



# The Wandering Tattler

**FALL/WINTER 2019-2020**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Where does one begin? It's been almost 30 years during which the leadership of LAS has been the responsibility of three dedicated Board members. Gene Gallagher served a multi-year term in the early 1990's and again starting in 1999; Bill Speare served three multi-year terms, the last one ending two months ago after 10 years; and Mike Carey served three multi-year terms beginning in 1995 plus another two-year term in the 1980's. That's 4 for Mike, 3 for Bill, and 2 for Gene.

Now, after 35 years I begin my second term. In all fairness, I was a bit busy with other LAS projects during this long period including 16 years as Tattler editor, helping care for our society's two sanctuaries, and working on many shorter important projects. But I will do my best to continue to serve LAS well.

Bill Speare outlined several open issues in his final President's Report, and these will continue to receive our primary attention. Especially important is looking for appropriate projects to do justice to the generous bequest from the estate of former member Barbara Williams.

Day trips and Anthracite Heritage Museum programs have been planned and can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. In the meantime, I look forward to hearing from our members about LAS related issues. My telephone number is (570) 563-5352

My E-mail address is [susan.zenke@outlook.com](mailto:susan.zenke@outlook.com)

Thanks to all for continuing to support LAS.

**SUE ZENKE, President**



**Timber Rattlesnake, see February Museum Program**

## Calendar of Events

This schedule covers programs and outings through March 2020. Locations are familiar to most LAS members. However, if you desire more information regarding any of the events listed or need directions, please call the contact person, who will be happy to answer your questions.

Call the contact person the evening before the event if you have questions concerning possible weather cancellations. Dress appropriately for the weather and terrain on all outings. On longer distance trips, car-pooling is in order and can be coordinated with the contact person or on the day of the trip. Drivers – have a full tank; riders - help share the cost with the driver. Pack a lunch for long trips beginning in the mornings. Bring your own binoculars, scopes, etc.

- Nov 17 Sunday 2:30pm. Anthracite Heritage Museum Program. McDade Park, Scranton. "PEEC History and the Future: Environmental Education and Sustainability." Presented by Jeffrey Rosalsky, Executive Director of Pocono Environmental Education Center. See article on page 6. Contact: Sue Zenke (570-563-5352)**
- Dec 14 Saturday Midnight to 5:00pm. Annual Christmas Bird Count. Various groups will be counting birds in a radius of 7.5 miles around the Lackawanna County Courthouse in Scranton. At 6:00pm, the count will be tallied up after consuming a delicious potluck dinner at the Church of the Epiphany in Glenburn. Information about the dinner and directions can be obtained from the count coordinator, Mark Catalano (570-760-6556). The dinner is open to all. So, even if you didn't count birds, come to the dinner and join in the fun. P.S. Bring your own plates and silverware to the dinner. More information about the count on Page 7.**
- Feb 2 Sunday 1:00pm. Walk at Hillside Park, Clarks Summit. We'll walk around the park and look for Groundhogs and any other signs of life. Meet at Hillside Park parking lot. Contact: Jon Thomas (570-586-3702)**
- Feb 16 Sunday 2:30pm. Presentation of "The World of the Timber Rattlesnake: History, Ecology, and Conservation of America's Snake". Presented by Christopher Howey, Asst. Professor of Biology at the University of Scranton. Come out and see this program about one of Pennsylvania's most fascinating animals. Presented at the Anthracite Museum located in McDade Park. Contact: Sue Zenke (570-563-5352).**
- Feb 22 Saturday 8:30am. Harveys Lake and Sordoni farm field trip. We'll look for a variety of waterfowl and other birds. Meet for breakfast at the Lakeside Skillet near the Harveys Lake outlet at 8:30 or we will begin the trip at about 9:00 from the restaurant. Contact: Bill Speare (570-586-8343).**
- Mar 15 Sunday 2:30pm. Anthracite Heritage Museum Program. McDade Park, Scranton. "Update on the status of the Fisher in Pennsylvania" presented by a representative of the PA Game Commission. Additional details to follow in the next newsletter.**

The current calendar and full newsletter can be accessed online at:  
<http://www.scranton.edu/faculty/carey/pdf/lascal.pdf>  
or at the LAS Facebook group page

## Annual Meeting and Dinner by Derry Bird

It was a beautiful night in August when 35 Lackawanna Audubon Society members and their guests gathered at Glen Oak Country Club for the Annual Dinner Meeting.

President William Speare Jr. greeted the members and their guests.

President Speare in turn was honored for his many years of service to the Audubon Society. He served as President for the last 10 years, as well as leading birding excursions too numerous to mention.

