

GULF COAST OIL SPILL
OCT. 20, 6 P.M. MANHATTAN PUBLIC LIBRARY AUDITORIUM



This month's program will be presented by Ellen Welti, leader of a group of students from KSU's Students for Environmental Action (SEA) that went to coastal Louisiana last June in hopes of volunteering to help with clean-up efforts for the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society sponsored this effort. A documentary will be shown about the group's trip which will be followed by a discussion centered on the role of different agencies (corporate, governmental, and non-profit) in the clean-up effort, and their effectiveness. SEA was not able to participate directly in oil spill clean-up and this presentation will explain why in hopes of educating our community about the politics behind the spill.

NORTHERN Flint Hills Audubon Society,
 P.O. Box 1972, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1972



PRAIRIE FALCON

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Upcoming EVENTS:

OCT. 2 - BirdSEED PICKUP UFM PARKING, 9-12N

OCT. 2 - GARAGE SALE - 1646 LARAMIE

OCT. 4 - BOARD MEETING 6:00 p.m.

TOM & MJ MORGAN HOME

OCT. 9 - SATURDAY BIRDING,

MEET AT SOJOURNER TRUTH PARK, 8 A.M.

OCT. 20 - Gulf Oil Spill 6 p.m.

MANHATTAN PUBLIC LIBRARY AUDITORIUM

OCT. 23-24 - SPOOKTACULAR SUNSET ZOO.12-5p.m.

OCT. 29 - BirdSEED ORDER deadline

NOV. 1 - BOARD MEETING

NOV. 13 - BirdSEED PICKUP UFM parking lot, 9-12N

NOV. 16- PROGRAM by WALTER DODDS



SKYLIGHT PLUS

PETE COHEN

Page 14 of June 19th's Science News contained a brief report on some research concerning a behavior of African topi antelopes that I believe could, if

pursued further, perhaps be of broader interest. It seems that female topi "are sexually receptive for one day only"—I presume per year, and not all on the same day—and are inclined to spend their day "visiting several males." And those males respond by striking the same pose and uttering the same warning snorts as they do when sensing the approach of some feared predator. Each male's purpose, and, I gather, his sometime result, is that females are conned into keeping close to him rather than risk wandering off alone to another.

Since the species is apparently not endangered, it would follow that such behavior either contributes to the species' success or at least doesn't materially harm it. The question then arises as to whether the posing males actually become—even if unintentionally—more alert, or self-absorbedly less.

The answer to this would be important because it would seem that, as long as they were surviving, the more talented posers would spread their genes the widest. The next question would be: to whom? Logically the brighter females would catch on to the game the quickest. The brightest of the bright might then make their own careful danger assessment, as the duller females would remain longest in thrall. Those in the mid-range would more likely wander off at random, stirred either by boredom or another male who might be intriguing for other reasons—to the occasional benefit of any predator that might actually be lurking. Thus, while it seems that a correlation of males' posing talent with their breeding season survival, if further correlated with data on the intellectual vigor of the females with whom they mate the most, would not likely provide any palpable new method for energy production, nor the cure for any disease, it could nonetheless provide some useful insight into the structure of humanity's future, for it seems that, with ever more and faster communication,

ever more members of our species have been adopting the male toplan tactic.

There is deception in the night air above us as well, for, as has been noted, those lights seeming to so cheerfully twinkle are, up closer are seething fulminations. And their steadily, dependably gently shifting patterns do not hint that there amid them (as also I think I've mentioned) the asteroid that's been given the name of Apoptis (translation: Death). The latest I've read is that it's still on a trajectory for a relatively near Earth experience in 2029, and if it then passes through a certain invisible "keyhole" in space, it can be expected to return in 2036 to tour the Santa Barbara area. The tour offers to be nearly instantaneous, and for anyone choosing to be present—to quote 1970s comedian Tom Lehrer, who was talking about the threat of nuclear missiles—the party would be "come as you are."

There are, so I've read, people working on a non-reception committee, should the need occur. Meanwhile one might as well take time to view the twinkles as well to smell the flowers. And basically it'll take just one finger to keep count of the planets. For at-your-convenience viewing, Jupiter continues to be outranked only by the Moon. For the other wanderers you have to be ready as the first few nights fall. And so *StarDate* provides a Moon-guided tour of this month's darkneses.

On the 4th, Leo's bright star Regulus is to the Moon's lower left at dawn. Just possibly on the 9th at our latitude Venus and Mars will be visible lingering to the Moon's lower right and upper right, respectively, as darkness comes. On the tenth, Mars shifts to the Moon's lower right with Scorpio's Antares equidistant to the Moon's upper, the reddish planet and the reddish star perhaps looking like reflections of each other. On the 11th is to the Moon's lower right, sans reflection.

