

CONGRATULATIONS JIM KOELLIKER!



The Greater Manhattan Community Foundation held its Community Foundation Awards (CFA's) last night and congratulations go out to Jim Koelliker for winning the Distinguished Volunteer CFA for 2018!

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



prairie falcon

Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

Any warm day - consider walking Stagg Hill property and take a trash bag to help keep litter picked up.

May 6- Board Meeting- 6 p.m. Friend's Room, MPL

May 11- Alsop Bird Sanctuary- Join the Rotary and help us with the Alsop property- 9 a.m.

May 11- Birding- meet at Sojourner Truth park, 8 a.m.

June 3- Board Meeting- 6 p.m. Friend's Room, MPL



Skylight plus

Pete Cohen

It is May, the time of spring flowers releasing their aromas, most of which bring pleasure to humans, though seeming primarily meant to attract insects that will

accidentally pollinate while receiving nectar for their trouble. It's such a pleasant symbiosis to contemplate. And how satisfying to read of incidences when dogs have helped rescue lost persons by following scents.

At the same time there is another, less poetic, name for the operative factor here: smell. It is what dog's seek in sniffing for hidden weapons or drugs. Their job seems straightforward, while Science News mentions in their edition of March 30th that rescue dogs often have the cards stacked against them, for lost persons tend to become fearful, and fear alters the odors they emit, and can override their default smell. So it behooves anyone becoming lost to try keep as calm as when they last wore the shirt, etc., that will be the cue given to dogs trying to locate them.

And there is the case of Mrs. Joy Milne, endowed somehow with a nasal sensitivity greater than the norm, and reported in the March 30th edition of the Economist. In 1974 she began to notice a new and odd musky smell in her Perth, Scotland, home. It continued untraceably until her husband, having been diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1976, became eventually in need of attending a clinic where other Parkinson's patients gathered, and there, to Mrs. Milne, the smell was everywhere. It's been discovered to emanate from along the shoulders, months in advance of present diagnoses. Its components have now been identified with the hope that some substitute for Mrs. Milne will become available for the benefits of early treatments.

Looking further, diagnoses by smell goes at least back to Hippocrates who around 400 B.C.E. found evidence of inner ills in external signs such as the smell of breath, sputum, urine, as well as, particularly regarding lung cancer, in the shapes of fingers. Others followed, with their own protocols, some right on, some not. Along the line, as might be expected, for a while the telltale odors were regarded as causing the malady they

represented, and in another case of shooting the messenger, exotic aromas were concocted and applied as counter-active medications, but eventually by the weight no doubt of its own failures, that fad died out.

And diagnosis by smell is part of current practice today, with dogs and other creatures sometimes involved in this, too. According to the Economist, paramedics are taught to recognize "the fruity smell of the breath of hypoglycemic diabetics, and gastroenterologists to detect the odor of digested blood".

In 1930 debuted a will-o'-the-wisp crime-fighter, with the ability "to cloud men's minds so he could not be seen", named The Shadow. His radio dramas began with a tightly sneering ominous voice speaking what became an iconic phrase: "Who knows what evil lurks in the minds of men? The Shadow knows!"

Today we can ask with as much hope as apprehension, "Who knows what informative scents await recognition in every breath exhaled."

If planets gave off scents, you'd have to sniff hard to catch Mars's who will be fading as it moves eastward from Taurus into Gemini during May. After Mars has set you'll be alerted to the essence of Jupiter as it comes up amid Ophiuchus (above Scorpius) before midnight. And the aroma of Saturn will come wafting up a couple hours later in Sagittarius at the southern end of the Milky Way (just behind Scorpius). They will be setting early, leaving the fragrance of Venus to enhance the morning skies.

However, since the planets are all mere reflectors, and the stars are violent furnaces, the overall redolence, should it be available, might be comparable to heads of iceberg lettuce scattered amid lots of overcooked chili.

