Welcome New Members
By Lucette Wombacher
We are always happy to welcome new members to the Manatee County Audubon Society.

New Members:
Due to the quantity of new members, please refer to page 4 of this newsletter.

Reinstated Members:
Elizabeth Cullen
Nancy Keegan
Everett W Miller
David & Winona Myers
Frank Yanni

Inside this issue:
Field Trip Reports  2-3
Clewiston Trip—Feb 28 to March 2  2
4-Sparrow Day at Felts  3
Grassy Point Event  3
Helping Hands at Felts  4
Dues Reminder  4
Birdwatching Course  5
Thank You Donors  5
February Walks, Trips  6
Junior Audubon at Myakka  6
Note from Olive Willard's nephew  6

FEBRUARY 2013
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NEXT MEETING...
Thursday, February 21st at 6:30pm

— Lou Newman —
“Wildlife Encounters”

Dr. Lou Newman developed a curiosity about photographic techniques as a teenager which evolved into a major lifelong hobby. Photography was a significant leisure time activity throughout his years as a rancher and veterinarian in Montana, and became more than a hobby when he left practice to become a veterinary college faculty member and pursue an advanced degree and career in the academic arena. Photography was an integral part of his roles as veterinary pathologist, professor, clinician, investigator, diagnostian and administrator.

Join us as the renowned wildlife photographer Lou Newman shares with us not only his outstanding photographic work, but also extensive knowledge of wildlife. Come enjoy his stories and wildlife action shots from his “Wildlife Encounters”.

Please note our meetings will begin at 6:30pm with our social hour; the general meeting follows at 7:00pm.
Location: 1st United Methodist Church of Palmetto (330 11th Ave. W. Palmetto)

Barbara’s Endowment — Great News! Fund is Established

Well Guy and Gals, WE DID IT! Last week our hard working, trip leading, money managing treasurer, Lucette Wombacher, handed over the papers and a check which established the Barbara Singer Memorial Felts Preserve Endowment Fund. (The BSMFPEF???) How about just Barbara’s Endowment! Because, it really is Barbara’s Endowment! She charted the course, and we all traveled along the path. With the establishment of this fund, we, Manatee Audubon, have given our friends, neighbors and birders from around the country and the world a pledge of the assured continuity and maintenance of Felts Preserve. This is something we can all be rightfully proud of!

Bequests from Otis and Anita Felts (the land), Olive Willard (a handsome bequest), and another bequest from Stanley Zaleski are the underpinnings of the endowment. Grants sought and acquired by Barbara were the main source of funds for the cleanup, planting and improvement of the property. However, MCAS could never have brought the preserve to the beautiful condition it’s in today with its environment and wildlife without the volunteer hours, dues, donations and support of our members. My hat is off to all of you! Job well done!

The endowment is structured in such a way that only the earnings can be drawn out each year and a limit is placed on them. While, at present, this is not enough to totally support the preserve, it is our goal to grow it to the point where this will be possible. To that end, we are dedicating the majority of the funds raised in The Giving Partner Challenge, March 5th and 6th of this year to grow the endowment and help provide for current maintenance. — (Continued on page 4)
REMEmBERING BARB’S BIRTHDAY

To honor Barb Singer’s birthday (Jan. 8th) Jerry Knight and Deb Yodock went to Terra Ceia Preserve and found Hooded Mergansers, Eastern Phoebes, lots of Palm Warblers and a wonderful pair of Barred Owls. They continued to Cockroach Bay Preserve and found Belted Kingfishers, Roseate Spoonbills, Snowy and Great Egrets, Greater Yellowlegs, Teals, Scaups, Ring-necked Ducks and so many Redheads, they couldn’t even begin to count. A total of 61 species were seen including a beautiful pair of Painted Buntings at Billie and Jerry’s home. (Billie had to work or she would have been with us.) American Kestrels, Northern Harriers, Red-shouldered Hawks, Osprey and Bald Eagles soared overhead throughout the day.

Lucette also spent Barb’s birthday birding and tallied 58 different species, including one life bird. It was a lot more fun birding with Barb than birding with memories of her. All wished Barb had been there in person, but we talked about her and concluded she was there in spirit. Like she said through her chosen poem, “I did not die, I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight.”

