

Philadelphia Larus

the newsletter of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club

VOL. 22 NO. 1

SPRING 1996



The Dreams of Street

By SANDRA L. SHERMAN

One of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club's most distinguished members, Phillips B. Street has rubbed shoulders with many of the country's most pre-eminent ornithologists. His classmates at Cornell University included Olin Sewell Pettingill, George Miksch Sutton and John Emlen; among his professors was the distinguished Dr. Arthur A. Allen.

He has birded with Roger Tory Peterson as well as some of the early members of our own club — Witmer Stone, Julian Potter, Ernie Choate.

But when I tell you he has had close connections with Wilson, I'm not suggesting he hung out with the early 19th-century figure sometimes known as "the father of American ornithology"; I am referring to the Wilson Ornithological Society, the national group that he served as president for two years.

There are men who have been members of DVOC longer than Street,

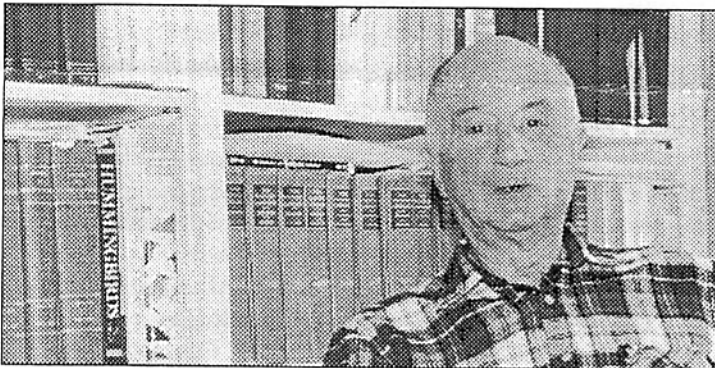


Photo by Sandra L. Sherman

who was elected to membership in 1945, on the same night, he recalls, that he gave a talk on the birds of Trinidad. But Street, DVOC president in 1954 and 1955, is one of a small handful of 50-year-plus members who have brought honor to our club that extends beyond the boundaries of the Philadelphia area.

Besides his years as president of the Wilson Society, Street is a past board member of the National Audubon Society and Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology.

He is probably best known for "Birds of the Pocono Mountains,

Pennsylvania," first published in the 1954 *Cassinia*, issued in December 1955. He most recently updated his records in the 1986-87 *Cassinia*, with the assistance of Rick Wiltraut. DVOC published the original work as a 76-page book; it has been out of print for quite a while. Street is currently working on updating his records from 1985 to 1995.

Street also authored "A History of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, the First One Hundred Years" in the 1990 centennial edition of *Cassinia*.

Born in 1914 in Beverly, N.J., — in the same house in which his father, architect J. Fletcher Street, was born — the younger Street was immersed at an early age in the ways of birds. J. Fletcher Street had already been a DVOC member for 11 years when Phil was born, and he served as president from 1919 to 1921.

Interestingly, father and son were never members of the club at the same time — Phil was not elected till the year after his father died. But he attended meetings and went on numerous field trips with the oldtimers.

Although he received his bachelor's degree in ornithology from Cornell in 1935, "there obviously weren't going to be any jobs in that line," he said, "so the last couple of years, I took as much in the way of business as I could, much to Dr. Allen's disgust and my faculty advisers."

Street went into the investment business, eventually with First Boston Corp. "I retired at 65, took a weekend off and went to work as an investment counselor," he said. He continued his second career for another 15 years before retiring once more.

He said he has no regrets about not remaining in the field professionally. "I think it's nicer to have it as a hobby, really."

And enjoy it he has.

As we sat in his basement study in Berwyn, Pa., with his precious, bound birding journals on the wall behind him and a few early spring flowers poking up in the sunshine beyond the window, Street allowed himself to reminisce about earlier DVOC memories.

"The club meetings then were so much more fun," he recalled. "We met up in the bird room [at the Academy of Natural Sciences], where all the cases were. When a discussion of a bird came up, you'd go over and get it out and look at it. That's one thing we're trying to do something about [now], but it isn't the same."

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PROGRAMS

NOTE: Several meeting dates have been changed this year and are indicated in bold italics. Please make a note of them now! Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m., at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, 19th St. and Benjamin Franklin Parkway. For information on programs, call Don Jones, 609-859-0281.

Parking is available at the Logan Square Parking Garage, 1815 Cherry St., at a reduced rate. This indoor, patrolled lot is between 18th and 19th Streets, with entrances on both Arch Street and Cherry Street. Remember to have your parking ticket validated by a security guard at the Academy.

For the record, early 1996 programs are included.

JANUARY 18, 1996 — EMILE DE VITO, "Forest Fragmentation: The Songbird Connection."

