

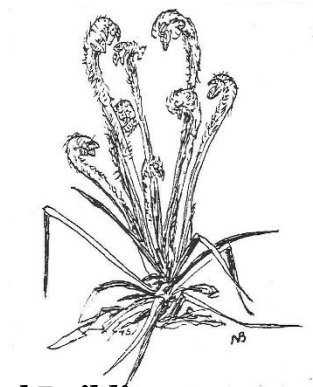
FYKE NATURE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

www.fykenature.org

Vol. 61 – No. 2 – Summer 2015

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please register for all field trips.



April 24 - Monthly Meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building
Kathy Mitchell, “Timber Rattlesnakes: Their Secret Lives and Conservation Needs.”

This presentation will address some of this new information as well as the natural history of the timber rattlesnake and its conservation needs. Kathy graduated from Lebanon Valley College with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. After years of conducting volunteer reptile and amphibian surveys while working as a wildlife technician for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation she began working as a wildlife biologist specializing in turtles, snakes and eagles and has continued for 20 years.

April 25 - Field Trip: Earth Day Warbler Walk at the Celery Farm

Meet fellow Fyke Members at the end of Green Way at 8:00 a.m. to look for spring arrivals. Birders of all levels are welcome! Leaders: Gaby Schmitt and Mike Limatola.
Register for this walk at celeryfarm@gmail.com.

May 2 - Field Trip: May Walk at the Celery Farm

This walk is for nature-lovers and birders of all levels. We'll look for butterflies, bugs, weird plants and our feathered friends. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Greenway. Wear long pants and socks; bring water and bug spray! Leaders: Jim Wright and Mike Limatola. **Register for this walk at celeryfarm@gmail.com.**

May 9 – Sweet 16! Stepping Up For Lorrimer

This will be our 16th Celery Farm Big Day, also known as “Stepping Up For Lorrimer”. Fyke teams will be birding the Celery Farm from dawn to dusk. The goal is to count all the species of birds seen to raise money for the New Jersey Audubon’s Lorrimer Sanctuary in Franklin Lakes. Please see the pledge form on page 2.
To sign up for a team contact Gabriele Schmitt, gaby413@aol.com or 201-387-0048.

May 22 - Monthly meeting: 8:00 p.m., Allendale Municipal Building
Jerry Barrack, “Ducks of the Celery Farm, Plus a Few Other Keepers.”

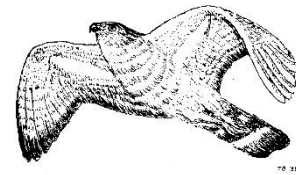
Jerry will show images collected over twenty five years from pre-dawn to post sunset throughout the four seasons. It will cover all the species of ducks seen over the years, including the incredible good fortune to have seen and photographed Wood Duck babies jumping out of the box when they are but one day old. Jerry was there on three separate occasions to witness this beautiful event. Not only will he present wonderful still images but also amazing videos. In addition to these and other wonderful duck images, there will be some new videos and stills never shown before.

July 18 - Field Trip: Our Tom Burr Memorial Butterfly Walk at the Celery Farm.

Named for the late Fyke member, naturalist, photographer and friend. Meet at the end of Greenway at 10:30 a.m. for a guided 90 minute stroll. Dress for bright sun. Leader: Mike Limatola. Register for this walk at celeryfarm@gmail.com.

September 1 – Mt. Peter Hawk Watch begins.

To volunteer, contact Judy Cinquina, judycinq@optonline.net or 201-327-1782.



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**The 63rd Ramsey Christmas Bird Count**

By John Brotherton

Our most recent Christmas Count was held December 14, 2014. Unlike last season we had pleasant weather and open water. As a result our 35 observers were able to count about 15,704 birds of a wonderful 99 species, higher than our recent average. Some noteworthy species were Barnacle Goose, 15 Bald Eagles, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Shrike, Horned Lark and Snow Bunting.

The team awards battle was as intense as ever. THE COVETED BLUE JAY AWARD was won by Team Kantrowitz with a total of 69 unseating the usual Team Schwenker. Team Carola, won the BEST TEAM TROPHY for finding 7 more species than their recent average. And finally Team Novinski won the HOUSE SPARROW TROPHY for counting 377 of this often overlooked species.



