10	4/26/10

Send your submissions to
saas_kettle@yahoo.com

SAAS thanks Benter Chiropractic for its in-kind donation of the printing of the monthly *Kettle* and hosting of the SAAS website.

Coming Events

Mark your calendars now to be sure you can attend.

12/9/09 Pot Luck and Slide Feast
1/13/10 "Predators! - and our troubled relationships with them" by Glen Mathew, retired DNR

SAAS meetings are held at the Cheboygan Area Public Library.

The scheduling of a meeting or program in the Cheboygan Area Public Library does not in any way constitute an endorsement by the library of the group or organization; its activities; or of the ideas and opinions expressed during the course of meetings or programs.

Straits Area Audubon Society
c/o Rosanne Rynerson
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