FEBRUARY 1, 1996 — SALLY CONYNE AND DAVID AGRO, "An Introduction to Neotropical Birding."

FEBRUARY 15, 1996 — JOAN WALSH, "New Jersey Breeding Bird Atlas."

MARCH 7, 1996 — Meeting canceled due to inclement weather.

MARCH 21, 1996 — ARMAS HILL, "Pelagic Birds, Near and Far."

APRIL 4, 1996. ROBERT M. SCHUTSKY, "Birds and Beauty of Arizona."

APRIL 18, 1996 — MARK JAFFE, "And

No Birds Sing." Jaffe is the environment writer for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the author of the book *And No Birds Sing*, which addresses the situation of the birds in Guam.

MAY 9, 1996 — MERCEDES FOSTER of the Smithsonian Institution, "Manakins." This is the second in a series of special lectures on the Neotropics.

MAY 16, 1996 — KENN KAUFMAN. "Birding in the 21st Century." Author, editor, DVOC member and one heck of a birder, Kenn will tell us where our sport is headed.

JUNE 6, 1996 — MAY RUN REPORTS. The final formal meeting of the season will detail May Runs, Big Days, Century Runs, whatever reporting of lists within a 24-hour period you wish to include. Contact Tom Bailey, Field Trip chairman, 609-426-4727 (home) or 908-758-4402 (work).

JULY 11, 1996 — First informal summer meeting has been moved back a week due to July 4th holiday.

AUGUST 1 and SEPTEMBER 5 and 19, 1996 — Informal summer meetings.

OCTOBER 3, 1996 — KEVIN KARLSON, "Birds of the High Arctic."

PLEASE NOTE: The date of the Annual Banquet, usually held the third Thursday in November, has been changed this year to DECEMBER 5 to accommodate the schedule of our speaker, Steve Hilty.

FIELD TRIPS

For meeting times and locations of these trips, contact the leaders. For other trips, call Tom Bailey, Field Trip chairman, 609-426-4727 (home) or 908-758-4402 (work).

Saturday, May 4. Belleplain State Forest, Cumberland/Cape May counties, N.J. For Southern breeding specialties and other Pine Barrens nesters. Leader: Megan Edwards, 609-783-4192.

Saturday, May 18. Magnolia Road Swamp, Pemberton, N.J. Visit a New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Dot and Brooks Evert Trail. About a half-mile hike that could be wet in areas, so bring appropriate footwear. About 10 species of breeding warblers. Meet at Vincentown Diner, Routes 38 and 206. Leader: Don Jones, 609-859-0281 (home).

Sunday, May 19. Chatsworth, N.J. New Jersey Conservation Foundation area for Pine Barrens breeders. Meet at Vincentown Diner, Routes 38 and 206. Leader: Don Jones, 609-859-0281 (home).

Sunday, July 21. Delaware Bayshore. Search for shorebirds. Leader: Sandy Sherman, 610-237-6814 (home) or 215-893-5730 (work).

Saturday, Aug. 3. Edwin Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (Brigantine). Shorebird trip. Leader: Tom Bailey.

Saturday, Sept. 21. Palmyra, N.J. Fall passerine migration's in full swing. Leader: Ward Dasey, 609-953-1685 (home) or 215-886-2220 (work).

COOT TRACKS

Computer Art by AL GUARENTE and JIM LOCKYER

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COOT being hit by Peregrine when radar doesn't work — Al
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COOT kissing COOT — Jim
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Why'd the COOT cross the road? I don't know. I was hoping you knew. — Al
    
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NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS:

Do you want your phone number/e-mail address listed with your address in the next *Cassinia*?

If so, send information to:

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A Proposal to Alter DVOC Program Schedule

By SANDRA L. SHERMAN
DVOC PRESIDENT

In the course of the past decade or so, a recurring comment Council members have heard about DVOC has been the length of the meetings and the hour at which they finish. Council responded by amending the bylaws to begin the meetings a half-hour earlier.

Even with that change, the meetings still frequently don't end till almost 10 p.m. For many, that leaves little time to socialize before having to rush home. And for some, it precludes their coming at all, especially for those whose schedules require very early wake-up calls.

How can we maintain the vitality of the programs without eliminating any of the departments or features we all enjoy?

I'd like to propose a major change in the DVOC program schedule: First, I suggest we streamline the first meetings of the month by paring down the committee reports. And second, I recommend we eliminate a formal speaker from the second meeting of each month. Those meetings would be run like a cross between a formal meeting and an informal summer meeting.

Except for the Annual Meeting, the first program of each month from October to May would continue to offer high-quality speakers. The business portion of the meetings, however, would be abridged to allow the speakers to begin earlier and the meetings to end sooner.

