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Summer 03

through the biKNOXulars

Newsletter of the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

June 4 meeting and picnic at Ijams Nature Center

The annual KTOS spring picnic will occur at Ijams Nature Center, beginning at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 4. Please bring a dish or beverage that can be shared with six to seven other people. Also remember to bring your favorite folding lawn chairs, binoculars and mosquito repellent.

Each year as school lets out, migration activity slows, weather turns hot and members start to leave for exciting summer vacations, we have one last event before summer. The picnic will be a time to socialize, meet new friends, become re-acquainted with old ones and share hopes of summer adventures. In the fall we'll have another social get-together to brag about what actually DOES happen over the summer!

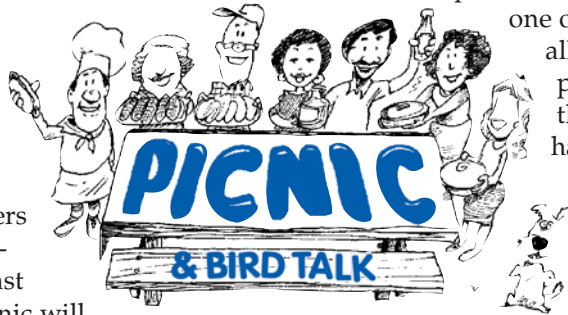
The location of the picnic, of course, also allows us to do a bit of birding. The motivated among us will have a chance to hear some owls and Chuck-will's-widows at the neighboring Forks-of-the-River Wildlife

Management Area after socializing is done.

In order to be more environmentally friendly, we are asking members to use as few disposable items as possible. A recent donation of flatware by

one of Charlie Muise's friends will allow us to avoid using any plasticware. Charlie will maintain the new flatware. If any members have re-usable plastic dishes, we would like them to bring these along. Same with cups.

The picnic will be at the plaza pavilion by the pond in front of the Visitor's Center.



Directions to Ijams: From I-40: take exit 388A, follow signs to James White Parkway, after crossing the Tennessee River, take first exit, then left on Sevier Avenue/Hillwood Drive, at bottom of long hill take right then a quick left on Island Home Avenue. Ijams is located at 2915 Island Home Avenue. (You can also get to Sevier Avenue/Hillwood Drive by turning east in front of Baptist Hospital at the south end of the Henley Street Bridge.)

Summer Field Trips and Long Vacations

Editor's Note: Club field trip coordinator, Harold Howell, is doing what we all should be doing—going on an extended road trip. Our last official communiqué from him was an e-mail he sent from Elkhart, Kansas.

Consequently, Harold didn't have time to work out details for summer field trips before he left. David and Charlie are working on local outings and Dean Edwards would like to lead one to Rankin Bottoms in August, but as of this newsletter's deadline, plans have not been finalized. To learn of these and other possible field trips please contact an officer and then spread the word. Otherwise, it's summer—relax, nap in a hammock, take long vacations, look for birds, snap photographs, sip frosty beverages, stay up late, read delicious books and live well!

The next KTOS newsletter will be in September. - Lyn

"The smallest birds sing the sweetest; it is always pleasant to hearken to their songs."

- James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer*



Presidential Perch - *By incoming President, Charlie Muise*

I'd like to take this opportunity, in my first message as president of the Knox chapter of TOS to discuss areas I'd like to see our organization head in the coming years.

But first, I think a great big Attaboy! is due to David Trently, our former president. David has done a lot for this club, and I only hope that I can come close to him in my term. David brought us a good scientific background and leadership skills, but perhaps most importantly, he is a great organizer. Two years ago he organized a very successful fall meeting, which was only surpassed by the recent "hugely successful" spring meeting.

These two events brought many birders (100 and 148, respectively) from around the state together for fun; they each had great field trips to well-chosen sites, led by seasoned trip leaders; and each meeting helped to raise a substantial amount of money for the JB Owen Memorial fund, which in turn will help us to protect the habitats which are desperately needed for the birds we love so much to observe. David helped with a number of other projects, from leading out-of-state trips, to building partnerships with UT, Knox County parks and rec, TWRA, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Isaac Walton League. During his tenure, club meetings boasted an average attendance of over 50 people. On behalf of the club, I'd like to say thank you to David. A forward-thinker, David put much of his effort into supporting and attracting fledgling birders.