Thank you to all counters for their work as citizen scientists contributing valuable bird data via the National Audubon Society. The results are a crucial part of the U.S. Government's natural history monitoring data base. Those with internet access can view Christmas Bird Counts from 1900 to the present through Audubon's website, [www.christmasbirdcount.org](http://www.christmasbirdcount.org). Thank you also to the Borough of Allendale for the use of the municipal building for our recap meeting. The recap meeting may be the highlight of the day allowing everyone to share and compare the results of their day in the field.

Our 64th Count is tentatively set for Saturday, December 19, 2015.

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Fish Kill at the Celery Farm

By Jim Wright, Celery Farm Deputy Warden

The Natural Area's Lake Appert experienced a massive fish kill this winter, and the late March thaw brought in record numbers of vultures and gulls -- plus at least five Bald Eagles -- to feed on the remains. The fish kill, a natural-occurring event, was the result of very shallow water and a prolonged thick snow cover over the icy pond. The snow drastically reduced sunlight penetration, ultimately dropping the pond's dissolved oxygen levels to below what many fish need to live. The die-off, involving hundreds of fish, became apparent after the ice began to thaw.

The good news is the dead fish have brought in several bird species in record numbers, and a first-ever sighting of a Glaucous Gull by Rob Fanning on March 30. The following day, Fanning counted 28 Herring Gulls. The previous high count for the Celery Farm had been 17.

Similarly, at least 50 Turkey Vultures were seen feasting at the sushi buffet on March 27. The previous high count at the Celery Farm had been approx. 20. At least five Bald Eagles also paid a visit, along with at least one raven and -- appropriately enough -- lots of Fish Crows.

The majority of the dead fish appear to be carp and sunnies, with some large-mouth bass as well. Marsh Warden Mike Limatola says that the death of the carp, an invasive species, was no great loss, and that all the fish species should rebound.

As they say in pidgin English, "What happens after carpe freezem? Carpe diem."

Friends of the Allendale Red-shouldered Hawks

By Jim Wright

We at the Fyke Nature Association regret to inform you that the Laura and her mate have decided to nest in a new tree this season, which makes our recent effort to install a streaming video cam in vain. The good news is that Laura appears to be incubating at least one egg: the 15th year in a row that these hawks have nested in Allendale or nearby Ramsey. The unfortunate news is that the nest is elsewhere, still in Allendale, but elsewhere. Nature has a mind of its own.



We are now trying to sell the equipment, and should have a better idea of where we stand in a few weeks. We will be offering appropriate refunds as soon as we can. And we still plan to do a free updated eBook on the hawks and will mention all donors by name.

Although our effort failed, we believe it was worthwhile. The opportunities to install a video cam and to observe nesting endangered Red-shouldered Hawks are few and far between anywhere, and this was likely going to our best chance. We had no way of knowing that the Red-shoulders had already chosen a new nesting site. The previous nest site had been used successfully for four years, and we were fortunate to have a homeowner, David Reik, who embraced the idea of installing a video cam in the nesting tree in his yard. We also were fortunate that Chris Fix Tree Service of Midland Park so graciously donated their time, bucket truck and expertise to install the camera and equipment. We cannot thank Conserve Wildlife Foundation enough, they donated their time to install the camera. These are all terrific people. As for everyone who donated to this effort, thank you so much. We tried our best.

Field and Feeder Notes

By Judith Cinquina

In severe weather, at sunset, in South Carolina, I observed a flock (of Cardinals) passing to a roost in a neighboring swamp and bushy lagoon, which continued, in lengthened file, to fly over my head at a considerable height for more than 20 minutes together. The beautiful procession, illumined by the last rays of the setting sun, was incomparably splendid as the shifting shadowy light at quick intervals flashed upon their brilliant livery.



