
SUN CITY CENTER AUDUBON CLUB

July/August 2021

Ponderings from your prez

Mary

As some of you know, I have been on an odyssey for the last month and this article is my musings on the adventure. I was headed to Connecticut where we will have a belated memorial for my husband beside the Still River where he loved to walk when we lived here. Getting to Connecticut was planned as a series of camping adventures in my converted cargo van.

As with many odysseys, a royal battle occurred almost at once. Me and my trusty steed (the little electric bike) versus the evil monstrous post intent on our destruction. We sped up to swerve away but it jumped in front of us and we collided. Whether the bike can be salvaged is still up in the air. I injured my leg pretty badly but they decided it didn't need surgery and could continue - I'm now finally walking without a cane.

But adventures must continue and so I did - though moving very slowly - very slowly. Seven different campsites including state parks and one national park. The main difference was that I spent a lot more time just sitting quietly in the woods. And just enjoying what was around me — fireflies flickering around me in the evening, the light filtering through the trees, rabbits and squirrels including a golden squirrel venturing close, a doe and her young fawn stopping to look at me before disappearing back into the woods.



Indigo Bunting

And, of course, we must talk about the birds. The woods were alive with the sound of music. I had downloaded the app to identify birds by their song - a great opportunity; but there was no internet! So I just enjoyed the music. I recommend just listening at times - with no agenda. Bird identification was difficult as they flitted from tree to tree seemingly without ever stopping. As I sat one day though, a pair of indigo buntings flew in to sit awhile and when they left, a pair of cardinals stopped on the same branch - and then a pair of magpies. The next morning, it was a flock of geese swimming across the lake in the fog and that caught my attention. Simple sightings but somehow highlights of my trip.

So what have I learned so far

- that misadventures come with adventures and I can handle them
- that camping with someone would probably be safer and more fun.
- that solitude in the woods is also a blessing
- that just enjoying the trees and the birds is enough - and very healing
- that there are many kind people in the world who will literally pick you up when you fall.

And from these lessons, I send this wish to you all:

May the stars carry
your sadness away.
May the flowers fill your
heart with beauty.
May hope forever wipe
away your tears.
And above all may silence
make you strong.
—Indian proverb -



Trail Blazing

Photo & Article

By John Lampkin

Do you think your life is complicated? Just imagine having to undergo hypermetamorphosis! Most insects have a relatively straightforward development from egg to larval stages called instars, to pupa, to adult. But some, like the Yellow-winged Wedge-shaped Beetle above, live a complicated life cycle. After hatching, the tiny first larval instar lies in wait on a flower. When a wasp comes to gather provisions for its future larva, the beetle hatchling latches onto the wasp with its mandibles. When the wasp arrives at its nest, the beetle larva hops off and hangs out while the wasp stocks the nest and lays an egg. Once the wasp egg hatches, the beetle burrows into the larva and temporarily feeds on it internally before exiting to feed externally. Then it pupates and emerges as an adult.

Perhaps because of the complexity of the development sequence and the short life span of the adults, wedge-shaped beetles like our *Macrosiagon flavipennis* are seldom reported. Indeed, our individual is the only Florida sighting on BugGuide.net, the go-to entomology site. Yet, the beetle is widespread, showing up in states across the country so it is not rare, just very uncommon.



This very uncommon beetle lives a complicated life!

Our adult was nectaring on the Sun City Center Nature Trails during our SCC Audubon Club first annual Earth Day Celebration. Because I had earlier discovered its similar sister species at Terra Ceia Preserve, I recognized it immediately as a significant

find. Celebrants in my field trip group watched me get very, *very* excited when I spotted it!

You can get excited also! The Nature Trails supports wildlife in all its forms and is an ongoing project of the SCC Audubon Club in cooperation with the SCC CA. The trailhead is located opposite North Lake on Del Webb West between Vincennes and Seton Hall. Join us for interpretive walks and hypermetamorphic marvels on the first Tuesday of the month at 9 am.

For more info, email me at

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Florida Birding and Nature Festival ***October 15-17, 2021***



The Florida Birding and Nature Festival will take place October 15-17 at the Manatee Viewing Center in Apollo Beach. There will be three days of field and boat trips, expert seminars, keynote speakers, and a great nature expo!