— Article by Deb Yodock & Lucette Wambacher

Clewiston Trip: Birds & Ranch Wagon Tour

We will bird our way to Clewiston on Thurs., Feb. 28th. Our lodging will be at the historic Clewiston Inn. A buffet breakfast will be included. Friday we will have a 5-hour wagon tour of a working ranch including a “chuck wagon” lunch. Dinner both Thursday and Friday will be on your own. Saturday we will tour the wonderful Station 5 area south of Clewiston. This spot has become one of the top birding hotspots in the East. We will carpool so departure for home will be early afternoon on Saturday, March 2nd depending on each group’s wishes. We have had overnights to Sta. 5 twice previously and many of those already registered for this trip are repeat Station 5 visitors.

At the present time we have 21 signed up. Our limit for the Ranch tour is 24. We can accommodate more, but those over that number can do other birding in the area on Friday. It would still be a wonderful trip. The cost of the trip is $190 per person including the $55 ranch tour. A $50 deposit will be due immediately with the balance due February 15. More information will be available at the February meeting. For more information or to sign up contact Connie Zack, 758-2929 or zacodo@tampabay.rr.com.
Trip Report: Let Us Enjoy Lettuce Lake

Nancy and Bob Dean led a group of MCAS birders to a cypress wonderland, Lettuce Lake Park, on Saturday, Jan 19th. What a special place! Located within Tampa’s boundaries we found a wild wet sanctuary for birds & wildlife that I never thought to be in such a place. You arrive, park and move onto the extensive system of wooden boardwalks that stretch throughout much of the wetland lake area. You never walk on the ground when you are within the lake area. For this reason the birds seem less sensitive to visitors and don’t disappear as soon as you appear.

For the birder this is a great opportunity to see water birds like the Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons and White Ibises. There seemed to be an especially good population of Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Night Herons. The Deans mentioned if the day is overcast the Night Herons come out more readily than if it’s sunny. I saw Wood Ducks, Anhinga, a Pied-billed Grebe, a female Belted Kingfisher and Roseate Spoonbills. A Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawks, Brown Pelicans and Laughing Gulls were seen overhead along with a multitude of Turkey and Black Vultures. There were also a good number of Warblers and smaller passerines. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Tufted Titmice, Black and-white, Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers and Northern Cardinals were seen.

I really enjoyed the wildlife. There are turtles, Otters, Banded Water Snakes and others to amuse you on your walk. Families and a mix of people use the boardwalk for walking recreation but even the excited kids didn’t really scare the birds away. There are also dry land woods to bird in as I noted some people were doing. There is a tower for upper story viewing, regular picnic areas and a ball field for kids too. There is a small welcome center with bathrooms. The park admission is $2.00, definitely worth it. — Article by Deb Yodock

A “4-Sparrow Day” at Felts Preserve

By Billie Knight

January at Felts Preserve has been very eventful. We started out with our Open House on Saturday, January 5, with many members and visitors visiting Felts Preserve. The number of species of birds seen at Felts during January was 60 species, with an otter spotted at the north pond by Tom Heitzman, and then seen last week in the south pond by John Ginaven and Stu Wilson. Barry Rossheim had a 4-Sparrow day on January 12th - a Savannah, Swamp, Chipping, and a first-ever for Felts, a Lincoln’s Sparrow. All sparrows were seen in the thickets in the south field. When you visit Felts Preserve, please take the time to fill out a Bird Checklist, which are located in the Bird Blind. This helps us keep track of the birders that visit Felts and the birds that are seen during the month at Felts Preserve.

At the Bird Blind, it has been quite active, with the Indigo Buntings and Painted Buntings feeding daily. The American Goldfinch also visit the feeders, but have found grass seeds in the west wildflower bed where they like to feed. The Swamp Trail is drying up and there are always many Carolina Wrens and Northern Cardinals on this trail. The Eastern Bluebird boxes have been cleaned out and we hope that the Bluebirds will visit Felts this year.

Our next Open House will be held on Saturday, February 2nd, from 8 a.m. til noon. Dick & Deb Comeau are scheduled to lead our Bird Walk, which begins at 9:30 a.m. All are welcome!

Tell Folks About MCAS at Grassy Point Preserve on Feb. 9th

Grassy Point Preserve, the new 32-acre preserve at Holmes Beach, will be hosting an Open House on Saturday, Feb 9 starting at 10am. Local vendors & conservation groups have been invited to set up booths for the event. MCAS will have a booth.