Nuttall (1832) from A.C. Bent's Life Histories of N. American Cardinals, Grosbeaks etc. (Part One)

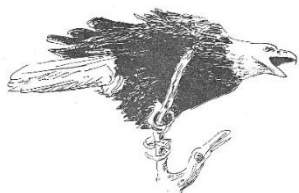
Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859), a noted explorer and ornithologist provided no count or estimate of the number in that flock. I'm sure it was many times the 20 Cardinals I counted March 1 in my Upper Saddle River yard. The ten males decorating my shrubs and trees as snow was falling that day was a first for me, and I wasn't alone. Carol Flanagan had eight males in her Hawthorne yard and Tim Tedesco reported eight Cardinals at his Oakland feeders. Probably all were brought in by the storm. A little research revealed that Cardinals in the northern part of their range are partially migratory, especially during a winter like the one we just survived. So the 20 in my yard could have included a couple from Boston and, being the only feeding station in the area, most likely included pairs and offspring from nearby neighborhoods. These flocks are not stable. John Bull in his *Birds of New York State* 1974 mentioned a birder in Ithaca, NY who banded 30 different Cardinals that visited his feeders during the winter of 1962-63. Dunn and Tessagliz-Hymes wrote in *Birds at Your Feeder*, 1999 that flocks of fifty or more may visit feeders in southern areas where populations are most dense. I noticed that my small flocks always consisted of pairs and they arrived together, probably led by the resident pair.

Cardinals were uncommon here in the 1800's. They began their range extension in 1930, and as bird feeding took off between 1950 and 1970 their push north increased dramatically. If you do have more than one male at your feeders, you might be able to detect which are alpha males by their deeper, more brilliant red plumage. Alpha males claim the territories that provide seeds, flowers, and fruits, especially dogwood berries rich in carotenoid pigments that give them the most vibrant red plumes. Long ago, you could purchase a Cardinal from a pet shop, but fed carotenoid-free seeds, its plumage would eventually fade. Since well stocked territories provide ample food for raising young, females prefer bright males. Cardinals have been singing for some weeks now. Both sexes sing, and they sing the same songs, but it's almost impossible to tell them apart. Ayako Yamaguchi, a NY researcher, figured out the difference, according to an article in *Science News*, Vol. 154, 8/29/98. Females whistle more nasal songs and "don't repeat notes as precisely as males do." See if you can detect the difference.

Two northern finch species turned up at some feeders this winter. One was the Redpoll with a single report from Mark Kantrowitz in late February. He had six at his Hillsdale feeders, a yard first. On March 13 he reported that Redpolls continued in Hillsdale in tall deciduous trees along Washington Ave. This high arctic breeder is nomadic, turning up where birch and alder trees produce the most seeds or at thistle feeders. Their occurrence was spotty this season with a small flock at Liberty State Park and a larger one at Barnegat Light State Park but not much in between. Pine Siskins, also highly nomadic, visited feeders all over the Fyke area. Alice Leurck enjoyed three at her Ramsey feeder, February 9. Betty McDonnel had some in Mahwah on the 16th, and four days later, Wiebke Hinch found a single at her thistle seed in Woodcliff Lake, and the 23rd brought a half dozen to Janet Tedesco in Oakland. Stephanie Seymoue reported two at her Ringwood feeder on March 1, and one finally showed up at Carol Flanagan's feeder in Hawthorne three days later. It's what I would call a spattering and certainly not anything like the invasion we had in 2009 when 100s aggressively took over many of our feeding stations. Even when they discover a good source of food, like your thistle feeder, they are likely to wander away. According to Dunn and Tessaglia-Hymes, the Siskins at your feeders today may not be the same ones you saw yesterday or a week ago. Case in point was a very yellow Siskin that some authorities call a "green morph" but Sibley describes as "overall more yellow with faint streaking" that turned up at my Upper Saddle River yard March 5. Although I still have Siskins, I have not seen that very yellow individual again.

The Allendale Red-shouldered Hawks are off to a good start. In February, Rob Fanning spotted the pair at the Celery Farm (CF) perching side by side. Then on both March 2 and 3, he found them copulating. Considered an endangered species in our state, Red-shoulders have

declined as a breeding species along with the wooded wetlands that supported them. Without the oversight and hard labor of many Fyke volunteers, especially marsh wardens Stiles Thomas and Mike Limatola, the CF and the wetland habitat preferred by this endangered species would probably not exist to provide the snakes, frogs and amphibians, along with small mammals and insects the pair will require to feed a growing family.