So what would I like to see happen in the coming year? Continued support and encouragement of new members, and of new birders and a strengthening of our partnerships with local and regional organizations whose goals are in line with our own.

In particular, we can become a voice for the embattled National Park we have had such great birding moments in. Great Smoky Mountains National Park staff have allowed us into restricted areas for birding, have presented at our meetings and have kept us abreast on important bird sightings and issues related to birds. I feel it is our place, and within our power to help the park through the difficult times it now faces.

There is a move to undermine some of the sound ecological progress the park resource management staff have made, and we who love birds need to support this work, through making our voice heard,

and by helping the park become more aware of species of special interest, such as the Cerulean Warbler and Peregrine Falcon. By documenting these sightings properly, the park can better protect its—our—resources. I hope to see the resurrection of the KTOS Conservation Committee, and I'm looking for a dedicated individual to head this committee up. I feel it is vital to have at least one person on the committee with a strong science background and at least one person on the committee who writes well.

I would like to see more articles from YOU, our experienced and skilled club

members, in the several publications by KTOS and TOS. In the short time I have lived in this area, KTOS has lost several long-time, well-known members whose collective memory was an asset to us.

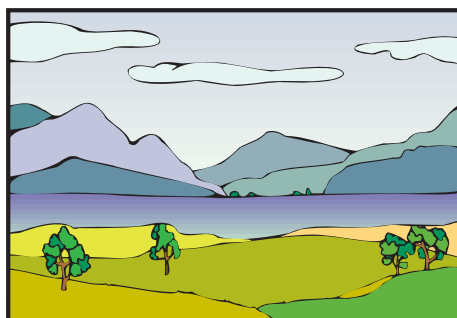
We have a number of cherished members who are not young, and whose memories contain a treasure of information

and experiences. I would like to see the formation of an energetic club history committee. Our club has so much history. We have, and have had some great ornithologists in our midst, as well as many great field birders and published authors. We've had lots of fun. It is important to document all of this and combine it with previous attempts to do so.

Finally, let's dust off the fine work that Boyd Sharp and others started several years ago in creating a club constitution. The TOS constitution is a good document that meets the needs for which it was intended. But in the last two years I have seen too many questions pop up in our attempts to do what we thought was right, that were not addressed by the state constitution. I believe it needs to be augmented by a local document and I am looking for an organized individual who will lead this committee. And to be successful, I feel we need at least one of our long-time members to be on this committee, if not heading it up. Of course, all this is far too much for one person to take on. And even if it were possible, it would not be appropriate for one person to do it.

These are my goals, but they will only come to fruition if they are also yours. Think them over and let me know where you stand on them. And please, if there are goals I have not mentioned, I would like to hear about them. I am only a part of where this chapter will go in the near future.

- Thank you, Charlie



J. B. Owen Annual report for 2002-03 May 1, 2003

The purpose of the J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment is to honor the memory of J.B. Owen, longtime Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) member known to thousands in East Tennessee through his columns in Knoxville newspapers. The Endowment provides funds for projects that promote the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee.

Guidelines for the J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment require the J.B. Owen Endowment Committee to present a report at the General Meeting of the Knoxville Chapter of TOS (KTOS) in May of each year as to the projects funded, the KTOS contribution, operating expenses, and other pertinent information as to the status of the Endowment and its administration.

Projects Funded

KTOS selected the Foothills Land Conservancy to receive the first J.B. Owen Award. This Award, in the amount of \$250.00, is for support of the Conservancy's important work in the acquisition of wetlands—for the welfare and conservation of cranes and other birds—in the area between the Yuchi and Hiwassee Island Refuges. The Award was presented to Randy Brown, Executive Director of the Foothills Land Conservancy at the February 2003 General Meeting of KTOS.