Incoming President, Susan Zenke, presented William Speare with a plaque commemorating his years of service.

We welcomed our "Birding Centenarian", Tinka Zenke, who is 104 years young! We wish her a Happy Birthday!!

We then settled back to enjoy a sumptuous repast. (We all remember, over the years; paddling down the Susquehanna River; passing food back and forth, between canoes—in mid-stream.) This was certainly different.

We then hopped and skipped 1000 miles to the dark Continent of Africa for a presentation entitled "Birds and Wildlife of South Africa" by Sharon Templin, a noted wildlife photographer. Her photography ran the gamut of the many different kinds of birds and animals that she had photographed in Africa. There were lions, hippos and cape buffalos. Oh My!



Dinner speaker Sharon Templin  
©Carol Lizell



Presentation of plaque to Bill Speare  
commemorating 10 years of service as LAS  
President

©Carol Lizell

## Calling All Screech Owls by Carol Lizell

“There’s a brand new home just waiting for your inspection.” Hopefully a pair will find it to their liking and move right in.

Jon Thomas’s latest project on behalf of the LAS at Hillside Park, Clarks Summit, was completed on Saturday, April 13. Following unanimous approval by the Board of Directors, Jon ordered a Screech Owl box online. With the help of Steve Liddic and Gene Gallagher, it was installed about 10 feet off the ground on a 110-year-old Red Oak tree.

It took plenty of patience and muscle power to attach the house to the tree. Gene supervised while Jon and Steve took turns holding the ladder and working the ratchet wrench within the small space of the house interior. Bit by bit the box was secured in place with two lag bolts.

Eastern Screech Owls are about robin-sized but stockier. Length: 6-9 inches. Weight: 4.3 - 8.6 oz. Wingspan: 18 - 24 inches. Either mostly gray or mostly reddish brown; complex bands and spots give excellent camouflage against tree bark. Eyes: yellow.

The breeding season may range from mid-March to mid-May. Screech Owl pairs do not build a nest. Instead, the eggs are laid at the bottom of a tree cavity or, as in this case, on the bottom of the nesting box on a layer of cedar shavings that came with the order.

Google “Eastern Screech Owl Sounds” to hear their whinny, purr, trill and screech. If you hear any of these sounds in your area, point in the direction of Hillside Park and hope for the best.



## Getting ready to install the Screech Owl house

©Carol Lizell

## Barbara Brown Memorial by Sue Zenke

Barbara Brown who passed away last year was an extremely valuable member of Lackawanna Audubon Society. Her property was adjacent to the Society’s Davis Crossing Sanctuary near Lake Winola, and she acted as our eyes and ears during the vast amount of time she spent caring for this wonderful and diverse property. She cleared nature trails, dealt with the tasks associated with beaver activity (often with the help of her dog Sweet Pea), and, not many years before her death, oversaw the construction of a steel bridge along the main access trail.

She was honored by receiving LAS’s prestigious Golden Eagle Award for her exceptional dedication to LAS and the environment. I don’t remember when I first met Barb at the Sanctuary, but there weren’t too many times I was there when

our paths didn't cross. She was a dear friend and a clever and talented lady.

After Barbara's passing, LAS received an avalanche of donations in her memory. Her family had suggested placing a stone bench on the property of the Tunkhannock Public Library, and the officers and directors of our society approved supplementing the donations received with the necessary additional funds to underwrite the cost of an engraved memorial stone bench. The directors of the library were very enthused and supportive of the project.

According to a recent press release from the library, Barbara was an avid reader, and a member of the Old Barn Rug Hooking Guild which meets at the library. Always interested in nature, she was a 4-H Leader in her younger years, won awards for her flower arrangements, and had been active in the Countryside Conservancy. Her commitment to helping the environment was exemplified by her dedicated involvement with the Lackawanna Audubon Society.

The engraved memorial stone bench is placed in the newly renovated library garden where readers and nature lovers can relax. The bench was dedicated on September 26, 2019, with Barbara's son, Don Shelton and his wife Evie, LAS President Sue Zenke, Barbara's Life Partner John Migliori, members of the library Board and staff, and Collin Lunger of Lunger Monuments, all present for the occasion.



**Memorial bench dedication**  
© Carol Lizell

### **Keystone Trolley Trail Walk by Bonnie Flynn**

It was a beautiful sunny, but cold morning when five of us started our walk on June 15. Before we left the parking lot, a friendly deer kept us company.

Derry, Gene, and Bill stopped to rest at the gazebo, while Chloe and I continued on. We heard a Pileated Woodpecker and saw a Downy Woodpecker. Many catbirds were seen, along with a cardinal and a sparrow. We met the men on the way back and learned they had heard a Red-eyed Vireo.