Six Bald Eagles floated down the Hudson River on ice flows, February 22. Mark Kantrowitz spotted them from Piermont Pier, below the Tappan Zee in New York on February 22. In spite of much of the river being iced over, he tallied 22 species there, including a pair of Long Tailed Ducks and a Common Goldeneye. Bald Eagles, another endangered species in our area, are nesting once again at the Woodcliff Lake Reservoir. Rosemarie Widmer caught the pair refurbishing their

old nest there, February 25 and found one sitting on the nest, March 14. She had feared they would desert the site because the water was lowered and construction begun last year on Church Road over the dam. She discovered another eagle sitting on a nest at Lake Tappan, March 21, and reported that the Red-tailed Hawks that nested at Darlington may be considering the site once again. On March 20, she spotted one adult visiting last year's nest. A Barred Owl has been visiting a pine grove behind Stiles Thomas' Allendale home since June 23. Crows discovered the owl, January 28 and proceeded to mob it. Like the Red-shoulder, this owl prefers swamps and wet woodlands and may hunt the CF. On the 30th, Rosemarie Widmer spotted a gray morph Screech Owl in her owl box in Allendale.

Two small groups of E. Bluebirds remained at Mahwah Green Acres, February 7. Simon Streatfeild counted 15 altogether. Boyle in *The Birds of NJ* states that many of this once uncommon thrush are now wintering in our state and that CBC numbers have increased from 70 during the 1970's to more than 2,000 in the 2000's. An American Tree Sparrow visited Judy Collier's Ridgefield Park yard on February 8. She had a Fox Sparrow that same day, but the majority of Fox Sparrows waited until March 17 when they were reported at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst, and in Allendale, Upper Saddle River, and Barbara Urban's Fair Lawn yard. Like a flash mob, they were suddenly here, without the technology that we primitive humans would need to coordinate the event. The sole E. Towhee report came from Mike Limatola in HoHoKus, February 24, and that one was a male. He also had a N. Flicker at his suet feeder on the 19th. The week before, Mimi Brauch also noted a Flicker at her Midland Park suet. Home with a cold, Judy Collier's day was brightened by a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at her Ridgefield Park suet, February 10.

Large patches of snow on the ground did not deter Woodcock from their annual performance at Halifax, March 16. Doug Morel reported three there that evening, and four evenings later, Rosemarie enjoyed two in flight at the end of Green Way. The first Tree Swallow was seen by a birder at the CF, March 17, Rob reported. More will be coming, and one of the better places to view all the swallow species is from the CF's Pirie Platform in late April and early May. Wood Ducks and Killdeer are already here, and the first Phoebe will appear any minute. Take a walk in a wooded area near water, and you may hear the first warbles of spring, sung by a Brown Creeper. It's probably one of the most beautiful sounds of March and April. In spite of the cold and snowy greeting spring received, it is gently pushing winter aside.



For information on the latest bird sightings, go to www.fykenature.org and sign up with our discussion group where many of the reports for this column originated. Or send your observations to me at judycinq@optonline.net or call me at 201-327-1782.

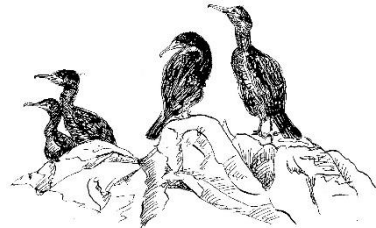
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**Fyke Limericks**

Building on the success of her Haiku challenge, Gabriele Schmitt e-mailed a new challenge, "It's getting warmer ... bird song fills the air ....and as we shake the winter frost from our brains yet again, I offer you another opportunity to explore your poetic side. Last year - haiku; this year - limericks please."