We need your help staffing our exhibit table & talking with folks. Make some new friends by handing out our Felt’s Preserve business cards & our key events brochures. Call Jim Stephenson if you can help for a few hours. (PS– Bring your own bottled water & sunscreen.)
Helping Hands at Felts

While the basic bird watching course participants were enjoying the birding experience at Felts Preserve, other MCAS members were busy improving the appearance of this excellent resource. Check out the freshly washed benches, wooden Roger’s Walkway donor sign, and pruned shrubs.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered their time and energy on the monthly Workday at Felts. Several months ago during one of our storms a large oak went down in Oak Alley. We extend our thanks to Fred Allen and Tom Heitzman for clearing out the oak, making the path accessible.

You, too, can join in the fun & fellowship during workdays on the last Saturday of each month. Meet near the shed at 8am. Bring work gloves.

Dues Reminder

Annual Dues should have been paid in January. If you have not yet paid your annual dues, you are in arrears. As of January 23, only 65% of our members have paid to renew their membership. It is only $20 per household. So please send your payment to: MCAS, PO Box 14550, Bradenton, FL 34280. Our by-laws require that we drop non-paying members, so don’t let that happen to you. If you are unsure whether you have paid, give Lucette a call at 776-8424.

Barbara’s Endowment

(Continued from front page) … Article by Jim Stephenson

Only a portion will go to the ‘Give a Child a Ride to the Wild’ initiative. Funds raised for the Wild Ride will pay for the transportation of school children to Felts Preserve for a day outdoors and an introduction to conservation. This campaign is where you can really make your donation dollars count, and we’ll be telling you more about that at our next meeting and in separate correspondence.

If you haven’t been on a field trip or out to Felts lately, please do so. Carmenza & I went on the Dean’s trip to Lettuce Lake where I commented, ‘I’ve never been in a place where I counted Night Herons by 10s’. The Painted and Indigo Buntings are also easy to see at the Bird Blind at Felts along with many other birds, including a bunch of warblers as you walk along the clearly marked & groomed paths.

Good Birding to each and every one of you! -- Jim

Welcome New Members

Please welcome the following new members to the Manatee County Audubon Society.

Carl Anderson        Ed Martin
Rodney & Beverly Bovee  Peter Mitchell
Janet H DeGroff      James F Price
Jan Eckle             Wendy S Provost
Sophia M Bryson"Fieke"  Ed Rajkowski
Liz Fitzgerald        Elaine S Ripstein
Mary Foster           Bob Roney
Nancy S Galese        Diane Ryu
Mary V Grimes         Sheila Springer
Elizabeth Hager       Julie Teofilak
Julie Heishman        Kerri Ward
Melisse Hypponen      Wendy Ward
Joanne K & James W Kelly  Carol Warren
David G Koppin        Linda & Harry  Wiedenmeyer
Rachel Marquina        Mary Zlosel

Please welcome the following new members to the Manatee County Audubon Society.
Over 30 birders are participating in the 2013 Beginning Bird Watching Course, led by Bob & Nancy Dean. Sessions include classroom presentations as well as 2 full-day field trips. Assisting the Deans as Audubon guides were: Jon Ginaven, Don & Bobbi Benson, Nancy & Mike Barnes, Mike Corso, as well as Billie & Jerry Knight.

The first trip started at Felts Preserve with over 30 species noted, including the expected Indigo and Painted Buntings, as well as a Barred Owl spotted by Scott Niblick on the swamp trail.

The field trip continued to Whitney Beach, where special birds included close-up views of a Common Loon, Royal, Forster’s and Sandwich Terns along with 4 plovers (Black-bellied, Semi-palmated, Snowy and a single Wilsons). A very large gull (sp) was photographed for later identification. This is the best plover count in a number of years. At Leffis Key (AKA Coquina Bay Walk), close-up sightings of Red-breasted Mergansers were special.

Everyone was pleased with the final count of 71 species being seen during the entire trip.

Thank You for Your Financial Donations — January Donors

As of time this newsletter went to press, we wanted to thank the following folks for their generous financial donations to Manatee County Audubon Society:

Barry & Shala Rossheim
Roger & Jan Robson
Carole & David Munro
Don Bansen
Janet Paisley
Dolores & Jack Weaver
Dr. Stanley & Sara Werner
Molly McCartney
Everett W Miller
Nancy Wolfe Stead
Ron & LaDonne Mayberry
Lucette Wombacher
Dean & Wendy Van Zegeren
Susan Anderson
Charles & Judy Warner
Smitty McGinnis
Carol Webster
Lynda Simmons

As a reminder, because MCAS is officially a non-profit organization, your financial donations are tax deductible in most cases.