Chloe and Bonnie continued to the pond where a Green Heron was seen. Many frogs were in the pond, and Chloe has many pictures of them.

It was an enjoyable walk.

## **November Museum Program by Sue Zenke**

LAS's next program at the Anthracite Heritage Museum is on Sunday, November 17. Attendees at this 2:30 pm presentation by Jeffrey Rosalsky, Executive Director of this very special environmental learning center, will hear about "PEEC History and the Future: Environmental Education and Sustainability."

PEEC has a very interesting early history, which began in 1972 when, in partnership with the then Keystone Junior College, it established a residential Environmental Education Center on the site of the old Honeymoon Haven Resort near Dingman's Ferry within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

A group from LAS spent a weekend at PEEC under the guidance of Director Jack Padalino not too many years after it first opened and, as reported in LAS's History, "roughing it in cottages from the former Honeymoon Haven, featuring sunken baths and bunk beds." Some of us folks who enjoyed roughing it way back then began trading stories after learning the subject of November's program.

The condition of the residential buildings when PEEC was established in 1972 at a resort long out of business presented a great challenge to those with the foresight and determination to MAKE THE IDEA WORK!

A wonderful transformation began at PEEC during, I believe, the 1990's. Some of the people who spent time at the old facility became members of PEEC's Board of Trustees, beginning with Derry Bird, then Sue Zenke, and Howard Hyde.

A number of LAS members with families and friends returned for another weekend at PEEC in 2003 and enjoyed the improvements made at the Center.

Those of us from LAS who worked with Dr. Barbara Brummer, a PEEC Trustee for decades, were delighted to learn that she was Board Chair at the time of Jeff's promotion to Executive Director. I am very grateful that Dr. Brummer has remained an invaluable guiding force and continues to be active in overseeing PEEC's growth and expansion over the many years of her tenure as Trustee.

Who knows? Will LAS plan another weekend at PEEC in the near future?

### **Contributions to LAS**

#### **Memorial Donations**

Len Janus, in memory of Gerry Janus

Eileen Sorrano for Golden Eagle Recipients

Catherine Noreika for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bill and Gail Sickler

Jim Montgomery for Frances Montgomery

#### **Society Sponsors**

Pat Green

Jon Rounds

Ken and Leslie Maas

John and Diane Sheur

Bob Burke

The Countryside Conservancy

And thanks for the many donations made in support of the Wandering Tattler

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**  
**by**  
**Mark Catalano and Cheryle Stone**

Lackawanna Audubon Society will hold its part of the 120th annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 14, 2019. The LAS will survey winter bird populations within a 7.5 mile radius of the Lackawanna County Court House. The count circle has been divided into ten smaller sectors, each one surveyed by a group led by experienced birders. The sector leaders would enjoy sharing their knowledge with you and showing you their most interesting areas. Besides that, they could use your help. An extra pair of eyes can make an important difference (especially while the leader is driving). We welcome everyone to participate, whether you are a skilled birder or an interested beginner. And we PROMISE you that the sector leader will never ask you to identify what you saw, only where you spotted it.

To take part in this fun and challenging day, or any part of it, contact one of the sector leaders below about joining his or her group. If you live in one of the count areas and prefer to participate by reporting birds seen at your feeders, call the sector leader after sunset on December 14 with your results.

Better still, join us on Saturday evening after the Count at the Glenburn Church of the Epiphany, 25 Church Hill, Glenburn Township, at 6:00 p.m. for a Count Down and potluck dinner. Please bring your own place settings and beverages. For questions about the Bird Count or dinner, contact the compiler, Mark Catalano, at (570) 760-6556.

Sectors, sector leaders and phone numbers are:

- A. Clarks Summit, Gene Gallagher (570) 586-5156
- B. South Abington, Mike Carey (570) 575-5293
- C. Dickson City, Olyphant, Throop, David Trently (570) 909-8052
- D. Elmhurst, Roaring Brook, Paul Mundy (570) 941-9851
- E. Montage, Lake Scranton, Rebecca Lesko, (570) 592-2629
- F. Pittston, Old Forge, Derry Bird, (570) 945-5226
- G. Ransom, Bald Mountain, unassigned
- H. Newton (west of Newton-Ransom Road), Sue Zenke (570) 563-5352 (east of N-R Road),  
Mark Catalano (570) 760-6556.
- I. Scranton, Dunmore, Taylor-Beth Gallagher (570) 961-8541

**Lackawanna Audubon Society**

**P.O. Box 132**

**La Plume, PA 18440-0132**

**Address service requested**