She relates, "Limericks are an old form of poetry, believed to have originated around the 14th century. The name is taken from the County of Limerick in Ireland. In times when few people could read or write, the simplicity of the form made them easy to be passed on verbally and limericks became very popular in Ireland and England. Some limericks originated in the pubs and these were often bawdy or rude. Limericks were meant to be fun or silly and so please enjoy a bit of creativity. I request that you refrain from the "pub" (bawdy) style."

An example from Gaby:

A St. Patrick's Day Challenge for you  
To send me a limerick or two  
About critters or birds  
Or just pen a few words  
Of your favorite Celery Farm view.



A side note from Gaby: Edward Lear, well known for his limericks and other poetry, is perhaps less well known as an accomplished artist of landscapes and birds. He created 80 bird portraits for the naturalist and entrepreneur John Gould. These were produced using lithographic plates, colored by hand and are considered by some to be fine examples of bird illustration.

With camera in hand I alight  
At the Celery Farm when it's bright  
Then I'm looking at what  
Is a beautiful shot  
If only the bird would sit tight!

Kurt Muenz

There once was a charmer named Thomas  
He had in his heart a big promise  
It took years of devotion  
And some with dejection  
His Celery Farm now wondrous!

DeedeeBurnside

This morning with temperatures chilly  
Going outdoors seemed really quite silly.  
But the waters were open  
And so we were hopin'  
To see mergs with those hairstyles so frilly.

Gabriele Schmitt



And sure there I was in Costa Rica  
 With enough hummingbirds to freak ya  
 So I lifted my bins  
 And as an ode to my sins  
 There I saw nothin' but a wood creeper  
 Brenda McIntyre

If it's Sunday don't lie in bed late  
 The Hour on the Tower starts at eight  
 One sighting says Queen Bee  
 Needs two to agree  
 Unless it's Rob then there's no debate  
 Malcolm Chesworth

With Winter's cold curse still gripping the land  
 'Twas Gabrielle S. who took matters in hand  
 With story and rhyme  
 She helped pass the time  
 And had us all thinking of sunshine & sand.  
 COOx2

There once was a sassy chipmunk,  
 He ate fermented berries and got drunk.  
 He spiked up his hair,  
 Got tattoos here and there,  
 He always wanted to go punk!!  
 Carol Flanagan



From the Tower I sighted a Rook  
 I had a most reasonable look  
 But when challenged by Rob  
 I started to sob  
 Seems I was badly mistook!  
 COOx2 (a.k.a. Charley West)

With spring just a few days ahead  
 You can see that the bramble is red  
 I thought I espied  
 A bill that was pied  
 But 'twas a Redwing Blackbird instead.  
 Laurie Neu



There once was a birder named Stiles  
 Who lead trips to tropical isles  
 With so many to please  
 He went to Belize  
 And all returned wearing bright smiles.  
 COOx2

This Winter has sure been a mess  
 One that I truly detest  
 I'll continue to wallow  
 'Till that first Tree Swallow  
 Which will (hopefully) signal the rest!  
 Rob Fanning

There once was a Woodcock named Shawn:  
 An avian Leprechaun.  
 He'd leap into the air,  
 With nary a care,  
 Then suddenly, he would be gone.  
 John Workman

So glad there's diminishing snow,  
But I'm out, as you likely know.  
In the land of the croc,  
Jersey weather I'll knock.  
Will see you in April, yo ho!  
Mimi Brauch



Nightjar nicknamed Bill  
Sang all night upon the hill.  
In my tent down below,  
Thanks to his solo  
I vowed to Whip...Poor...Will.  
John Workman

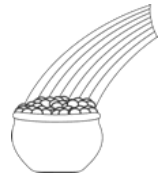
Of birthdays the Marsh Warden thinks  
While Bobolinks work on their "pinks"  
But we haven't forgotten  
The calendar's been shoutin'  
Happy Birthday to Mike: Some drinks!  
Valerie Moore



It's not easy to ID the animals.  
It takes time and the use of field manuals.  
Lord forgive us our sins,  
When we put down our bins  
And cry wolf when we see cocker spanuals.  
John Workman

I've heard of a Warden named Mike  
Who gives lots of help to Fyke  
He hikes round and round  
Finding things on the ground  
But we never see him on a bike  
Sue Dougherty