Financial Summary

J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment Financial Summary	
Fund Balance (May 1, 2002)	\$4,388.47
KTOS Contributions	\$ 0.00
Other Contributions	\$ 185.60
Interest	\$ 81.69
Distributions	\$ (250.00)
Fund Balance (April 30, 2003)	\$4,405.76
Operating Expenses (paid from the treasury of KTOS as part of the general business of KTOS)	\$ (1.28)

Other Accomplishments

- J.B. Owen Endowment Committee formed and volunteer members approved by Officers of KTOS
- Guidelines for the J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment approved by KTOS
- Developed annual schedule of activities for administration of the Endowment
- Endowment funds invested in higher-earning accounts

J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment Investment Earnings Improvement		
Period	Earnings	Annualized interest rate (%)
Last quarter of calendar year 2002	\$22.81	2.1
First quarter of calendar year 2003, with previous accounts	N/A	1.0
First quarter of calendar year 2003, with new accounts	\$32.34	2.9

- Solicitations widely distributed for proposals for J.B. Owen Award (posted on TOS Website, TOS chapter newsletters, *The Tennessee Warbler*, *The Tennessee Conservationist*, *Knoxville New-Sentinel*, *Friends of Roan Mountain Newsletter*, several departmental bulletin boards at University of Tennessee and East Tennessee State University)
- Two ornithological field study proposals received

Submitted by J.B. Owen Endowment Committee

Jerry Hadder, Chairman
Jean Alexander
David Johnson
Marie Oakes
Bob Steffy

Special thanks to David Trently Everyone in the local chapter wishes to thank outgoing president David Trently for a job well done. Where does the time go? David will still be active leading field trips; both locally and to faraway places wet and wild. We also hope he gets to spend some time organizing his presidential papers in preparation for the David Trently Presidential Library planned for his hometown. Good job David!

Spring 2003 • TOS Board of Directors Meeting May 3, 2003

Highlights by Laurie Mooney, Director

Treasurer's Report (Chris Sloan):

A financial report was not given, but a full statement for 2002 will be presented at the Fall Meeting.

The membership list for the state has been converted to an Access data base. This will facilitate keeping the list current, and creating labels for *The Migrant* and *The Warbler* of the active members. Chris Sloan will choose a data base administrator to assist in maintaining this data base. It was reiterated that membership dues are due December 31 of each year for the following year.

The financial records have been converted from the manual system to Quick Books data base with a Non Profit overlay.

Curator's Report (Chuck Nicholson/Ron Huff):

We are in the process of locating and consolidating all of the historical records to make research access more efficient.

Migrant Editor (Chris Welsh):

The fall issue for 2002 is at the printers. To assure timely publications, more articles need to be submitted for review.

Nominating Committee:

The following slate of officers for 2003-2004 was presented and accepted by the board:

President - Virginia Reynolds
 West TN Vice President - Dick Preston
 Middle TN Vice President - Melinda Welton
 East TN Vice President - Allen Trently
 Treasurer - Chris Sloan
 Secretary - Donna Ward
 Curator - Chuck Nicholson, Ron Hoff
 Directors at Large
 West TN - Donna Ward
 Middle TN - Stephen Routledge
 East TN - Dee Eiklor

TOS Website (Chuck Nicholson):

The web site is averaging 170 visits a day. There has been a 25% increase in users since Jan. of this year.

Putting *The Migrant* on the Web: Chuck will continue to investigate the details for accomplishing this. The executive committee approved that this will be done, and a time line and quote will be presented at the Fall meeting.

The 2003 Fall Meeting and Symposium is not currently scheduled. If a chapter does not volunteer to host this meeting, it will not be held.