Here's what you can expect. Two days of Zoom broadcast seminars from experts in their fields. There will be seminars on coyotes, butterflies, horseshoe crabs, tortoises, Florida bees, and many more. The Nature Expo is free of charge and full of nature organizations, original artwork, and more. There will be field and boat trips, many of which will take you out to sites not normally accessible to the public (\$25-\$60). The keynote events take place both Friday and Saturday (\$20 on Zoom, \$40 in person). Enjoy an hors d'oeuvres buffet and drinks.

The opening Keynote speaker is Craig Pittman, renowned American journalist and author of books mostly about Florida. He was a reporter and columnist for the [Tampa Bay Times](https://www.tampabay.com). In 2020 the Florida Heritage Book Festival honored Pittman as a 'Living Legend'."

Lunch will be available for purchase from 11 am to 2 pm from the Manatee Viewing Center's cafeteria on Friday and Saturday. For more detailed information go the website: floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org

Bluebird Season is in full swing!

Melanie Higgins

This summer I have had the privilege of filling in for a couple of our monitors who are taking well deserved breaks. What fun to see eggs, hatchlings, nestlings, and fledglings! The excitement of seeing a fresh clutch of five blue eggs, the surprise of almost being hit in the face by a female flying out of the box AFTER you have knocked loudly and waited, the thrill of watching a brood fledge before your very eyes; these are the things that keep our monitors going back despite frogs, wasps, tragic fatalities, empty boxes, and other travails. We'll keep checking boxes through the end of August/early September before tallying our final count and reporting to the club.

In the off season, boxes are checked and repaired if necessary and this year we will be analyzing the success vs. lack of success at all locations and will make some strategic moves.

I have a bag of Niger thistle bird seed, first to claim gets it. Please call if interested at 813-625-1271



News from our Master Birder

Ray Webb



This column is dedicated to this season's crop of youngsters! Breeding season is well along by now, and in most instances the young are up and about. I have up to ten house finches competing for six perches on my black-oil sunflower feeder. There are young common grackles in the back yard (still brown, without the yellow eyes of their parents). At Walmart, the cries of young boat-tailed grackles can be heard as they chase their parents around, begging for food.

On Swan Lake, a family of wood ducks (mama, with young in tow) were photographed by Tom Bredesen I wonder if they might have been raised in one of the two wood duck boxes we put up along the West Campus Nature Trails!. And, in my back yard, a young Eastern bluebird found a convenient perch on my rain gauge! Note the heavy spotting on the youngster, which indicates its thrush heritage (like young American robins).

Young bluebirds are being fledged from boxes all over Sun City Center. This has been a most successful project!



Officers & Committee Chairs

2021-2022

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Membership

Dennis Morris

For your convenience, please find a copy of our Membership Form included in this newsletter. Along with a copy attached to your email. You may also obtain a copy on our website at www.sccaudubonclub.com

We look forward to seeing everyone at our October meeting.





SUN CITY CENTER AUDUBON CLUB
www.sccaudubonclub.com

2021 Membership Registration

Annual Dues: \$10 for CA and Kings Point Gold CA Access Card holders

Print this form, fill it in, and bring it with you to the next in-person meeting. One form per person or mail it to Dennis Morris, 373 Club Manor Dr., Sun City Center, FL 33573. Make checks payable to SCC Audubon Club.

1

Check # _____ Cash _____ Date _____
(In-Person only)

Name (Please print legibly) _____

_____ New Member _____ Renewal



2

To become a member, you must sign below.

Liability and photo release

I voluntarily choose to participate in field trips sponsored by the Sun City Center Audubon Club. I recognize the field trips may expose me to harm or injury resulting from travel to and from the field trip site, and due to forces of nature and natural wildlife, including, but not limited to birds, animals, plants, and other wildlife. I expressly assume the risk of any harm that may occur directly or indirectly from travel to and from the field trip site, or from the forces of nature or wildlife that I may be exposed to. I release the Sun City Center Audubon from any and all liability arising from or in connection with the field trips.

I grant to the Sun City Center Audubon Club, its representatives and members the right to take photographs of me and my property in connection with field trips or other activities of the Sun City Center Audubon Club. I authorize the use of same in print and/or electronically.

Member Signature _____

Date _____

3

Enter only NEW or CHANGED information in this box.

