



# the prairie falcon

Vol. 32, No.11  
JULY 2004

NEXT program and  
Prairie Falcon will be in  
September

NORTHERN FLINT HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. Box 1932, MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1932

A Minor Bird by Robert Frost  
*I have wished a bird would fly away,  
And not sing by my house all day;  
Have clapped my hands at him from the door  
When it seemed as if I could bear no more.  
The fault must partly have been in me.  
The bird was not to blame for his key.  
And of course there must be something wrong  
In wanting to silence any song.*

I wonder if Robert Frost had a similar experience - awakened at 5 a.m. by the untuned chorus of birds - wrens, dickcissels, robins, blue birds, eastern phoebes, meadow larks, -- to name just a few -- outside the window. All singing at the same time! No conductor for this orchestra.

A friend from Washington D.C. came to visit last year and thought it was so peaceful in the Flint Hills -- till 5:30 a.m. This summer she has been serenaded by the 17 year cicada - but prefers the birds singing.

I was in the Upper Peninsula of Wisconsin for a week in June and it was so quiet. Only a few redwing blackbirds and ring-billed gulls could I hear when I woke. I missed the sounds of the prairie - the birds, frogs, insects, and coyotes. But I'll admit, at 5:30 a.m. I don't appreciate them as I should.

Have a wonderful summer!

*Cindy Jeffrey*

## Field Trips

### BEGINNING BIRDWATCHING WALK

Join us Saturday, July 10<sup>th</sup> and every second Saturday at 8 a.m. in the Ackert/Durland parking lot on the KSU campus. We will carpool to a local birding hotspot and should return by about 11 a.m. Birders of every age and interest level are welcomed. Children are especially encouraged to attend. For more information call Patricia Yaeger (776-9593) or e-mail her at [pyky@flinthills.com](mailto:pyky@flinthills.com).

## INSIDE

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## CONTRIBUTORS:

PETE COHEN  
THOMAS MORGAN  
MADONNA STALLMANN  
ELLEN WELTI (DRAWINGS)

## UPCOMING DATES:

JUL 10 Beginning Birding, 8 a.m.  
Ackert/Durland Parking Lot

No Program in July or August  
See you in September!

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MANHATTAN, KS



## EDUCATION

madonna stallmann

### **NFHAS IS DEVELOPING A NEW & EXCITING RELATIONSHIP WITH WONDER WORKSHOP!**

I am delighted to announce a new partnership between NFHAS and Wonder Workshop! Richard Pitts, the director of Wonder Workshop (WW), and I will co-chair the education committee this upcoming year. And what a year it will be! Programs filled with fun and adventure are being developed as this newsletter goes to press!

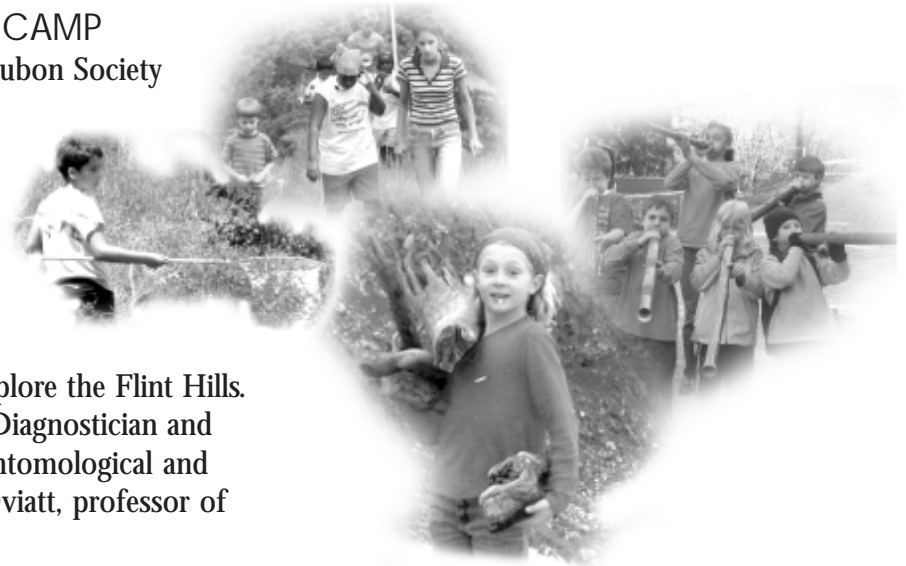
As many of you already know, Richard has been sharing the wonders of nature with children of our community for years. With the help of our chapter he will continue to do so, and will expand his outreach to families & people of all generations. The board has allotted a portion of the annual budget to develop these programs. Here's a few examples of how individual members can help:

- 1) If you or someone you know has extra binoculars or spotting scopes that are not being used, donate them to WW. They will be put to good use!
- 2) WW provides scholarships, for all of it's programs, to people who need financial assistance. You can make a donation to help with these scholarships.
- 3) Be a nature guide! If you are knowledgeable about anything having to do with nature (i.e. gardening, birding, rocks, wildflowers, etc.) & would like to share that knowledge, WW participants would enjoy learning from you.
- 4) Last but not least, sign up to participate in any of our upcoming Audubon/Wonder Workshop events. (See the announcement in this & September's issue of the Prairie Falcon.) You will learn, make friends, and have fun!

If you would like to know more about WW and the upcoming events, give Richard Pitts a call at Wonder Workshop, 785-776-1234, or email [wonder@kansas.net](mailto:wonder@kansas.net) Please join the board in extending a warm welcome to Wonder Workshop! We look forward to a relationship filled with the wonders of nature!

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Wonder Workshop OUTBACK CAMP  
co-sponsored with the Flint Hills Audubon Society  
Coming September 18, 2004.



For Family and Friends who like to explore the Flint Hills. Featuring Bobby Brown, KSU Insect Diagnostician and assistant curator of the Museum of Entomological and Prairie Arthropod research and Jack Oviatt, professor of Geology at KSU.

More information will be in the Sept. issue of the Prairie Falcon, but you may contact Richard Pitts, Director of the Wonder Workshop at 785-776-1234, or email [wonder@kansas.net](mailto:wonder@kansas.net)



*“As I cup it in my hand, committing an impropriety as it were, chucking a queen under the chin, the cluster of blossoms tilts forward. The outer circles of tiny white blossoms are open and full, but narrowing in circles, the tiny fists of white are tightly closed. An opening fist is tinged with purplish pink which flees to cream upon opening. A stamp of royalty is in the center, the purple one, the dark purple heart, the center of a flower arrangement that one’s heart propels.”*

Adapted by myself and Morgan Jane McFarland from her journal entry on a warm July day.

There are several mutually-exclusive stories that might explain how this wildflower acquired its common or rather its uncommon name. When Anne arrived as the new queen-to-be, she challenged the ladies in waiting to produce a lacework pattern as lovely as a wild carrot’s. That’s what I believe. Queen Anne’s Lace (*Daucus carota*) may have been introduced here by European settlers. It might have been present in sacks of grain brought over by the Pilgrims. This free-spirited flower is present in 48 states including our own state of Kansas. It is present in Riley County, although it is much, much easier to find near the Missouri border. I brushed against it, when I was a little tike, shakily navigating the ground to our mail box. Contact with it brings back memories. When MJM sent me snippets of her journal entries, I latched on to this one above, with her permission, because it brought back memories of sensual shapes, textures, and faint aromas. This 2 to 3 foot-tall plant with a large, compound umbel is “robustly” delicate. MJ reminds me that the queen’s umbel “... is like a basket - you can feel the green-gray staves ....” and a meshing of the lesser frameworks that are delicately frictive. Its wild astringency and vigorous, bending tensile resiliency remain memorable.

Again MJ has provided a quote for this column when she said, “... if you push down into one flower with your face, it springs and dances.” A dance for those who are young of heart. Although part of the dance is the progression from germination to death. The seed has rows of tiny bristles, which may stick to critters and be carried to a suitable site. The young plant produces a rosette of tender leaves. Depending on the harshness of the local environment, it may complete its dance in one, two, or more years. It will flower in its second year if the diameter of its root is an half an inch or more. This root may be harvested by a person who wishes to know the wild carrot this way. The root is more nutritious before it donates the starch and sugar to the flower and becomes even tougher than

normal. Therefore, the people who wish to emulate Euell Gibbons need to be able to identify a non-flowering stage. People sometimes read a story about the origin of Queen Anne’s Lace and then nibble on a look-a-like that they hope is edible and sometimes become sick. No, don’t do something like that, my friend. Euell Gibbons devotes several paragraphs to Queen Anne’s Lace in his gem of a cookbook, “Stalking the Healthful Herbs.” He suggests that domesticated carrots occasionally go feral, runnin’ amuck as it were, providing new populations with wild astringency. He writes that the roots can be identified by a carrot-like odor. I would add that a root that smells like parsnips must be avoided, and a look-a-like with a smooth, non-hairy stem must be avoided, because it could be water hemlock or poison hemlock. Each part should smell like a carrot. And please consult a more authoritative identification guide than me.

