

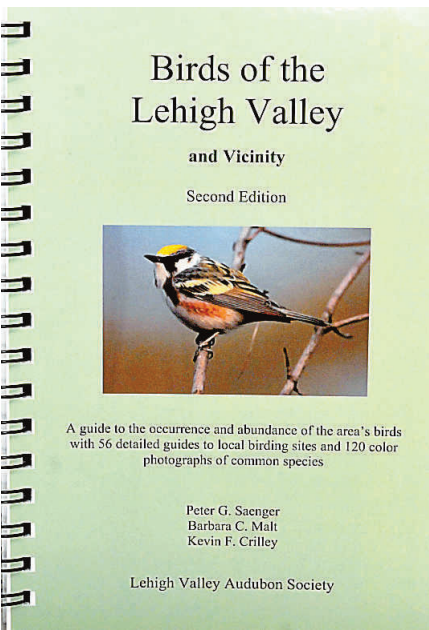
Advice & more

‘Birds of the Lehigh Valley’ a must-have for birders



Bill Uhrich

I’M DEFINITELY a book guy. So many online and electronic aids exist for birders that it’s easy to get caught up in the gadgetry. But give me a book any day. That’s why I was pleased to find that the Lehigh Valley Audubon Society has published its latest “Birds of the Lehigh Valley,” with a coverage area that dips into northeastern Berks to include the Kutztown area and the fields and hills into the Lehigh County border. We have more than a passing Berks connection, though, since Peter Saenger, one of the three authors, is a Longswamp Township resident. I’ve followed this series of books since I picked up a copy of the 1984 edition of “Birds of the Lehigh Valley Area” at Hawk Mountain. And I like to keep up with what’s happening up in the Valley, since I am a Northampton County native who spent many hours at Jacobsburg State Park back in the 1970s at a time before it was



READING EAGLE: BILL UHRICH

Birds of the Lehigh Valley

a state park. It remains one of my favorite places to walk when I go back home. The new edition comes out at just the right time, too. With the boomers either retiring or adrift with empty-nest syndrome, many

are looking for an activity that is challenging and rewarding. At some point in all of our lives, it seems a switch gets thrown in our brains that turns us on to birding, whether to identify all the birds in our backyards or to go out in search of a variety of species. A good local guide that’s handy and comprehensive is a must. We in Berks can make good use of the species accounts listed in “Birds of the Lehigh Valley” since we live in a pretty similar region. I always advise beginning birders who want to get serious about the hobby to get a good field guide like Peterson’s Eastern guide (still the best) and sit down for a few hours with a local list and the bird book and annotate the guide with the species that occur in our area. The field guide generally follows the order of the species list, so it isn’t difficult to start at the beginning of both, highlight the species name in the guide and write in the occurrence information. For instance, the Lehigh Valley guide lists snow goose as a “migrant, winter visitor, common.” It takes a few seconds to make those annotations. There’s no better way to start learning the different birds and when to expect to see them.

The Lehigh Valley guide lists the 349 species that have been documented as occurring in the area. Birding is a great hobby that can be practiced anywhere, as I often do when walking to work or strolling on Penn Street, but there are some wheres that are definitely better than other wheres. The Lehigh Valley guide is invaluable for its site guide and map listings that direct birders to the local hot spots. The appendixes offer advice to birders on ethics and record keeping. Available at Hawk Mountain, the book is a must-have for Lehigh Valley and Berks birders. It’s spiral bound, too, so it opens up and lies flat. Perfect. Now, the best part for me is reading through the human species list, all of those who contributed sightings and records over the years. Birding can be a solitary or social activity, as much as a birder’s mood or personality can handle. I like finding familiar names and even some surprises. When I was a kid, I played basketball with one guy on the list down at the playground and never knew the dude was into birds. Hey, cool sighting. Contact Bill Uhrich: 610-371-5090 or buhrich@readingeagle.com.

