



## STAGG HILL GOLF COURSE BLUE BIRD TRAIL

Two years ago I had a call from someone who had assumed the monitoring of the Stagg Hill Golf Course Blue Bird Trail and was not going to continue it! Through some connection with AOK it came to me and I was sure that I could find someone to do it. For two years I have-- me!

This year I have two friends who have volunteered to help. Kevin Fay stepped up, not only does he go along, but also has made many great new Blue Bird boxes that are also successfully hosting Blue Birds! Susan Pusker's monitoring and enthusiasm is so appreciated as well, for her knowledge and interest-- she has hosted Blue Birds before as well.

I have monitored the trail seven times this season. The first two, my wife Carol helped me check them and clean every one of the 28/30 nest boxes. (Possibly last year's storms resulted in two being destroyed—we'll replace them, with Kevin's great assistance!) With much appreciation on my part, Susan Pusker and Kevin Fay joined me a few weeks ago to help monitor the trail. We carried (in the back of the Golf Cart, freely supplied by Stagg Hill Golf Course), new Kevin-built houses. The pictures, taken by Susan Pusker, exhibit Kevin's great contribution! They are now hosting Blue Birds.

As a point of information, 35 Blue Birds have fledged (plus or minus) this season so far and two more nest boxes with eggs again, e.g. one box that had 5 young in it 14 days ago, now has already 1 egg in it for the next clutch.

I have a good Blue Nest Box pattern I will share with all interested in this effort!

*Irvin Hoogbeem (Hoogy@cox.net)*



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



## prairie falcon

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**WARNING,  
SAVE THE DATE**

### Upcoming Events

Jun. 5 - Wildflower Walk, Konza Prairie  
6:30 p.m. (Non FOKP members \$10)

Jun. 6 - Board Meeting 6 p.m.  
Home of Susan Pusker

Jun. 11 - Sat. Morning Birding 8 a.m.  
Meet at Sojourner Truth Park

Jul. 9 - Sat. Morning Birding 8 a.m.  
Meet at Sojourner Truth Park

July 17 - ANNUAL PLANNING MTG.  
Home of Tom & MJ Morgan



## Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

My continuing discussion of the year 1811's claim to fame, beyond its enduring comet and tremendous mid-

continental earthquake, requires a couple more bits of preamble. One is that while Zebulon Pike was having his encounter with Spanish officials in northern Mexico, the activities of Aaron Burr, aiming to transform the western part of the U.S. into a separate inland empire, began to attract premature notice. General James Wilkinson, who was to supply the scheme's troops, reacted by apparently doctoring some documents to indicate his innocence and then exposed Burr. Burr's trial for treason in 1808 resulted in acquittal, for the Constitution narrowly requires two witnesses to certain kinds of overt acts for conviction. Pike, upon his return, was hurried to Washington, but was not called to testify.

The hard, unstable economic conditions, rooted in the difficulties of long distance muscle-powered transport, that had given the scheme its possible prospects remained unchanged in 1809 as Nicholas and Lydia Roosevelt had made their first trip down the Ohio-Mississippi, a scouting expedition on a current-powered, sweep-steered barge. In that case Lydia had been in her first pregnancy, though not nearly so far along, and besides the perils of the rivers and river brigands, they survived at least one occasion with rough company, and made do without the hospitality of some riverside settlers who had been abused by previous travelers, to reach New Orleans in the midst of a yellow fever flare-up. Surviving that, they were in Pittsburgh in 1811 for the building of the *New Orleans*, the first steamboat to try the inland rivers. It was nearly washed away, unfinished, by a rise of the Monongahela, but nonetheless, churning against the wind of wide opinions that steam could never manage anything usefully large against the currents and obstacles of the strong rivers, in December

it was making its maiden voyage, had seen the birth of the Roosevelt's second child at Louisville, then had dared to run the Ohio's rapids there and then encountered the repeating shocks of the great earthquake.

Actually, the noise and shaking of their machinery was such that the water's turbulence was less alarming than the collapsing banks, and the earthly rumbles and cries of confused waterfowl when they stopped to get fuel or for the night. Having moored to an island one night, they had to cut loose their hawser when the island sank. At the torn town of New Madrid, closest to the quake's center, the fifteen aboard had to refuse the pleas of some town survivors to be taken away, for lack of supplies to feed them. As frightened as those residents must have been, it's interesting that they didn't try to force themselves aboard, though who knows what has not been said? It's believed that some Indians believed the boat was the comet come to Earth, enraging the river, and along the Chickasaw Bluffs they had to depend on the endurance of their steam engine to outlast if not "out speed" a swiftly-paddled canoe of Indians, who did not seem to be chasing them with friendly intentions.

We interrupt here for a celestial commercial. If you're shopping the skies this June, Saturn will be on special all night long. And *StarDate* says it will demonstrate that there is another star in Virgo besides Spica by cozying up to Porrima on the 10<sup>th</sup>. You will be able to find Jupiter brightly displaying in the Ares section about three hours before daylight, with the Moon as guest on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Antares will be to the right of the Moon all night the 14<sup>th</sup>, preparing it for a total eclipse the 15<sup>th</sup> which, however, will not be visible from North America. Mars will show a little to the lower left of the Moon the 28<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile summer officially arrives at 12p16 the 21<sup>st</sup>. The Moon will be new the 1st at 4p03 and full that 15th at 3p14.

