

Advice & more

One of bird-watching's holiest grails resides in Berks County



Bill Uhrich

ANYONE INVOLVED with bird-watching dreams not only of finding the rarest of the rare birds but eventually owning something that represents the highest level of the hobby.

Birders will speak of the Holy Grail of binoculars or spotting scopes.

Once those grail items are acquired, like Holy Grail birds, new ones take their place in what seems like a never-ending quest.

The grail quest will often switch from birds to bird-related items of historical importance.

One could be an original Audubon print.

Or maybe a signed first edition of Roger Tory Peterson's 1934 field guide.

Last week, I had an audience with what many birders would consider the holiest of the Holy Grails: Witmer Stone's personal set No. 1 of the two-volume "Bird Studies at Old Cape May."

Over the last 40 years, Cape May has risen to the top of bird-watchers' affections thanks to the efforts of Pete Dunne and the Cape May Bird Observatory.

With this rise came a new-found appreciation for Stone's classic 1937 ornithological study based on his many years of observations at the cape and Jersey shore at the turn of the 20th century.

Although a disciplined scientist, Stone wrote engaging prose describing the cape and its bird life, which has endeared the work to succeeding generations of birders. As we find with many things, there is a Berks County connection.

Earl L. Poole, former director of the Reading Public Museum and a world-class ornithologist and artist, contributed many of the line drawings in the book along with another Berks artist, Conrad Roland.

Poole's watercolors of an osprey and laughing gulls are the frontispiece art in each of the two volumes of the set. Stone, a founding member of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club (DVOC), was Poole's friend and mentor.

The original 1,400 sets were bound at the Arnold Bookbindery at Fourth and Walnut streets. And each one of the sets is individually numbered.

The late Sandra Sherman of the DVOC was curious as to what happened to these numbered volumes over the years. She published her results in the club's journal, *The Cassinia*, in 2000.

Her article and the running list of the sets can be accessed online at www.dvoc.org/Publications/TrackingStone.htm and www.dvoc.org/Publications/AdditionalStone.htm

Set No. 1 now resides permanently in Berks in the collection of the Berks History Center.



COURTESY OF THE BERKS HISTORY CENTER

Witmer Stone holds his two-volume set of "Bird Studies at Old Cape May" that is now in the collection of the Berks History Center in this December 1937 photograph, which is pasted opposite of the title page in set No. 1.

Last October, Valerie Malmberg of Greshville Antiques and Fine Arts donated through the Spinnaker Foundation set No. 1 along with the original Poole frontispiece osprey watercolor to the center.

The painting hangs in the Henry Janssen Library at the center.

Valerie acquired set No. 1 a decade ago when she and her husband, Kurt, became aware of an auction at a New Hampshire cottage of Stone books, memorabilia and artwork. They attended, and because of Poole and Roland's artwork in the books, bid on the set, which was one of the last

items auctioned.

The staff of the center last week were kind enough to let me look through and photograph the set.

On the title page is Stone's inscription to his wife, to whom he dedicated the book: "To Lillie M. Stone with love from Witmer Stone and with fond regards of the following who helped so much in the production of 'Bird Studies at Old Cape May.'"

What follows are 13 signatures of the day's leading ornithologists, including Poole and Roland's.

Pasted on the page opposite is a small photograph of Stone, standing outside his home, proudly holding undoubtedly this set No. 1.

The late fall sun slants across the brim of his hat. There's a Christmas wreath on the door, and I like to think that this photograph was taken the day of a get-together he had with those signers on Dec. 15, 1937, the day before the general meeting of the DVOC, where he distributed and signed copies for other members. Stone died less than 18 months after this photograph was taken.

More photographs of the rare set can be found with this column online at readingeagle.com.

By the way, set No. 2 belonged to Poole and is now owned by his son, Joe.

It's incredible to think that these two rarities of New Jersey bird life now reside in Berks.

Contact **Bill Uhrich**: 610-371-5090 or buhrich@readingeagle.com.

Quotable

Martyrdom has always been a proof of the intensity, never of the correctness of a belief.

Arthur Schnitzler, Austrian author-playwright (born this date in 1862, died 1931)

On this date in history:

1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed an act establishing the Department of Agriculture.

1886, poet Emily Dickinson died in Amherst, Mass., at age 55.

1911, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Standard Oil Co. was a monopoly in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, and ordered its breakup.

1930, registered nurse Ellen Church, the first airline stewardess, went on duty aboard an Oakland-to-Chicago flight operated by Boeing Air Transport (a forerunner of United Airlines).

1940, DuPont began selling its nylon stockings nationally.

1963, astronaut L. Gordon Cooper blasted off aboard Faith 7 on the final mission of the Project Mercury space program.

1970, just after midnight, Phillip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green, two black students at Jackson State College in Mississippi, were killed as police opened fire during student protests.

1972, Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace was shot and left paralyzed by Arthur H. Bremer while campaigning for president in Laurel, Md. (Bremer served 35 years for attempted murder.)



Dear Abby
ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

Spendthrift kids won't be in will

Dear Abby: We have an adult son and daughter who can't handle money and can't keep a job. Should we tell them they are not going to inherit everything we have when my wife and I are gone?

We have bailed them out of trouble more than once, but they don't seem to learn.

They are in their 30s and 40s, and neither one is looking for a job. Anything we left them would soon be squandered, and there are many organizations that could put the money to good use.

We would leave them something, but nothing like what they expect. So: Tell them or not? — *Perplexed in the South*

Dear Perplexed: In the back of my mind is echoing the Boy Scout motto, "Be prepared." You should definitely tell your "children" now, while there's still time for them to get off their posteriors and start preparing for their financial futures.