E-Mail _____

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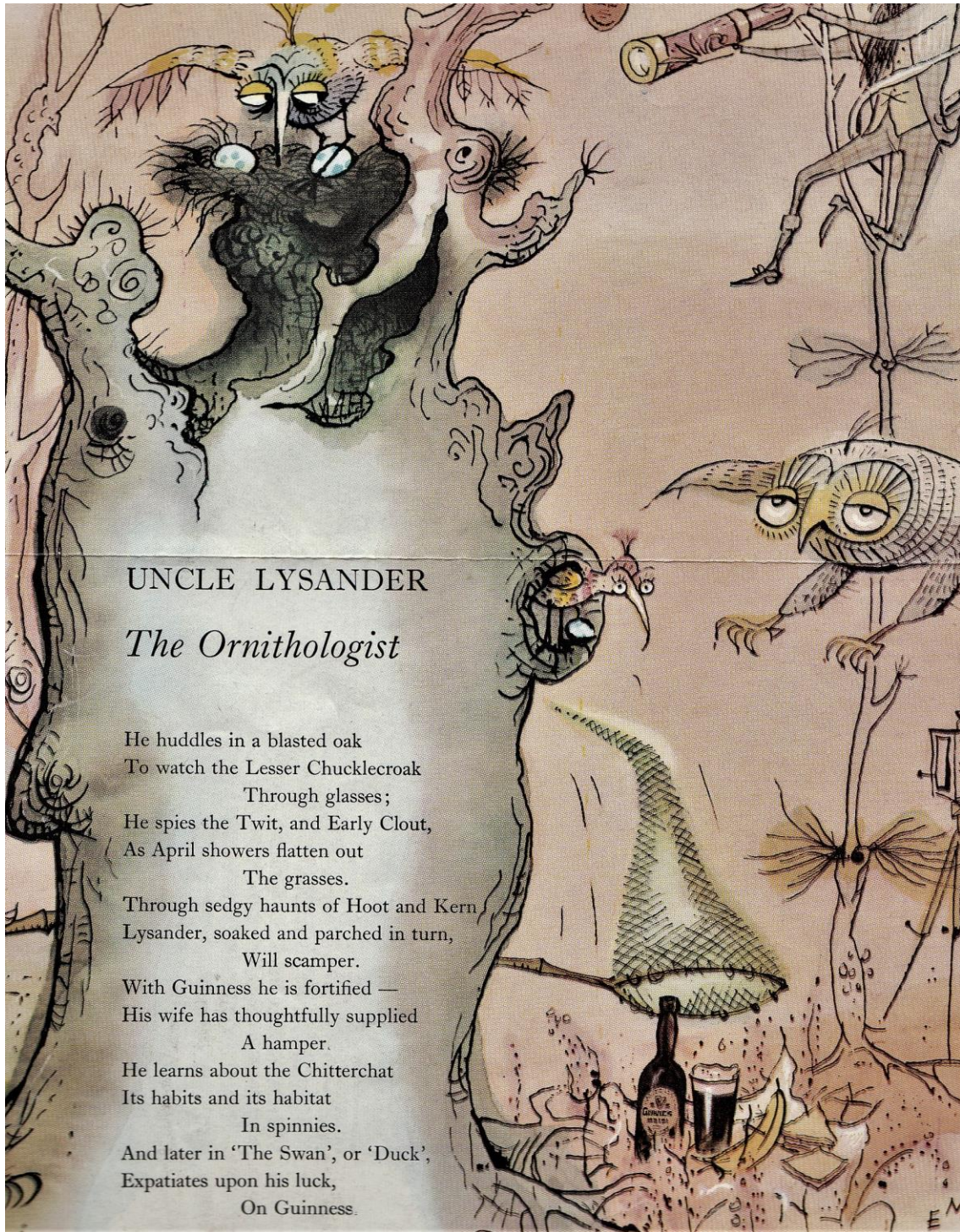
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Birthday Month _____ Day _____

Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering on the following committees:

____ Membership
____ Conservation
____ Publicity
____ Refreshments
____ Greeters

____ 3-Day Trip
____ December Meeting
____ Field Trips
____ Serve on Board



UNCLE LYSANDER

The Ornithologist

He huddles in a blasted oak
To watch the Lesser Chucklecroak
Through glasses;
He spies the Twit, and Early Clout,
As April showers flatten out
The grasses.
Through sedgy haunts of Hoot and Kern
Lysander, soaked and parched in turn,
Will scamper.
With Guinness he is fortified —
His wife has thoughtfully supplied
A hamper.
He learns about the Chitterchat
Its habits and its habitat
In spinnies.
And later in 'The Swan', or 'Duck',
Expatiates upon his luck,
On Guinness.

John Revill, a longtime Audubon member had saved this ad for Guinness for years, it appealed to his British birding side.