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The Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society has updated our website (and moved to a new domain - nfhas.org). We have kept most of the old features, and added some new ones - such as the “Bird Blog” where you can post what you’re seeing or ask questions. We hope you like it and find it useful.





# Rescue

Dru Clarke

I visited a former, beloved student of mine—I'll call her T. —who runs an after-school program for latch key kids. Most have worn out their welcome in other facilities, having been labeled with “behavior disorders” - ADHD, autism, Asperger's, other acronyms—but she seems to deal with them just fine. Maybe because she eschews labels, or has an innate, intuitive manner which engages them in a kind of quirky, but effective way. I'd prefer to call them ‘orchid children,’ unique, rare, difficult to rear, but oh, so beautifully bright.

The building where they come together is vast but shabby, but there are computers and books and, not least of all, dogs. The dogs, like the kids, have been rescued; they are damaged, hard to manage, and require great patience and love. One had cigarette burns on its skin and still cowers at the sight of a lit one and the smell of burning tobacco.

The kids respond to them, and the dogs, to them. T. told me that after school she can see the kids coming by their reflections in a building's windows across the street: they run hell bent for leather until they reach the corner of her building, then they screech to a halt and walk sedately and quietly inside: they respect the dogs' state of mind.

One child got into trouble – sort of – by taking a meandering journey home and ended up in a nearby creek. The parent was not too happy about this, probably because she was scared, and I assume the misdeed was dealt with sternly, but T. smiled as she told me about it. While creek walking can be risky if done alone, navigating a shallow winding stream with someone else can be a exhilarating cruise into creation, especially if you are in middle childhood (ages six through about twelve) or an adult who never outgrew that magical time in life. And, if you know something about what you find hiding under pebbles in a riffle or what might have burrowed in that

muddy bank, you can make that walk a memorable educational experience as well as a rich sensory one. Recently, while I was acting as a docent for a gangly group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders, one of the kids ‘discovered’ some tiny snail-shaped masses of sand grains glued to a slimy rock in Kings Creek, the major waterway on Konza Prairie. Contrary to what they looked like, they were actually the cases of a kind of caddis fly larvae: other cases can be made of bits of plant detritus, twigs, or larger grains arranged in tubular shapes. The kids were awestruck: Their mouths hung open and their eyes were wide and bright. And they launched themselves right back into the creek to discover other treasures that lay hidden under the clear water. For me, when I was their age, these creek walks were transformative events that helped shape my grownup love of water, especially when it is running.

After my visit with T., I came home and rummaged through books, finding some I could donate to her library ( those that never get read go to a used book store where they get credit for new ones). I found some with nature as the theme and I hope, fingers crossed, that some might resonate with her charges.

Her other work involves training search and rescue (and sometimes recover) dogs. There was not enough time that day to listen to any of these heart-rending stories, but it made me all the more fervent in believing that we need to create opportunities for ‘rescuing’ all of our children while they are alive and growing, while they are making the world their own, before it is too late for them, for us, for the world. All of us who have an interest in something of the natural world – whether it is birds, streams, wildflowers, or insects– can share that with a child, and it may be the greatest gift you could ever give.

© Dru Clarke 5/11

## Take note



### June Warning!!

We have had no response for a volunteer to take over the Bird Seed Sale since announcing that Annie Baker has “retired.” **If no one comes forward, we will be forced to suspend selling birdseed this coming fall and winter.**

### SAVE THE DATE!!

Our annual planning meeting will be held **July 17<sup>th</sup>** beginning at 4 p.m, followed by a potluck. The meeting/potluck will be at the home of Tom and MJ Morgan, 1440 Beechwood Terrace, Manhattan, KS. Please bring a snack or treat.

**ALERT** - Clean Air Act in Danger – contact your congressman NOW, see back page for phone numbers and email addresses.

E-Newsletter: If you wish to opt out of the “paper” Prairie Falcon newsletter and get it on-line as a pdf - send your name and email address to Jacques Staats - [staats@wildblue.net](mailto:staats@wildblue.net)





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Membership Information: Introductory memberships - \$20/yr., then basic, renewal membership is \$35/yr. When you join the National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. You will receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the Prairie Falcon newsletter. New membership applications should be sent to National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership renewals are also handled by the National Audubon Society. Questions about membership? Call 1-800-274-4201 or email the National Audubon Society [join@audubon.org](mailto:join@audubon.org). Website is [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

Subscription Information: If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in NFHAS local activities, you may subscribe to the Prairie Falcon newsletter for \$15/yr. Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, and mail to: Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan, KS, 66502-1932

RARE BIRD HOTLINE: For information on Kansas Birds, subscribe to the Kansas Bird Listserve. Send this message <subscribe KSBIRD-L> to <[list\\_serve@ksu.edu](mailto:list_serve@ksu.edu)> and join in the discussions.

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