Believe it or not, the queen’s lace is a problem where carrots are grown for seed. In some areas, it is classified as a weed. It can be a problem in hay, since cattle do not munch selectively on hay. The roots and seeds and foliage have medicinal properties. A controversial use of the seeds is in a tea used as a morning-after contraceptive. This tea is used for this purpose in some areas of our country.

Queen Anne’s Lace is a relative of the herb, silphion, which was used as a contraceptive until it was driven into extinction. It appears that human reproduction, whether restrained or unrestrained, has had ecological consequences throughout recorded history.

Close to the Missouri border town, Parkville, where I grew up, Queen Anne’s Lace seemed like a member of society, a part of history, and yet something playfully beautiful nodding gently in the breeze.



## SKYLIGHT

pete cohen

As *The Prairie Falcon* prepares to take its August vacation let's return to the overhead garden party we left last month, arriving again in the evening. The guests we didn't greet, in the eastern part, have moved a bit westerly now, and the Milky Way is blossoming almost in the north-south middle. Vega sparkles high overhead, the bright blue eye of the Lyre Bird, with a small, faint parallelogram of starry feathers beneath. Just to the east, the long, wide cross that is Cygnus the Swan is re-enacting some previous flight for the benefit of Aquila the Eagle, who is perched in a long, pinched triangle shape further down and just off the edge of the Way. Its bright star, Altair, in rising has marked the east. Just arriving from that direction will be Pegasus, the upside-down horse, whose body is outlined by the Great Square that follows behind his curved neck and outstretched forelegs.

Politely disengaging from him we can move further east before sauntering back along the garden's southern border to encounter a receiving line of Zodiacal personages, passing first by Aquarius, then Capricorn, acknowledging as best we can their Honorable Faintnesses. We then meet again the Milky Way and should have little difficulty locating Sagittarius the Archer, or at least that part of him that resembles a Teapot. From the west-pointing spout, a puff of starry steam marks the direction to the center of our galaxy, and as we proceed further westward we are keeping company with the long curved tail and the akimbo claws of Scorpio, whose red heart, Antares, is beating clearly.

Scorpio will be leaving the party early as August deepens; thus we will miss greeting Libra the Scales, who feelin' faint, and who has gone early and is probably just as happy not to be disturbed. By now, in mid-August, Jupiter will also be leaving, but there are new arrivals in the east, so let's cut straight back across the garden toward them. On the way we can pause with two guests whose positions we have been circumnavigating. Here is Hercules directly between the Corona Borealis, greeted last month, and Vega, where we began this time. Find a keystone of stars, with antennae like rays going out from each corner, and you have engaged Hercules. To the south, occupying the spread of space between Hercules and Scorpio, is Ophiuchus the Snake Handler. He's rather

like a large triangle with curved sides, and note the trail of stars curling up from either side of his southern base: there in front of you is the snake he is handling.

Now resume to westward, angling northward, and amid the Milky Way bloom, above the Swan's demonstration, Queen Cassiopeia will be rocking in her W-shaped throne chair, and facing her husband King Cepheus, a square face with a crown that more resembles a dunce cap, its pointy top aiming between his dearest and Polaris. Sneak around behind the throne chair in late summer, and to eastward of the Way you will meet Princess Andromeda. She's in a gown shown by two shallow curves of stars that spread apart toward the horizon but come together at the northeast corner of Pegasus's square. And close behind her, as time passes, will come racing through the Milky Way her lover and protector, Perseus, looking rather like a large Greek letter *pi*, or as it also can seem to me, like a little boy on a tricycle.

