

G N A T C A T C H E R

 JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 7 No 6

June 1975

Night Clouds

The white mares of the moon rush along the sky
 Beating their golden hoofs upon the glass Heavens;
 The white mares of the moon are all standing on
 their hind legs
 Pawing at the green porcelain doors of the remote
 Heavens.
 Fly mares!
 Strain your utmost,
 Scatter the milky dust of stars,
 Or the tiger sun will leap upon you and destroy you
 With one lick of his vermilion tongue.

- Amy Lowell

The June Excursion - Wildfoods Picnic

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: Portage R.R. Historical Site

DATE: June 22nd - Sunday

at Cresson. The Picnic Area.

DIRECTIONS: Take Rt#22 up and past the Lemon House $\frac{1}{4}$ mile and turn right to the Picnic Area. There are signs marking the entrance.

Al Burd and others have been working very hard to make the up-coming wild foods outing a success. We have a reserved shelter at the picnicking site. A good number of foods have been readied for this dinner. It should be very interesting and educational for young and old alike. Bring a food or drink if you can and if not bring yourself. As in the May Gnatcatcher we urge people to bring also some regular dishes - hamburgers, hotdogs, salads, etc. so there will be plenty of food for anyone who is quite hungry and might not like some of the exotic plant and meat dishes of the wild. Some of the items that you will be able to sample are common and some are rather unusual. Even a small quantity of a food will suffice since it is a sampling that counts.

Some people will be at the site as early as 1:00 setting up. There will be a good charcoal fire going by the time 2:00 come around. The dinner will be ready by 3:30 or 4:00. Try to collect one of your specialties. Don't worry if it is being brought by someone else. The same items prepared differently will be fine. Bring any guides on collecting and preparing wild foods so that we can forage for edibles right at the picnic site. This is a challenge of sorts: Who knows just what might be found where we are going? If you consult the public library you are sure to find a number of good books on the subject. Noel Gibbons' Stalking the Wild Asparagus is the classic source. A number of wild things are not yet ready for harvesting and some are already too late to get. Wild strawberries are in now if you know where they grow. Fish would be a good item - no one has said yet that they are bringing it. There will be a good number of small camp stoves for us to cook up items like fish. Call Al at 9430586 for more information. As always, this outing is open to anyone. Bring your friends or tell others about it.

Bluebird Committee Report

Bill Rosevear asks all members with houses to clean them in preparation for the second nesting. The Gnatcatcher will attempt a fully detailed report on this project in the July issue. There are bluebirds nesting in a number of the houses. Bill, himself, has had four nesting pairs and a total of sixteen baby bluebirds. Mike and Margaret Chonko have three wrens in nests and had baby bluebirds in one box but found them dead one day. More later on this very interesting endeavor.

"Conservation Notes" - Altoona Mirror

Don Wharton's column in the Altoona Mirror should be looked for by members. It runs every week or so and is nice for its reporting of conservation news. Current news items - some of them controversial - are presented in a type of article that is new to the Mirror. Bucky Krause had a weekly column as does his son who carries it on, but it is not solely devoted to conservation. The Krauses have covered more hunting and fishing than anything else. Don's column is titled in large, black blocked letters: CONSERVATION NOTES.

If you missed the June 11th notes it is worth getting out the old papers for his comments on the 26 acres of Parcel 19. How true it is that so many of the people here are in a rat race for what? How long will the aesthetic values remain subverted to the ignorant, unecological lurchings toward "pie in the sky" progress. In viewing the entire issue of those 26 acres as well as other problems one can't help but feel something is amiss. Peoples Park is lost to the religion of athletics. The LeVan House fell to the planners for progress. What is next? Living in the mountains keeps us isolated from some enlightened acts of progress occurring in other parts of the country. An instance of change can be seen in the Fort Roberdeau reconstruction plans. We as a conservation group feel the need for caution in fitting that project into the Sinking Valley environment. Great care must be taken to avoid massive parking lots of macadam, uprooting of woodland and polluting of streams, marshes and ponds. Audubon hopes to get some representation on the planning of the newly proposed Fort Roberdeau Park. We have spoken out already on this as well as on the 26 acres of old railroad land. Are we one voice crying out in futility? A group consensus is said to be very difficult to achieve in interpersonal relationships but it is worth struggling for. We must keep abreast of the problems in our territory as well as in the country. Education is a big part of our effort for without it we remain ignorant. We need some balance in our society if any meaningful progress is to come about. A Christmas Bird Count or a wildfoods dinner is just one part of Audubon and must never absorb all of our energies. Work must be done on community problems. Being an aware member of National Audubon and our local Juniata Valley Audubon somehow must relate to the whole of our area and not just to each other in the group. Meetings give us enlightenment. Audubon magazine gives us the same. The question now before us is "What do we give?" What is our 2¢ worth? (The foregoing is from the Gnatcatcher's viewpoint. For Don Wharton's views read the June 11th column)

Contributions to Gnatcatcher Invited

Please send any and all items to the Gnatcatcher! Articles - large or small; reports on wildlife or flora; trip reports of recommended spots worth visiting - local and distant; suggestions of any sort; questions that need answered; and so on. Shorter items are more easily handled in getting the newsletter together but a larger article could be worked in with an extra page. All materials should be mailed to 3001 4th Ave. before the 15th of any month. (There is no issue in August) If you know anyone who might like to receive our newsletter please send or call in (943-5629) the names and addresses. A year's subscription to the Gnatcatcher is only \$1.00 for 11 issues. We will mail a few issues free to those who are interested in conservation, whoever or wherever they might be. We exchange newsletters with some other Audubon branches and those that we get will be available for anyone to read starting in the fall with our first regular meetings.

Iron Works Notes

John Orr is working to get some support for restoring and preserving the Elizabeth Furnace at Pine Croft. Matching funds are available for work on a site that is registered as a national historic landmark. Mt. Etna, it seems, could easily get such federal funds with the local effort putting up half (\$5,000 is the estimate) of the total cost. It is hoped that Elizabeth Furnace can be similarly registered and saved. Also, it is possible that other means are open to us in saving it. It could be a fine educational project for our local schools if only it can be kept together. If you are interested in giving of your time and ideas to the iron works preservation call John at 943-5629.

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