KTOS Financial Report for June 2003

Compiled by Jerry Hadder, Treasurer

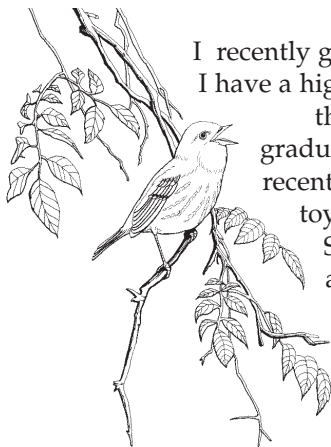
	May	April	YTD
Income:			
. Dues	\$92.00	\$276.00	\$1,502.00
. Mugs	\$6.50	\$26.50	\$98.50
. Interest	\$0.00	\$41.63	\$41.63
. Misc Donation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7.50
. Spring Meeting	\$932.00	\$1,581.00	\$2,909.00
. Owen Memorial	\$1,109.00	\$0.00	\$1,171.00
. Fuller Memorial	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$70.00</u>
Total Income	\$2,139.50	\$1,925.13	\$5,799.63
Expenses:			
. Newsletter	\$117.80	\$100.00	\$562.10
. Supplies	\$11.46	\$0.00	\$87.31
. Member Dues to TOS	\$44.00	\$1,196.00	\$1,240.00
. Spring Meeting Expense	<u>\$1,913.46</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$2,313.46</u>
Total Expenses	\$2,086.72	\$1,296.00	\$4,202.87
Other:			
. Foothills Conservancy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
. Friends of UT Gardens	\$0.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
. Fuller Memorial	\$120.00	\$0.00	\$120.00
. Memorial Books	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$90.00</u>	<u>\$90.00</u>
Total Other	\$120.00	\$150.00	\$520.00
Account Balances			
. KTOS Checking & Savings	\$4,748.32	\$5,924.54	
. J.B.Owen Memorial	\$5,514.76	\$4,405.76	
Memberships			
	161	160	

KTOS officers, directors elected

At the May 7 meeting of KTOS officer and director candidates were all approved unanimously. Officers for the upcoming year will be: **Charlie Muise**, president; **Tracey Everson**, vice-president; **Jerry Hadder**, treasurer and **Don Vowell**, secretary.

Ron Hoff, **Laurie Mooney** and **Dan Mooney** were also elected to a new two year term as directors.

'Bionic Ears' give new lease on hearing birds - by Dan Mooney



I recently got a new lease on hearing. I have a high frequency hearing loss that has been with me since I graduated from high school. I recently became aware of a new toy (thank you Ron), the Songfinder, which has allowed me to hear birds that have been out of my hearing range for as long as I can remember. It is difficult for me to express how much joy this new toy has brought me. I can now hear

waxwings, blackburnian warblers and chickadees.

If you do not have a hearing loss or do not know someone with a hearing loss the rest of this article probably will not interest you. Let me say now, I do not have any financial interest in the Naturesounds, the Songfinder or Lena Electronics, but I wish I did.

The remainder of the article comes from the Songfinder owner's manual because they said it much better than I can!

"The SongFinder is an advanced digital device aimed at bird enthusiasts who suffer from high frequency hearing loss and who are unable to hear high-pitched bird songs in their natural surroundings. Unlike conventional amplifying-type hearing aids, the Songfinder works by lowering the frequency or pitch of bird songs into a range where the user has normal or near-normal hearing. This method avoids the many pitfalls of extreme amplification. Furthermore, the SongFinder is a two-channel "binaural" device that allows the user to determine the directions and distances of singing birds with amazing accuracy. The SongFinder offers an elegant and tasteful solution for aging birders and other nature lovers who can no longer hear high singing birds.

As we grow older, we experience diminished sensitivity to high frequency sounds. Youthful hearing extends as high as 20,000 Hz (Hz = cycles/second). However, the average person (especially among men) over fifty years of age has completely lost the very highest frequencies and often suffers moderate hearing loss in the range from 4,000 to 10,000 Hz. Moderate to severe hearing loss above 4,000-5,000 Hz becomes the norm for individuals living sixty and beyond.

Loss of hearing with age, technically referred to as presbycusis, is a widespread phenomenon that

seemingly cannot be avoided.

To make matters worse, prolonged exposure to loud music and other loud background sounds also results in reduced sensitivity in the high range. This is NOT good news for aging bird-watchers!