Quotable

“Fear is forward. No one is afraid of yesterday.” Renata Adler, American writer

On this date in history:

1535, Sir Thomas More was executed in England for high treason. 1777, during the American Revolution, British forces captured Fort Ticonderoga. 1854, the first official meeting of the Republican Party took place in Jackson, Mich. 1964, the movie “A Hard Day’s Night,” starring the Beatles, had its world premiere in London.



1971, jazz trumpeter and singer Louis Armstrong died in New York at age 69. 1988, 167 North Sea oil workers were killed when explosions and fires destroyed a drilling platform. Medical waste and other debris began washing up on New York City-area seashores, forcing the closing of several popular beaches. 1989, the Army destroyed its last Pershing 1A missiles at an ammunition plant in Karnack, Texas, under terms of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty. 1994, 14 firefighters were killed while battling a several-days-old blaze on Storm King Mountain in Colorado.



Dear Abby
ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

Friend goes too far with gift request

Dear Abby: I am planning to attend a birthday party for my friend “Sophia” who is turning 50. When I mentioned to her that I would be shopping for her birthday gift, she asked that while I was shopping for her, that I also pick up a gift for her friend “Stacy.” I have met Stacy only a few times, and I think it was extremely nervy for Sophia to ask me to do it. The party is only for her, and I don’t see the connection. Sophia has done this in the past, and I’m trying to think of a way to tell her I’d rather not buy a gift for her friend. How should I handle this? — No Longer a Doormat
Dear No Longer a Doormat: Tell Sophia with a smile that you are not close to Stacy, don’t know her taste and do not feel comfortable shopping for her. Smiling when you say it should prevent your refusal from appearing confrontational. P.S. I agree she had a lot of nerve to ask.
Dear Abby: My husband, who is nearing 60, throws plates of food at the wall if he gets upset about something. It is usually minor and totally spontaneous. He then leaves it for me to clean up and won’t apologize. I am sick of living with a 60-year-old going on 4. What can I do? — Had Enough in Illinois
Dear Had Enough: How long have you been tolerating your husband’s outbursts? Has he been breaking other things, or raising a hand to you? There are several things you can do. The first is stop cleaning up after him. Eat separately if you have to. You could also warn him that if he doesn’t seek help now for his temper that you have had it. If you need my permission to go, I am giving it to you.
For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order “How to Be Popular.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)
Dear Abby appears daily, distributed by Universal Press Syndicate. The column is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



Annie’s Mailbox
KATHY MITCHELL AND MARCY SUGAR

Sister’s troubled ex is influencing son

Dear Annie: When my sister dated “Ron,” he was a very angry and controlling man. They fought constantly. My parents insisted they both see a psychologist to work out their relationship issues. The psychologist diagnosed Ron as a sociopath, but my sister married him anyway. They divorced when their son was 5 years old. My sister has sole custody, but Ron sees and speaks to him whenever he pleases and constantly disrespects my sister. I have recently noticed some disturbing behavior in my nephew. He has bursts of anger, displays reckless behavior and copies his father’s words, calling my sister some very bad names. I worry that my nephew will become a sociopath like his father. Since I have the clinical diagnosis from the psychologist, can I hire a lawyer to request that Ron have only supervised visits? I realize that I’m meddling in my sister’s business, but she doesn’t have the strength to fight her ex. In fact, she wasn’t the one who asked for the divorce. Ron did. My parents are very old, and none of the other siblings cares about this. I feel I should do something. — Can’t Stand By Helplessly Watching
Dear Can’t: We understand your frustration and concern, but without your sister’s cooperation, there’s a limit to what you can do. Would you be willing to claim that she is an incompetent mother and take custody of the boy? Can you show that she is putting her child at risk? We think you should instead urge your sister to get counseling to understand the ways in which she is allowing her ex-husband to take advantage of her and emotionally damage their child. She also should seek counseling for her angry son, who wants his father to love him, and so he emulates behavior that hurts his mother, whom he also loves. This is both confusing and manipulative. Perhaps she will take action for the sake of her child, if not for herself.
Annie’s mailbox appears daily, distributed by Creators Syndicate. The column is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please email your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie’s Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611.