Retained in this format would be election of new members, abbreviated committee reports (books, field trips and programs), announcements, local notes and any conservation reports or other reports that are time-oriented.

The second meeting of each month from October through May would begin with the reading of the minutes, election of new members and all Committee reports, but would give additional weight to an expanded Ornithological Studies section, including more time devoted to the study of skins, as reconstituted by Sally Conyne, David Agro and Alan Brady.

Additional time would then be available for local notes and for sharing members' expertise in the field of ornithology.

There would still be many reasons to continue coming to both meetings. And this would be a good time to remind members that most other bird clubs meet only once a month. You are already getting twice as much for your dues — at a bargain price.

Specific topics for these second-of-the-month meetings could be announced in advance, and maybe members could bring slides or other information pertaining to the topic. Those returning from interesting trips would have the time to share some highlights with us.

Book Committee chair Ellen Short, co-owner of Backyard Bird Co., has been bringing half her stock of birding books and tapes with her to each meeting. What if we planned an evening to review new birding literature or sounds? This would be a great service to our members, one that we just don't have the time to incorporate now.

Because Jan and Ken Gordon have done such a commendable job with the Conservation Committee, their reports have expanded in recent years. The second meeting would give them the time to continue to inform us. And perhaps one of these meetings might be devoted

to expanding on some of the issues they raise.

The first January meeting would remain our Annual Meeting, and the second January meeting could include a speaker instead. The third Thursday in November would still be set aside as our Annual Banquet (although, please note that this year the banquet is Dec. 5).

While dues have remained constant for many years, our expenses in almost every area of running the club have increased: Speakers' expenses, postage, publication costs, rental fees, etc., all have risen.

Our 1996 budget is just under \$10,000. As an unintended benefit of such a new policy, we would be able to trim our costs by reducing the speakers fees and by reserving the Commons or Widener Room instead of the auditorium. Some of the savings could allow us to bring in nationally known speakers more frequently.

I deeply respect the traditions that have been carefully put in place in the DVOC's 106 years.

I ask everyone to consider these options seriously. Sometime in the fall, we will set aside a period of time to discuss the changes, and then the membership will vote on the idea.

I propose that, beginning in early 1997, we institute this new schedule for a trial period — let's say through May 1997. At the first June meeting, we can re-evaluate and vote on whether to rescind the changes or to make them permanent. A notice in the *Larus* will inform you of the meeting date at which the vote will be taken.

This proposal evolved from discussions with Dr. Frank Gill, DVOC member, former head of the Academy's bird department and currently vice president/science for National Audubon Society.

I welcome your input into this subject. Feel free to contact me.

Club Elects — Yes, a Left-Hander!

Sandra L. Sherman was elected president of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club at the club's Annual Meeting. Donald Jones was chosen vice president, and Ronald J. French secretary.

Barbara M. Haas was re-elected treasurer, and Franklin C. Haas was re-elected editor of *Cassinia*.

Judge W. Hart Rufe III becomes immediate past president and will serve on Council for one year.

Continuing to serve on Council are Alan Brady and Dr. Erica Brendel, whose three-year terms continue through 1996, and Alfred Driscoll and Tom Bailey, through 1997. Newly elected to Council are Sally Conyne and Megan Edwards, whose terms extend through 1998.

Charles A. Wonderly was named a DVOC honorary member, and Keith Russell was chosen as a fellow of the club.

The Witmer Stone Award, presented for the best paper dealing with ornithological research not undertaken in the course of professional duties was presented to Colin Campbell for a *Cassinia* article on his Big Year in Delaware and other articles. Members of the Stone Committee were Brendel, Barbara Haas and Pat Sutton.

The Julian K. Potter Award, for outstanding contribution to field ornithology, was not presented this year. Members of the Potter Award Committee were Bill Murphy, Dr. John Harding and John Miller.

The Dreams of Street

Continued from Page 1

He pointed out how the men used to come to meetings dressed in coat and tie — and how they dressed the same way in the field, too.

At a time when few people owned cars, the men would meet at the train shed in Camden and hop an excursion train or a trolley to their birding destination. Even though there were many trolley lines, “it certainly limited what you could do in a day,” he noted.

One also was limited in another sense: the tools. “There weren’t any books; binoculars weren’t very good. We didn’t have scopes. That’s why they collected birds,” he said.

During World War II, Street was a supply officer in the Navy. He served in the Pacific and later in a blimp squadron in Trinidad.

When I was out in Samoa for a year, with the SeaBees [Construction Battalion], out in the Pacific, you couldn’t say where you were. My parents sort of surmised where I was. One day I got a letter from Dad. He says, ‘I’m sending you a book [Rodolphe Meyer] de Schauensee lent me on the birds of Samoa.’