On the 19th and 20th the giant planet Jupiter appears David-sized, battling it out at close quarters with the Goliath-sized Moon for brightness honors, but Jupiter has no slingshot. On the 25th Taurus' red eye Aldebaran is to the Moon's lower right, after the Moon has competed with the Orionid meteor shower on the 21st. It will be new the 7th at 1p44, full the 22nd at 8p37.

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PLUM(B)* CRAZY DRU CLARKE



One thing about getting older is that you tend to exhibit more patience: allow more wait time for yourself and others to formulate a thoughtful response; stay still longer, waiting for that elusive bird to reappear on a more clearly sighted limb; find other things to do to pass the time while seasons pass, especially from spring's early blossoming to late summer fruit, September time, when the wild plums are finally ripe.

Thickets of wild plum abound in the shrubby fringes of the Flint Hills prairie, and several are within walking distance of our cottage. Our closest thicket was in jeopardy this summer when our electric company came in to replace our utility poles: they wanted to put two of them right where our plum patch struggled to survive. The other thing about getting older is that you are less reluctant to be reticent about those things you care deeply about. I firmly told the utility guys that they would have to figure out a way to put in the poles without sacrificing our plum trees. I retreated inside, fingers crossed in the hope that they would not regard me as an eccentric and would acquiesce in accord with my caveat. Three plum trees flank one pole while the other nuzzles up against the second. How they managed to pull off such a delicate operation rivals the capping of the blown-out Deepwater Horizon.

Other species of plum - sandhill, Chickasaw, wild goose - can be found wild in the state and eco-region, but the most common and the one we have here is *Prunus americana*, the wild plum or American plum. The size of shooter marbles, each plum's smooth roundness accentuates its rosy, sometimes orangish hue, softened by a dusty "bloom" on the firm skin. Easy to pick, once you negotiate the prickly branches, the ripest fall easily from the tree, while those reluctant to drop come loose with a slight tug. The trees are more shrub than tree in height, so one can easily harvest all of the plums from each tree with little effort, but it is more satisfying to leave

a few fruits for wild life. There must be thickets of plum I have not discovered as, while walking on our dirt road, I have found large rust-colored piles of scat (6 - 8" in diameter and 4- 6" high) filled with plum stones. Deer, we know, have plucked plums from one thicket: their hoof prints and trodden grass all around offer evidence.

I picked enough this year to "stew" two big pots of plum, and I usually make a cobbler or some jam, but this year I thought I'd try jelly. I managed to get enough juice after squeezing pits out of the mushy, slimy pink pulp to make a batch. I merely poured off the juice and did not strain it in cheesecloth, as they tell you to, so I thought as long as I don't "gift" it, a cloudy product would do for our personal consumption. The part in the recipe about allowing it to reach a rapid, rolling boil I wasn't quite prepared for, and about two cups of hot sugary juice poured over the lip of the pot and oozed down through my stove. With some help, I managed to clean up the unit and the well on the stove top, but I knew I hadn't gotten all of the spill. Instead of seven jars



of jelly, I ended up with five, BUT after a day, it had set beautifully, and this morning, we had it lathered on buttered toast. The color alone made it a delight. And it is not cloudy!

So, it wasn't exactly a "plum job" as there is one problem remaining: a pretty puddle still appears daily under the edge of the stove. But, as I have learned patience, eventually it will all have been sopped up. (My husband said brightly that when we bake in the stove oven this winter the kitchen will fill with a pleasant fruity fragrance. Cute.) But, I smile each time I pass those brand, spanking- new utility poles in the middle of our plum thicket.

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OUTLIERS: THE STORY OF SUCCESS BOOK REVIEW: DAVE REDMON

When things are tough, I often go biking, sailing, paddling or hiking to soak in the solace of nature. After reading Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers: The Story of Success* (Little, Brown & Co., 2008), I think I understand more about why I've spent so much time outdoors—often by myself.

Gladwell, who's also written *Blink* and *The Tipping Point*, asks why some people succeed far more than others. Like any good read, *Outliers* raises a number of disturbing questions. What follows is part book review, part personal reflection.

Gladwell defines an "outlier" as 1) "something that is situated away from or classed differently from a main or related body" and 2) a statistical observation that is markedly different in value from the others of the sample." The book's thesis is that despite IQ and ambition, if a student at an early age does not gain from family, schooling or the immediate community the know-how to rightfully inquire into issues that matter to him or her, odds are that individual will not live up to his/her potential and may become highly frustrated, perhaps even cynical. He suggests that the "success" of outliers is measured by a combination of two yardsticks—how the world judges their effectiveness and how they assess themselves while striving for self realization or self actualization.