Grandparenting
Key Kidder

Are newborns good or evil, inherently?

Dear Grandparenting: I so enjoy sitting and watching my grandson Turner. I cannot get enough. Turner is 11 months old. He gurgles and smiles and likes me to smile back. He likes to be rubbed on his little tummy. He is just a perfect little angel. I also think about all the cruelty and suffering in this world that people inflict on each other. Babies are often characterized as selfish little monsters with no morals who need to be civilized (which grandparents do quite nicely, thank you.) I suppose another way of looking at it is that my little grandson is pretty much born capable of becoming one of those hateful wrongdoers on the evening news. Or is he not? This question has been rattling around in my brain for some time now. Are babies born to be good or born to be evil? Does my grandson have a sense of right and wrong? — AV, The Good Witch
Dear Good Witch: Yours is a most interesting take on our inherent nature, and one that we are not equipped to answer. We did some research and found a man who is, and his answers may surprise you. Paul Bloom, professor of psychology and cognitive science at Yale University, conducts research into how babies understand their world. Bloom contends that “a sense of good is bred into the bone” and maintains that babies are born with a moral compass and sense of empathy and fair play. In one of his child development experiments, 1-year-olds view a puppet show featuring a good guy (who returns a ball to its owner) and bad guy (who runs away with the ball). Each puppet was then given a treat. The babies were allowed to take one away. Almost all denied the treat given the bad guy. Infants as young as 3 months are similarly inclined, based on what they look at and reach for. Bloom says his results are supported by other research. So instead of being little savages, grandchildren begin as moral creatures. Then grandparents and other guardians take over, influencing their subsequent development by modeling behaviors that enhance or degrade this moral foundation. Grandparenting appears Sunday. Contact Dee and Tom Hardie and Cousin Key at 830 W. 40th St., Suite 304, Baltimore, MD 21211 or email them at grparentng@aol.com.



Hints From Heloise
HELOISE

Nutty method fixes scratches in wood

Dear Heloise: My wood floor has several scratches from furniture and my dog. Is there anything I can do to get rid of them so the floor looks better? — A Reader in Texas
There is something you can do! Get a pecan or walnut and break the meat in half. Rub it into the scratch. Make sure you go with the grain of the wood. You should feel the nut get warm. Then buff with a soft cloth. Depending on how deep the scratch is, you may need to repeat the steps. If the nuts don’t work, try using a crayon that matches the color of your floor. -- Heloise
Dear Heloise: When I planted my garden this year, I found an inexpensive method to identify what was planted in each row: I cut small squares from a plastic milk jug and wrote what was planted in each row with a permanent marker. I then punched a hole in each tag and attached it to a bamboo stick with a twist-tie. The marks don’t fade, and the twist-ties last a long time. Good way to recycle a milk jug and the twist ties from bread loaves. — Jim in Shepherd, Mont.
Dear Heloise: I use a lot of rubber bands around the house. I never had the right-size rubber band, they broke easily, or they had rotted out. I bought several different sizes of elastic hair bands in the hair-accessories section at the drugstore. They can be reused, and they last forever. — Barb B., Oakton, Va.
Dear Heloise: I cut out my name and address from junk mail before recycling. One day, I ran out of pre-printed return-address stamps, and it dawned on me that the bits I cut out are the perfect replacement! They come in all sizes, and the only expense is one or two small strips of tape. — Duane S., Columbus, Ohio
Hints From Heloise appears Monday, Wednesday and Sunday, distributed by King Features Syndicate. Send a great hint to Heloise, P.O. Box 795000, San Antonio, TX 78279-5000, or you can email it to heloise@heloise.com.