“All I could write back to him was, ‘That book would be extremely timely.’

“When I was in Trinidad, the only book I had was called *The Birds of Panama* — there wasn’t any book on Trinidad.

I asked Street if he ever shot birds; his response was, “No, but I’d watched it done.”

He described the scene, and later, while paging through his journals — 18 typewritten volumes bound in red, with photographs, covering his birding adventures from his school days in 1928 through 1993 — he found the entry, written while a student at Cornell:

“Jan. 13, 1932. Today is warm and springlike, with a temperature of about 60°. Emlen, Sutton, Pettingill and I drive out to Marathon in the afternoon. It is well worth a drill cut! Marathon, in the direction of Cortland, but south of it, has a large woods of evergreen, maples and scrub growth, a marsh bog, marshy fields, and higher fields. It is fine birding country. We see a flock of Meadowlarks, and George collects two of them for Saunders. Grouse are common in the woods, and, high on the opposite hill from where we are tramping, we hear the Pileated Woodpecker calling. A Barred Owl is twice seen in the woods.”

From the time he was 6 years old, Street has been visiting the family home in Pocono Lake Preserve. Anyone who has attended a DVOC meeting in December knows that he shares his love for the area by leading an annual club trip in early January. And how each year, he promises there’ll be plenty of winter finches for everyone.

He has enjoyed doing research on the area, rooting out old records. “It’s interesting to find that Wilson and Audubon had spent time in the Poconos. The Poconos were a long way from Philadelphia in those days.”

His father bought the home, Street recalled, from John Carter, one of DVOC’s oologists.

Times were different, and egg- and nest-collecting served a purpose.

“That was the day,” he said; “when people were learning things about birds. That period is over, and now, in the DVOC, it’s mainly just a matter of seeing how big a list you can get.”

Not that there’s anything wrong with that, Street pointed out.

“I like listing. It’s a hell of a lot more fun to go out on Jan. 1 than

on Dec. 31 and see the same birds. You’re starting a new list, starting a new year.”

In the early March sunshine, he pondered whether to visit South Florida and the Dry Tortugas, a trip that would surely nudge his North American life list from 698 over that magic number. And yes, it means something to him.

“When you’re that close to 700, it’d be nice to get over it,” he acknowledged.

His 600th, he seemed almost chagrined to acknowledge, was a Brown-throated Wren found in Portal, Ariz., while staying with Walter and Sally Spofford.

Outside of the area covered by the American Ornithologists Union, Street said, he “has birded pretty much everywhere except Southeast Asia.” He has put together DVOC trips to Argentina, India and Nepal, and Australia.

Does he anticipate that there still will be a Delaware Valley Ornithological Club in 25 years?

“I expect it’ll be pretty much as it is today. The learning curve is pretty well over, as far as anything except identification. Back in those days, nests were new, all kinds of things were new.”

He reconsidered that statement, adding, “I think the Christmas Counts, Big Days, Jimmy Stasz’s North American Migration Count and the Cornell feeder watches are all adding something to our knowledge of birds.”

There are a few things he would change if he could. He has a strong belief that more club members should be more active in the national societies — AOU, Wilson and Cooper Ornithological Society. At a recent DVOC meeting, a discussion came up about the AOU’s taxonomic changes, and some members were unaware of them. “In the old days, everyone would have known about that.” He also seemed dismayed that no one at the club mentioned anything about the scheduled annual meeting of the Wilson Society at Cape May in mid-April.

“Another thing I don’t think the younger members realize,” he added, “is how much of the territory they visit today is bird territory because of Allston Jenkins. Tinicum, parts of Holgate, parts of Brigantine, the northern end of Barnegat Bay, parts of Salem County — all that stuff.”

Jenkins, an active member of the Philadelphia Conservationists until his death last year, was a longtime member of DVOC.

Street, who doesn’t head south for the winter like *some* club members, still attends most DVOC meetings. He completed another rotation of Council recently and chairs the Archives Committee. He is driven to be sure the history of the club is maintained by tracking down the minutes of the meetings and seeing that they are bound.

Beyond that, he believes, “I don’t think we should have much in the way of archives. That’s one sad thing. When we were meeting in the Bird Department, we had our own library.”

At some point, DVOC allowed the Academy’s Bird Department to take possession of the club’s skins and books. Access to these items still can be arranged, but they are not readily available anymore.

Along with his own bound journals on the shelf in his study are his father’s 17 volumes of notes, covering the years 1901 to 1942.

“I guess I’ll give them to the Academy eventually,” Street said with a sense of reluctance in his voice. “If we had a DVOC library, I guess they’d go there.”