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Dear Abby: My husband and I hang out with a group of six couples ranging in age from 24 to 74. One day, when three of us women went to lunch, I was complaining about the list of things that needed to be fixed in our home. My dear friend came up with a great idea that works very well, and I want to share it.

Once a month a couple will host a party at their home. The wives prepare a covered dish and we all bring any sort of beverage we would like, from tea to soft drinks, beer and wine.

The men all get to work on the problem until it's fixed, and then we laugh and eat and drink together. It's so much fun. We call ourselves ... *The "Honey Do" Gang*

Dear Gang: I love the concept, which proves not only that "many hands make light work," but also that honeydew is more than a melon.

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

Paving the way for nanny's retirement

Dear Annie: Last weekend, my youngest daughter got her driver's license. She is now able to take herself places, thus dissolving the role of our nanny, "Maria."

Maria has been part of our family for 20 years, since my oldest child was 3 months old. My youngest daughter has known her for her entire life. Maria has picked up my daughter from school every day, taken her to sports and activities, organized the house, started dinner and cleaned once a week for additional money.

Both Maria and my daughter have known that this day was coming, but I can tell that my daughter is upset and sad. Maria has had a tough life. Her husband was killed right in front of her. She had to leave her four children and come to this country for work. She never learned a great deal of English, but my daughter understands her perfectly.

Obviously, this whole thing makes me very emotional. Maria is now 60 and has spent a third of her life looking after my children. We would love for her to stay, but my daughter clearly doesn't need anyone watching over her and we cannot justify the cost of keeping Maria with us. I know nothing is forever, but can you help with this? — *Missing Her*

Dear Missing: All children eventually outgrow the need for a nanny, and over time, her absence will be easier to bear. If Maria is ready to return to her family, her "retirement" may be comforting for all of you. But if Maria is looking for another job, you can help by extolling her virtues to neighborhood families with young children, or posting a recommendation on a nanny employment site or community bulletin board. You also don't have to lose touch. Your daughters probably would love to have Maria visit occasionally, perhaps for a birthday party or family dinner. And please do something special for her last day, along with presenting her a farewell gift.

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@creators.com, or write to Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 737 Third St., Hermosa Beach, CA 90254.



Grandparenting
Key Kidder

Need a job? Don't dress like a slob

Dear Grandparenting: I am the grandmother of five grandchildren. They have different ages and different personalities, so I never know what to expect when we get together. Gary, 22, is the oldest. I hadn't seen Gary since his college graduation. To the best of my knowledge, Gary was the first in our family to graduate from a four-year college. He did it with honors too. Everything seemed easy for Gary back then.

So here we are a year later and Gary is job hunting. Nobody has bought what he's selling. I have a friend who owns a company who is hiring. He's an accountant, and guess what Gary's major was in college? Accounting, because he's always been a numbers kind of guy.

So far, so good, right? Wrong. Gary flew out to my place on my dollar. He showed up with a good week of stubble on his face and blond highlights in his hair, like my wife used to do. He looked like a rat, and I told him so. "That's how I roll," he said, like shrugging it off.

So that's how Gary looked when he went to the job interview, and that's how he looked when he came back without an offer. I kept my mouth shut. But I am embarrassed and ticked off that Gary couldn't bother to clean up for everybody's sake, because it's the right thing to do. — *Lee Ann Marshall, Elgin, Ill.*

Dear Lee Ann: Don't book yourself a guilt trip about speaking up. The age group you're dealing with has the reputation of behaving like real hardheads. If anything, they need more wake-up calls like yours.

These so-called millennials, grandchildren born between 1980-2000, may be the most discussed and analyzed generation in history. At over 80 million strong, it's America's biggest generation ever, and the most controversial. They've been variously described as having a more global and civic-minded orientation, the ones who will save the world. But others characterize Millennials as considerably more narcissistic than their elders, and inclined to believe they're somehow entitled.

Grandparenting appears Sundays. 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

Night light a must when on the road

Dear Heloise: When I travel, bringing along my night light is a must. Mine comes on when the lights go off or it gets dark in the room. It's a lifesaver, since it is difficult to get a good night's rest in a hotel.

When getting up at night, having that light in the bathroom is far better than leaving a light on. — *Rhonda B., Bar Harbor, Maine*

A terrific travel hint indeed! My travel kit includes a night light too, as well as two small travel flashlights that sit upright and shine light on the ceiling. I've bumped into too many doors! — *On-the-Road Heloise*

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Dear Heloise: I am a college student and experimenting with creating flavored coffee beans to save a little money. My friend suggested sprinkling a spice over regular beans prior to grinding them. I tried cinnamon, and it was delicious. It's a good way to get gourmet coffee on a cafeteria-coffee budget! — *Cal T., San Antonio*

Yep, great flavor for a fraction of a penny! You just might become a coffee entrepreneur and connoisseur of flavored coffee. My pamphlet may help you with some suggestions, coffee hints and recipes. Visit www.Heloise.com to order one, or send \$3 and a stamped (68 cents), self-addressed, business-size envelope to: Heloise/ Coffee, P.O. Box 795001, San Antonio, TX 78279-5001. I'd love to hear from readers and will print your hints. What do you do to have special coffee without spending big bucks? Try a pinch of chili powder for a real kick! — *Heloise*

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Dear Readers: You can make a temporary funnel using the corner of an envelope by snipping it with scissors. This funnel can be used to fill spice jars or create designs with colored sugar on cakes or cupcakes. — *Heloise*

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