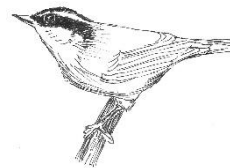
There once was a lady from Fyke,  
Who wanted to go for a hike,  
She followed a rainbow I'm told  
To our own pot of gold,  
Our preserve on Franklin Turnpike.  
Carol Flanagan



I sat down to pen a few words  
'bout birders and their birds.  
But we shouldn't be naughty,  
Or use words that are bawdy,  
Da-da-dah; da-da-dah, da-da-durds.  
John Workman

### Limericks are still being accepted

If you're thinking it might be too late  
For your verses both funny and great  
From these lines take a clue  
I'm still waiting for you  
To share with all, don't hesitate.  
Gabriele Schmitt





To the Tower the FYKE'rs did go  
Where they gazed at the Ice and the Snow,  
Of the few birds they saw  
Many sang out a "caw"  
But Oh how the breezes did blow!

It wasn't the scene they would have chosen  
With Lake A. bare and mostly frozen,  
But not to stay  
Is a debt to pay,  
So they had to postpone the thaw-en!

Why are we here? I heard someone ask  
We're really not up to this bone-chillin' task  
But rather instead  
We could be home in bed  
With brandy being served from a cask!  
COOx2



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Photos Are Needed for the Celery Farm 2016 Calendar!

Photos taken at the Celery Farm by Fyke members are needed for the 2016 Celery Farm calendar. There is a limit of TEN (10) photos per person. The photo must be landscape orientation, 150 dpi or higher, and sent as a .jpeg file. Photos not submitted this way will not be considered.

Please send your photo, landscape orientation, 150 dpi or higher, and saved as a .jpeg file, to carolflana@aol.com by August 1, 2015.

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**2014 Stepping Up For Lorrimer Pledge Form**

There are three ways to send your pledge:

- 1) Pledge forms can be returned at the April members meeting.
- 2) By mail to Fyke Nature Association, Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446
- 3) By e-mail to John Brotherton, jbro29@optonline.net

YES! I want to support Fyke's team and Lorrimer on May 9 by making a pledge per bird species seen. I understand that 60 to 80 species may be recorded; however the total could be higher if conditions are ideal. All money donated will go to Lorrimer Sanctuary.

My pledge is:

\_\_\_\$1/species \_\_\_\$.75/species \_\_\_\$.50/species \_\_\_\$.25/species \$\_\_\_\_\_/species

Name:

Address:

Phone:

e-mail:

**You will be notified of your pledge total soon after May 9th. Checks should be made out to Fyke Nature Association.**



**Here's An Easy Way To Support Fyke**

Don't forget we now have a direct link to AMAZON from our website. Fyke does not endorse any particular merchant but just log onto [www.fykenature.org](http://www.fykenature.org) and you will find the link on the first page. Every month AMAZON sends us a sales commission check. Thank you for your participation.



**Fyke Board of Trustees:**

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| Celery Farm:  | Stiles Thomas<br>and Mike Limatola |
| Conservation: | Jim Wright                         |
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| Land Trust:   | Hugh Carola                        |
| Newsletter:   | Carol Flanagan                     |
| Programs:     | Penny Whitlock                     |
| Publicity:    | Gabriele Schmitt                   |
| Webmaster:    | Kevin Watson                       |



**The Fyke Nature Association**, a 501 (c) (3) organization, meets the fourth Friday of every month except June, July, August, and December at the Allendale Municipal Building, 500 W. Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ 07401.

Meetings and membership are open to all. Annual dues: Individual -- \$15.00; Family -- \$20.00. For further information, write to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, visit our website [www.fykenature.org](http://www.fykenature.org), or call Mike Limatola, President, at 201-739-8062.

The Newsletter is published four times a year and manuscripts and artwork are welcome. Interim Editor: Carol Flanagan, [carolflana@aol.com](mailto:carolflana@aol.com). Production: Molly Gardener, Herb Gardener, and John Brotherton.

The deadline for the Fall 2015 issue is August 19, 2015. Send material to Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446, or via e-mail to [carolflana@aol.com](mailto:carolflana@aol.com).

