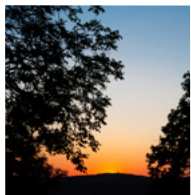


A new way to keep up with what's going on in the Oregon Conference —without wasting paper.

eCOMMUNIQUÉ

SEPTEMBER | 2013 | VOL.NO. 45



AS SUMMER COMES TO AN END

It's been a busy summer with events around the Conference. Read President Reimche's look back at this summer's blessings.

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MOTORCYCLE CAMP MEETING

Read about the blessings given and those received during this year's Northwest Motorcycle Camp Meeting.

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PATHFINDER CHALLENGE

Read four personal accounts from Pathfinders who took the challenge and participated in this summer's Pathfinder Challenge.

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NOTE WORTHY NEWS

Bits of news from around the Conference and around the world that we thought you might find interesting.

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From left to right: Kolby Somers, Dave Irons, Albert Roman, Mark Janta, Nels Nelson, and Zack Fritzler.

KESTRAL KREW'S BIG DAY

By Phil Kahler

How many bird species can be seen in a single day? At 3:00 am on May 5, the Kestrel Krew, an enthusiastic group of 8th grade students from Tualatin Valley Academy, began their quest to find the answer.

The Kestrel Krew began as an idea planted by John Gatchet when he shared stories about some of his Big Days of birding with my students. For the past five years, John has been leading my students on bird watching ventures to Fernhill Wetlands in Forest Grove. This year several of my students continued watching birds on their own time, so when they asked me if I would take them on a Big Day, I knew they were serious.

The American Birding Association defines a Big Day as "a single-team effort in which the primary objective is to identify as many bird species as possible during a single calendar day." We weren't quite up for a midnight-to-midnight birding adven-

ture, so we settled on 3:00 am to 8:00 pm, a full seventeen hours of bird watching bliss. Dave Irons, content editor for BirdFellow.com, volunteered to scout out local bird habitats, and then created a detailed itinerary and Google map for us.

By 3:30 in the morning we arrived at Nobel Woods Park in Hillsboro. As we quietly made our way in the dark, Dave sounded off a series of hoots; almost immediately a pair of Western Screech Owls answered Dave's calls. We had scored our first bird!

When we reached Killin Wetlands, the dawn chorus of bird song was in full swing. In the pre-dawn darkness we identified Red-winged Blackbirds, Marsh Wrens, and Virginia Rails by their songs alone. We heard a Great Horned Owl call from the fir trees down the road, and as the early morning light began to illuminate the landscape, an American Bittern flew just five feet over our heads!

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KESTRAL KREW

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We made several stops in the Coast Range Mountains to find warblers, woodpeckers, and jays. By 9:00 am we had identified over fifty species, and were headed for the coast. At Ecola State Park we observed wave after wave of migrating shorebirds and loons winging their way north. Near Nehalem the students witnessed a large cloud of Cackling Geese take to the sky to escape the talons of a Bald Eagle. By 3:30 pm our species count was up to 112 and it was time for ice cream at the Tillamook Cheese Factory.

We made our last stop at Jackson Bottom Wetlands where at 8:30 pm, we counted our last bird, a Eurasian Wigeon. Overall, the Kestrel Krew covered over 200 miles to see wetland, coastal mountain, and beach habitats, and identified 139 bird species in a single day! Kolby Somers echoed the thoughts of his classmates, "It was very interesting how many birds we identified just by hearing their calls." Most of the eighth graders said they would definitely do this again. "This trip was a real adventure," says Mark Janta.

The Kestrel Krew included students Zack Fritzier, Mark Janta, Danny Rivera, Albert Roman, Katrina Santiago, Kolby Somers, Lucas Kahler, Kris Somers, and Nels Nelson, and was led by Dave Irons and Phil Kahler.

Phil Kahler teaches science at Tualatin Valley Academy in Hillsboro where he maintains a large bird feeding station and observation blind for his students. His students collect and submit observation data to eBird.org as part of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's BirdSleuth program.

John Gatchet (right) with Albert Roman (left) at Fernhill Wetlands, February 2012.



AS SUMMER COMES TO AN END...

By Al Reimche

Somehow summer escaped on us again. It just barely started and now we are back into another school year and another autumn. But while it was here, some exciting things took place.

Camp meeting was a blessing again this year. The first weekend was filled with around 5,000 of our Spanish members who came on the campgrounds Thursday evening and stayed through Sabbath evening. A larger number were able to enjoy camping throughout the three-day event than at previous camp meetings. Though I have not yet mastered the language, the comments shared told me that people were blessed by the speakers. For me the highlight of these three days was the Camp Meeting Joint Choir led by one of our pastors' wives, Patty Pacheco. In fact, I have asked them to come together again for our quadrennial session in just a couple of weeks to share the rich sounds of their music for all of us to enjoy.

After a couple days of transition between Spanish and English camp meeting we were set to start again, and once again the blessings flowed. Our team of Conference directors had done an excellent job of coordinating the multiple seminars and speakers that filled each day. The evenings were a blessing as John McVay, president of Walla Walla University, and John Bradshaw, speaker/director of It Is Written, spoke. Sabbath morning Alexander Bryant from the North American Division shared a powerful message about the story of Gideon and how our understanding of having all the resources is different from God's. Each morning we were blessed by Gordon Pipher's and Russell Burrill's thoughts on our theme, "Come Unto Me." But camp meeting was not just speakers and seminars, as refreshing as they were. The energy and excitement of friends meeting again, the grounds filled with campers, the discussions that happened during

lunch or in corn dog lines, the children sitting with rapt attention during skits and snakes and speakers, the huge team of employees and volunteers handling food trays, parking cars, teaching seminars, coordinating children's programs, and providing security — these were all part of the blessings of camp meeting.

To finish out the summer, we met with the Conference Executive Committee members for the last time during this quadrennium. Our administrative team and I have been blessed these past four years as we have journeyed through reports, decisions, and plans with each of our Executive Committee members. It would be difficult to summarize all of the joys and challenges we have gone through together these past four years, but through it all runs the real experience of seeing God's hand leading this conference. In a very brief way we will be sharing some of those experiences on September 15th at the Conference quadrennial session.

...through it all runs the real experience of seeing God's hand leading this conference.

During this last Executive Committee we received reports from Stan Berman in our ministerial department concerning evangelism in the Conference, a report from our new vice president for education, Gale Crosby, on the changes this summer has brought to his department, and a report from our associate member ministries director, Cheri Corder, describing the training and fellowship opportunities happening throughout our Conference. Treasury also shared data indicating that our tithe has continued to hold a positive increase even through the first part the summer. We are again reminded that it is the blessings of God, experienced by our members, that are stamped on every dollar we receive.

So summer, a recent memory, still resonates with God's blessings in a variety of ways. I pray that as you think back over your summer you too, feel God's hand of blessings in your life.