As to the Moon you might get a whiff of a thin, waning slice of it close to Venus on the 2nd, and making a somewhat stronger bud near Taurus' Aldebaran the 6th, and Mars on the 7th. It'll be in wider bloom near Regulus in Leo next, the 11th-12th, then making Virgo's otherwise lonely Spica a bouquet companion the 15th-16th. Then the Moon should pass close to Jupiter as it begins its slow shrivel the 19-20th, and Saturn the 22nd-23rd. It will have been new the 4th at 5p46 and full the 18th at 4p11.

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Spring Rituals

Dru Clarke



Folks throughout the northern hemisphere become positively giddy with the arrival of the vernal (spring) equinox, when our Sun shifts across the equator, and daylight and nighttime balance one another. In the southern hemisphere, however, this time is the autumnal equinox, a slide into fall, signaling the coming of winter. Joy – more hope really – at the promise of warming, sunny days has caused many to perform annual rituals that reflect the character and resources of the locale where they evolved.

I would have liked to have met Eostre (from ‘east’ or ‘dawn’), the Anglo-Saxon’s moon goddess of spring and fertility. She may today have a hand in turning our oldest bull Feargus into a bellowing mass of desire, moaning throughout the night in his version of passionate courtship. Or Blodeuwedd, the Druid’s goddess of the same capacity, who, as a Flower Woman, left in her path swathes of white clover. We’ve not seen bluets or dandelions yet but will know she’s been here when we do. (If I were a Celt, I’d probably be able to pronounce her name. Blah-doo-wed?)

In Russia, Maslenitsa, celebrated before Lent, sounds a lot like Mardi Gras (think beignets, etouffee, and hurricanes), as folks eat all those foods – meat, eggs, fish, and dairy – that are denied them for many weeks. A straw figure representing the Lady Maslenitsa is set afire, the ashes then scattered on fields, promoting crop growth. Here, we burn prairie grasses around the same time to ensure lush new pastures.

Bosnians (and others who come just for this) in Zenica, north of Sarajevo, celebrate Cimburijada, where eggs, a universal symbol of the beginning of life, are scrambled then ladled out on paper to eager recipients. (In some places, bunnies lay eggs, though it’s a mystery how THAT evolved. Irish hares, which are HUGE, could host live birth AND lay eggs – who knows.) Other rituals, in Spain and Switzerland, augment their bonfires of straw effigies with explosives (a sphincter-constricting experience, I’d imagine),

while in Poland, theirs, called Marzanna, are tossed into rivers, symbolically drowning winter’s bleakness. These don’t explode. And, Japan, of course, has its cherry blossom time from March to May. Called Hanami, the time is celebrated by staging parties under the branches. Something similar happens in Washington D.C. when the trees, given as gifts to our national capital by the Japanese, bloom. Some years ago, we strolled along the cherry tree-lined walk bordering the water fronting the Jefferson Memorial, a fitting homage to our spring.

About the weirdest spring practice is Whuppity Scoorie, held only in Lanark, Scotland. Kids at sunrise run three laps around a church, waving balls of paper, then stoop to retrieve coins tossed by locals. It is thought that this evolved from ‘scooring’ (i.e. ‘scouring’) in the Clyde River of badly behaving folks. What this has to do with spring’s arrival is puzzling as it seems misbehavior could be dealt with year round, or when the behavior occurs, but it’s a good excuse to expend some energy and reward their children for being good.

Our spring rituals are modest and random. We note when the first phoebes, redwing blackbirds, and kildeer arrive. Budburst of pussy willow and lilac we write on our calendar. We anxiously await the call of the thrasher and the cuckoo and are only sure that spring has really arrived when we hear them.

It is enough to be content with knowing they have returned with the Sun.

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The trip to the Platte

Jim Koelliker



The Platte was flooded and the icebergs flowed, so the Sandhill cranes kept to the surrounding marshes and fields. But we did see them!



Once upon a time I was not interested in sparrows. Now I have a captivating experience with each species both because of what I see and especially in the way they sound differently. The same muted interest, I confess, has been true of black birds. However, on a walk last week I found a flock of 7 Brewer's blackbirds (6 males 1 brown female for the record). They were searching about on a perfectly black, burned yesterday pasture. In the morning sunlight their body's iridescent green was astonishing topped with an equally brilliant purple iridescent head with light yellow eye. This black on "black" sighting make blackbirds rise to the favorites on my list to find.