Thank you again for supporting Manatee Audubon.
February Bird Walks & Field Trips

Drivers will suggest your share for riding in their vehicle. The (L) listed for some trips means you should bring a bag lunch.

Sat., Feb. 2 — Open House at Felt’s Preserve — Bird walk at 9:30 with Dick & Deb Comeau

Wed, Feb. 6 — Celery Fields and Pinecraft Park (L) Bob & Mary Kelly 758-9796, Spring migration at these 2 hot spots. Meet at Lowe’s parking lot SR 70 at 1-75.

Tues, Feb. 12 — Emerson Point - 2 hr walk. Lucette Wombacher 776-8424. Meet at the Welcome Center at 8:30 a.m.

Thurs, Feb. 21 — Felt’s Audubon Preserve. Let’s all check out Spring migration at our own preserve. Meet at Felt’s at 8:30 a.m. Steve Black 376-0110

Sun, Feb. 24 – Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve - Billie & Jerry Knight 592-7622 will lead search for waders, ducks & songbirds. Meet at 8 a.m. Walmart 508 US 301 at 10th St & Palmetto. Limited to 20 people so call or email Billie to make reservations.

Thurs-Sat, Feb. 28 – Mar. 3 — We will bird our way to Clewiston on Thurs; Friday have a wagon tour of the working J7 Ranch. Saturday we’ll tour the hot birding spot: Station 5, heading home that afternoon. Connie Zack 758-2929.

JR Audubon Hikes Myakka State Park

Junior Audubon met at Myakka State Park on Jan. 19th. Junior birders included Matthew & James Press, Nicholas & Eric Martinez and Isaac Ceciliano. We met at Myakka State Park because last month we had studied prairies and Myakka State Park is second largest Dry Prairie in the state.

The park provided us with a ranger who took us to a prairie and explained the type of plants and animals that lived there. In addition, he talked about the benefit of fire in managing the prairie. He showed us a Fire Truck. This particular Fire Truck was utilized to start fires more than prevent them. When fire is suppressed, the prairie becomes overgrown and a lot of plants don’t survive.

We concluded our visit to the park with a trip to the Canopy Walk which is two towers connected by a Suspension Bridge which enables you to get a good look at the park.

— Article by Steve Black

President’s Note

I sent Olive Willard’s nephew an email today telling him about memorializing her at Felt’s Preserve and about her bequest making up a major part of Barbara’s endowment.

I just received this touching email from him.

(Shown at right.)

2012—2013 Standing Committees

Beach Nesting Bird Stewardship — Dee Hanny 745-1553
Christmas Bird Count — Dick Comeau 752-1835
Conservation — Carole Munro 896-6102
Education — Deb Yodock 228-1269
Field Trips — Connie Zack 758-2929
Felt’s Audubon Preserve — Tom Heitzman 737-3169
Felt’s Open House — Amy Miller 758-7478
Historian — Don Bansen 794-0255
Hospitality — Patti Clauer 776-9063

Junior Audubon — Steve Black 376-0110
Membership — Lucette Wombacher 776-8424
Newsletter Editor — Lori Roberts 404-941-4365
Newsletter Mailings — Betty Benishak 254-7662
Programs — Jim Stephenson 301-466-1973
Publicity — LaDonne Mayberry 795-4685
Strategic Alliances — Lori Roberts 404-941-4365
Ways & Means — OPEN
Webmaster — Tami McNally 343-8267

- MANATEE COUNTY -
AUDUBON SOCIETY

Manatee County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 14550
Bradenton, FL 34208
Ph: 941-729-2222

2012—2013 Board Officers & Executive Committee

President — Jim Stephenson 301-466-1973
Vice Pres — Deb Hutchinson Comeau
Secretary — Patty Petruff 747-1789
Treasurer — Lucette Wombacher 776-8424

Due to the passing of Barb Singer, in a special election of officers at the December Board of Directors Meeting, Jim Stephenson was elected president of MCAS. Deborah Hutchinson was elected vice-president.

2012—2013 Board Members

Don Bansen 794-0255
Steve Black 376-0110
Dick Comeau 752-1835
Dee Hanny 745-1553
LaDonne Mayberry 795-4685
Amy Miller 758-7478
Carole Munro 896-6102
Bunny Schneider 792-1794
Jack Schneider 792-1794
Connie Zack 758-2929

Manatee Chapter Board meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Manatee County Library, Downtown Bradenton Branch.

INJURED BIRD HELP: Call 778-6324 for what to do. Someone will call you back.