The average frequency of the songs of songbirds is about 4,000 Hz, approximately the same pitch as the highest note of a piano. Many warblers, sparrows, waxwings, kinglets and a number of other birds produce sounds that reach 8,000 Hz and beyond. Moderate to severe hearing loss in the 3,000-10,000Hz range greatly reduces the ability of a birder to be aware of the presence of these high-pitched singers.

The traditional approach to counteracting hearing loss has been to utilize amplifying hearing aids that raise the amplitude of incoming signals to levels where they can be heard. This approach works well in the realm of speech perception (mostly below 3000 Hz) but has limited application for birders and other nature lovers who are deaf to high-pitched bird songs but who have little trouble hearing speech.

For aging birders, conventional amplifying-type hearing aids are usually a major disappointment."

There is a demo of how bird songs are modified by the SongFinder at:

www.naturesound.com/songfinder/songfinder.html

Once you reach the Songfinder page, click on the link to the examples of pitch-lowered bird songs.

Nest box honors Louise Fuller

Donations to KTOS in memory of **Louise Fuller** have been used to purchase and erect a bluebird box in the Wildlife Viewing Memory Garden at Ijams Nature Center. The nest box can easily be seen from the exhibit hall windows. The all cedar box with predator guard has a copper roof and is mounted on a solid cedar post complete with a predator baffle.



Pam Petko-Seus, wildlife biologist at Ijams, says the installation will be "a great teaching tool." We're sure Louise would have liked that.

KTOS at UT's Blooms Days Garden Festival, June 28-29

Join us on June 28 and 29 for the first annual Blooms Days Garden Festival and Marketplace in the UT Gardens on the Knoxville agriculture campus off Neyland Drive.

KTOS will have a booth at the event to meet people and answer questions about local birding and the club. If you're interested in helping with the club's booth contact David Trently.

The festival's marketplace will feature unique crafts and gardening goods not available locally, as well as specialty plants selected exclusively for this two-day event.

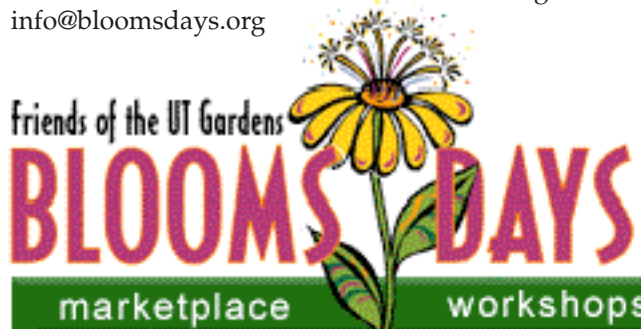
Adult gardening-related programs and children activities are included in the admission costs plus live music throughout the weekend. Admission to the festival is \$8 single or \$20 per family. (Children under 13 are free.) Hours for the event: Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Blooms Days will feature workshops presented by horticulture experts covering a wide-range of gardening topics like: How to be a Weeding Wizard, Herbal Gardening Pleasures, Winning the Battle

Against Garden Pests, Water Lilies and Beyond, Dig into Some Dynamite Perennials, Super Shrubs, Color Your World with Kicked-up Annuals, Turn Your Neighbors Green with Envy and One-Pot Gardens. Each session will last approximately 30 minutes. Dates and times are subject to change based on speaker availability.

Entertainment will be provided by the Farragut Pops Ensemble, The R.B. Morris Band featuring Hector Quirko, Jeff Barbra and Sarah Pirkle and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (Irish traditional music).

For more information about the festival go to info@bloomsdays.org



KTOS Membership Renew your membership with KTOS by mailing your annual dues to: Jerry Hadder, 18 Rockingham Lane, Oak Ridge, TN 37830. Membership fees are \$18 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Sustaining memberships are \$28 and a Life membership with TOS is \$200 with an annual fee of \$8 to the local chapter.

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TOS HOME PAGE: [HTTP://WWW.TNBIRDS.ORG](http://www.tnbirds.org)

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