Thinking gulls are not dull will likely be my next awakening. I look forward to that experience.

~ Patricia Yeager

Volunteer Help Wanted

Compensation:

Satisfaction that you help NFHAS thrive

Birds tweeting in a place they can survive

Your brain inspired, your body tired, your sleep sound

Friends to laugh with all around

Peace knowing you did your part

Attorney: Club needs help lessening property tax burden of the Manhattan property it owns.

Metal artist: Large garden trellis needed and other, more elaborate display opportunities.

Deck builder: Boardwalk needed over rough areas on nature trail.

Assorted gardens tasks doers: No experience necessary will train: Reliable person(s) sought to water garden; hoses, sprinklers supplied, weekly weeder for small bed or larger area (organic methods only) hoe supplied, person(s) wanted to help plant plants large and small on planting days.

Land manager: sought for 26 acres wooded ravine. Ability to organize the neighbors or other groups to help litter control or larger events such and Chinese honeysuckle control a plus.

Trail maintainer: Work as needed at your own pace. Some chain saw skill useful on rare occasion.

Greeter: Do you enjoy meeting others and listening to birding stories? Person needed to make new persons attending NFHAS meetings feel welcome. Duties include checking that coffee and cookie duties are delegated a week prior to the meeting. Ability to remember names a plus but not required.

Cookie Bakers: baking 2 or 3 dozen cookies prior to meetings.

Program searcher: Duties include seeking out and contacting potential speakers relevant to NFHAS purpose that might appeal to both the general public and our club membership and finding out if they require a fee or will donate their time. Report back to the board for group approval of subject and expense.

Marketing talent sought: Can you design an appealing print ad or write one for radio. Are you social media savvy?

Nature teacher for children: Do you love children and birds? Experience teaching youngsters is invaluable to our group. Arrange one event or a regular group meeting. Create a children's program you would enjoy.

Migratory Bird Count Leader: Tech savvy enough to send in the report but sensitive enough to realize that many good birders do not have these skills. Willingness to meet with bird counters as a group and tally or accept phone calls of their bird list. Must be available on the second Saturday in May. Some recruiting of birders available on this Saturday will be necessary.

Secretary for the board of NFHAS: Keep minutes at board meetings. Send minutes to board members via e-mail after meeting. Send courtesy notes on occasion. For example, thank you notes, sympathy notes and congratulations cards.

Blue bird trail apprentices: Want to learn what maintaining a blue bird trail is all about. Tag along and find out.

Sign maintainer: NFHAS has several signage projects currently and some of our trail signs and information markers are showing some wear.

NFHAS historian: Do you know the story of who, what, when, where, and why of the events that NFHAS was involved in in the past. For example, can you write about when the club was involved in the Save Cheyenne Bottoms Campaign or how the blue bird trail came about at Carnahan Creek? Send the story to Cindy so that it will be archived in the pages of the Prairie Falcon.

Jobs are not limited. Want to contribute something? No job too small or too large to be considered.

New Book by Pete Cohen

Neighbors *in the* Sky

*For all the family, a book of
the Northern Sky's constellations
using*

*Poems, Singable Verses, Illustrations
with Space to Draw Your Own Interpretations.
A lively way to enjoy more of the night sky.*

by

Peter Zachary Cohen

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38224 Sycamore Creek Road
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claflin@interkan.net.