The author tells story after story of comparative success and self realization—including the tale of a genius whose work has languished in obscurity because he's spurned a number of opportunities for assistance. Despite myths of individualism to the contrary, Gladwell argues that success is often influenced first by the achievement of 10,000 hours of practice in one's area of interest, but also by one's family, birthplace and even birth date—factors that are often not apparent. Many whose story he tells are well known figures such as the Beatles and Bill Gates. The outliers were those who were ready when opportunities knocked.

The author differentiates two parenting styles. The first, which he describes as "the accomplishment of natural growth," is the more traditional, almost *laissez-faire* approach that often leads to better behaved and more independent children. The second style he calls "concerted cultivation." It teaches children that they have the right to pursue their own individual preferences and to actively manage interactions in a variety of institutional settings. Gladwell argues that the latter method leads to greater

cultural advantage because it instills a sense of "entitlement" i.e. teaches children to practice adult rules of engagement and interaction (active listening, advocacy and negotiation)—what might be thought of as "how the world actually works behind the curtain of rhetoric and nicety."

I am troubled with some of the ramifications of "entitlement," given the rampant nature of our culture's bent towards exceptionalism and political extremism. The politicization of more and more concerns, coupled with the democratization of aggressive demands, makes me long for modesty and understatement. But I'm probably living in another world—one that never existed.

In his own defense, Gladwell tempers his use of "entitlement" to mean "assuming one's right to take a place and play a role in society." A strong sense of entitlement is necessary, he argues, so that we persist at learning to "dance the dance" of society as graciously and effectively as possible, with a final goal of increased effectiveness at achieving self realization/self actualization via nonviolent conflict resolution.

No one is successful at every endeavor, of course, but Gladwell contends that interactive skills training can prepare us to play vital interdependent roles not only as leaders, but as collaborators who can see and appreciate where we may fit into organized efforts. This may have special application to our civic and political engagements—even our participation in the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society. Each has a unique place in Life's mosaic.

Gladwell excludes talk about the identity of our inner Who (aka the Soul, our natural talents, instincts and interests), preferring to concentrate on the What of acculturation. In my case, I cannot explain my lifelong fascination with history (*every* thing has a past) or my love of beauty for its ability to transcend the literal. Nor can I explain my solace when I lose myself on a winding river, or the liberation from the need for justification I feel when meditating on the timelessness of the Divine. Yet these come closest to defining my main claim to success—Who I am.

As the hard-nosed writer of Ecclesiastes puts it, all is vanity—except love, friendship, and work.

Dave Redmon considers himself lucky to have survived careers in journalism and teaching. He resides in Manhattan with his wife Ann and their cat Eddy, surrounded by a thousand daylilies. Email: LDRedmon@gmail.com

TAKE NOTE

INEZ ALSOP PROJECT UPDATE:

The next step in creating a bird sanctuary at 1646 Laramie is to sell off the remaining items from the property. The Students for Environmental Action are going to conduct a garage sale for us on site on Sat. Oct. 2nd. We would also like to sell off any salvageable items from the home. For example, furnaces, air conditioner unit, banister, nice interior doors, wood flooring, 1950 style kitchen counter (red top), bathroom fixtures (nice corner cast iron bath tub). If you know of anyone who may be interested in these items and can remove them in October please let Patricia know. Demolition of the house is planned for November. A group interested in the landscaping of the property is starting to form. Please speak up now if you want to have a voice on that committee. The family and neighbors are very interested in this project as well.



Spooktacular is a fun time of trick or treating at Sunset Zoo from noon to 5 p.m. on Oct. 23rd and 24th. Would you like to help NFHAS make a fun and educational booth that will appeal to children? Please volunteer. Contact Patricia Yeager pyky@flinthills.com 776-9593

WHAT ARE YOU SEEING?

Members are invited - encouraged! - to share their birding experiences: favorite bird, what you're seeing now, what did you see on a trip? Please contact Cindy Jeffrey - cinraney@k-state.edu, or call after 5 p.m. 785-468-3587 (home).

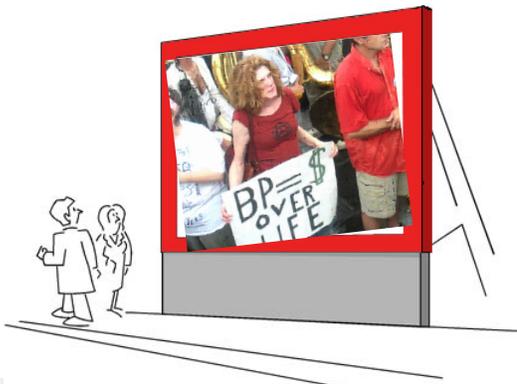


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Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520. (cinraney@ksu.edu)
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Membership Information: Introductory memberships - \$20/yr., then basic, renewal membership is \$35/yr. When you 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. Website is 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> and join in the discussions.

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