Well, to this point we've been participating mainly with the evening sessions, while during this year's season, as with many parties, it's after midnight that things really get going and the night owls and early birds have their fling. Venus, just past her greatest brilliance of this time around, will continue to light up the whole affair starting just before 4 a.m., then just a little bit earlier with each session. The Perseid meteors flock in at 37 miles/second after 12 a.m. from July 23<sup>rd</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup>, but particularly in the wee hours of August 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, according to Astronomy's time clock. And on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Saturn returns; according to *The Old Farmer's Almanac* it will be just to the right of the thin crescent Moon. And as August becomes September, Saturn and Venus will have an easily-viewed conjunction in the eastern pre-dawn. And that ain't all: on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> get a load of the Moon, Saturn, and Venus floating above a get-together of Mercury and Regulus, the bright star at the bottom of Leo's re-appearing backward question mark. Then early on the 13<sup>th</sup> the Moon and Mercury will be conjoining, or nearly.

Full moons July 31 (at 1p05) and August 29 (9p22); new July 17 (6a24), August 15 (8p24), and September 14 (9a29). Times from StarDate.

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This is the end of the year for the Prairie Falcon and the NFHAS Board. Our new year begins in September - with some returning board members and some new faces. Everyone on the board has not only given their time but brought a passion or love of nature to the organization. This is manifest in various forms to be sure, but a commitment to preservation, conservation, education and the joy of birding is there in all of us.

AND ALL OF YOU VOLUNTEERS! The NFHAS appreciates every one of those who have volunteered in some way to organize, dig, plant or make possible - the Bird Seed Sales, Birdathon, Christmas Bird Census, Programs, fund raisers, Garden show booth, Northeast Park Prairie area, the Michel-Ross preserve, Cecil Best Trail, OR go to public meetings, keeping watch so to speak. And the list goes on.... THANKS TO ALL OF YOU!

## THANK YOU!



Dru Clarke for her wonderful stories.



Tom Morgan for bringing plants and insects into closer view.



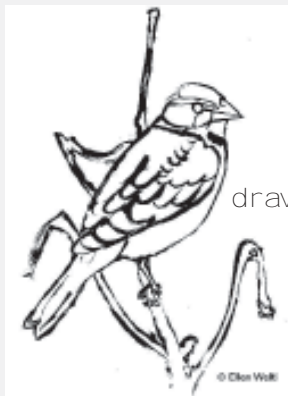
Pete Cohen for guiding us through the night sky.



And Dave Rintoul for being our "webmaster."

If you have an idea or want to submit an article for the Prairie Falcon, the deadline is the 15th of month for the following month's issue. Mail or email Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520 (cinraney@ksu.edu)

I am a dickcissel



drawing by Ellen Welti

Photo by Dave Rintoul





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



Printed on 100% post-  
consumer recycled  
paper

**Non-profit Organization**  
**U.S. Postage Paid**  
**Permit No. 662**  
**Manhattan, KS 66502**

***Return Service Requested***

No program in July  
or August - See you  
in September!

Published monthly (except August) by the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society  
Edited by Cindy Jeffrey, 15850 Galilee Rd., Olsburg, KS 66520 (cinraney@ksu.edu)  
Also available on the World Wide Web at the URL <http://www.ksu.edu/audubon/falcon.html>

**Subscription Information:**

Introductory memberships - \$20 per year; then basic membership is \$35 annually. When you join the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of the National Audubon Society and receive the bimonthly Audubon magazine in addition to the **PRAIRIE FALCON**. New membership applications may be sent to NFHAS at the address below; make checks payable to the National Audubon Society. Membership Renewals are handled by the National Audubon Society and should not be sent to NFHAS. Questions about membership? Call toll-free, 1-800-274-4201, or email the National Audubon Society [join@audubon.org](mailto:join@audubon.org).

If you do not want to receive the national magazine, but still want to be involved in our local activities, you may subscribe to the **PRAIRIE FALCON** newsletter for \$15 per year. Make checks payable to the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society, and mail to: **Treasurer, NFHAS, P.O. Box 1932, Manhattan KS 66505-1932.**

**RARE BIRD HOTLINE:** For information on Kansas Birds, subscribe to the Kansas Bird Listserve. Send this message **<subscribe KSBIRD-L>** to this address **<listserv@ksu.edu>** and join in the discussions!

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