The Volland Store-about 7 miles SW of Alma on Old K-10 Hwy.,
785.499.3616,

Corvus the Crow

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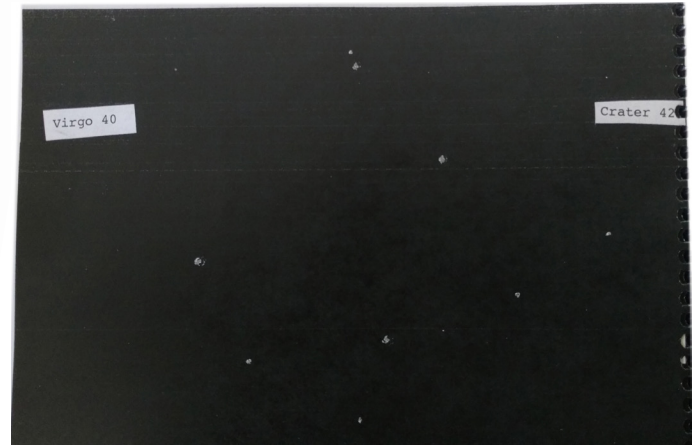
The real common crows we see are usually black though they can glisten in silvery ways whenever light touches them from certain directions. The sky's Crow, of course, sends forth his own glistening, mainly from four main points and two lesser ones worth noting, and is another constellation that can bring thoughts of baseball to mind. Just to the right and a little lower than Spica.

There is Corvus! Corvus the Crow!
his four main stars clearly aglow,
like a stubby kite or an archer's drawn bow.
They're quite distinct, so they're easy to know:
the main sparkling points of Corvus the Crow!

They can outline a baseball infield, too,
although in spacing they are slightly askew,
yet, close enough to true, for a bird.

Those four main stars can be the bases;
the other two are in the coaches' places
making their traces beside first and third.

His feathers are as dark as the night, that's so,
But you can start from the stars named Leó,
and travel southeast without waking Virgó,
as you pass on through her to just below,
to the sparkling points of Corvus the Crow.



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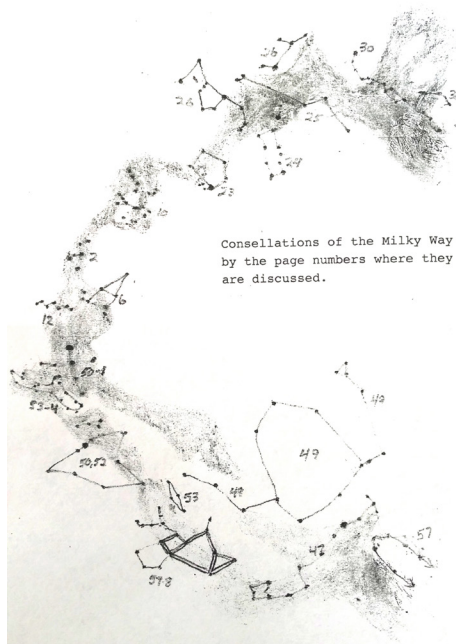
The Archer's Tea Kettle

Now dear to my eyes are the scenes of the season
when summer's long sunlight sinks out of the day.
The lights that start twinkling are part of the reason
my eyes want to drift down the long Milky Way.
The Swan and the Arrow, the Eagle and Shield;
they will delight as my glance passes by,
searching below for that bright starry field
where sparks the Tea Kettle that glides 'cross the sky.

The sparkling Tea Kettle,
that southern Tea Kettle,
the sparkling Tea Kettle,
that glides 'cross the sky.

Hail Sagittarius, the centaur and Archer,
who carries so well the Tea Kettle we love.
All summer long that dependable marcher
keeps our Tea Kettle the horizon above.
And so keeps alive that continuing question,
the answer to which we may someday find out.
Is it right, or else wrong, that repeating suggestion:
That the whole Milky Way is the steam from its spout.

That southern Tea Kettle,
that starry Tea Kettle,
the sparkling Tea Kettle
that we all talk about.





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The purpose of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society is to teach people to enjoy and respect birds and their habitats. NFHAS advocates preservation of prairie ecosystems and urban green spaces thus saving the lives of birds and enriching the lives of people.

Also available online at nfhas.org

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Also available online at nfhas.org

WE NEED YOU!

PLEASE consider joining our NFHAS Board.

The Board meets on the first Monday of each month. The meetings usually last about an hour.

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Secretary

Treasurer

Board member at large:

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Birdseed Chair

NFHAS Board

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At-large: Susan Blackford

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