



# Connecticut Ornithological Association

## 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

### Saturday, March 20, 2010

Chapman Hall • Middlesex Community College, Middletown, CT

#### Schedule of Events

8:00 - 9:00      **Registration / COA Marketplace**

9:00 - 9:20      **Welcome / Business Meeting**

Patrick Comins, COA President will present a brief overview of the state of COA, followed by elections of officers and board members. Ken Elkins, Program Chairman will welcome the membership and introduce the first presenter of the day.

9:20 - 10:15      **Alan Brush “Flashy Plumage: Molecules to Message”**

Carotenoids play an important role in bird plumage. Dr Brush has worked with some fascinating species on some of the most basic questions of color and plumage in the field and will take these insights on pigment chemistry and weave them into a larger world of plumage function and evolution to discuss such topics as how did the stunning colors of Scarlet Tanagers evolve? What role does diet play in House Finch pigmentation and what unintended consequences has research into the wax of Cedar Waxwings had?

Alan is Professor Emeritus (Physiology & Neurobiology) at UConn. His research included work on feather pigments described here and the molecular structure and evolution of feathers. He served as Editor of *The Auk*, and was visiting research scientist at several US Universities and in Australia. He writes “Books on Birds” for the CTWarbler.

10:15 – 10:25    **MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD PRESENTATION**

10:25 – 10:35    **BETTY KLEINER AWARD PRESENTATION**

This is a new COA award honoring the memory of Betty Kleiner, whose name is synonymous with *The Warbler*, COA’s flagship publication. The award recognizes a deserving author or artist in the field of ornithology.

10:35 – 10:55    **Break - COA Marketplace**

A time to socialize, purchase COA Raffle tickets and check out vendors’ offerings of bird-related items.

10:55 - 11:55    **Olivia Gentile “Birding Planet Earth: The Passion and Adventures of Phoebe Snetsinger”**

Olivia Gentile, author of *Life List*, a new biography of one of the world's most storied birders, discusses how Phoebe went from being a sheltered and frustrated suburban housewife to an intrepid, globetrotting adventuress. After being told she was dying of cancer at age 49, Phoebe hit the road, determined to see as many bird species as possible. But against all odds, she didn't get sick; instead, she spent the next two decades taking hundreds of trips to the most rugged corners of the earth, amassing a breadth of ornithological knowledge to rival any professional's, and seeing more bird species than anyone in history.

“Except for one thing, this book would rate as a great adventure novel and fictional psychological portrait, about a woman’s obsession with bird-watching, its effect on her relationships with her husband and her four children, and the horrifying mishaps that she survived on each continent—until the last mishap. But the book isn’t that great novel, because instead it’s a great true story: the biography of Phoebe Snetsinger, who set the world record for bird species seen, after growing up in an era when American women weren’t supposed to be competitive or have careers. Whether or not you pretend that it’s a novel, you’ll enjoy this powerful, moving story.”

--Jared Diamond, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the bestselling *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Collapse*

12:00 – 1:00    **Lunch at Founder’s Hall Cafeteria followed by dessert (Osgood Cake!) back at Chapman Hall**

1:00 - 2:00    **Dr. Margaret Rubega    “Look Up! Chimney Swifts in Connecticut”**

Chimney Swifts are among the species of birds we take for granted; a common sight over any settlement with chimneys, they have adapted with spectacular success to nesting in human-built structures. Chimney swift populations are declining steadily. Our state ornithologist, Dr. Margaret Rubega will present an introduction to their biology and conservation, and describe current projects aimed to help the swifts.

2:00 - 2:15    **Break - COA Marketplace**

2:15 - 3:15    **Greg Hanisek & Mark Szantyr    “The Art and Science of Rare Bird Identification”**

Did you finally catch up with Pacific Loon last fall in Middlebury? Sometimes the answer to a tricky identification is a cooperative bird. Mark Szantyr and Greg Hanisek, who have both served as secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, will lead a panel and audience participation discussion on the art and science of documenting the identification of rarities. The emphasis will be on birds that pose identification problems in Connecticut. Mystery photos on view at the venue will serve as a focus of discussion.

3:15 – 3:30    **COA Raffle and Silent Auction**

The ever-popular Raffle will conclude our day with many prizes including avian artwork and valuable birding equipment donated by artists and vendors. Raffle tickets will be available throughout the day.

**For map and directions: [www.mxctc.commnet.edu](http://www.mxctc.commnet.edu)    or call: 860-343-5800**

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**REGISTRATION FORM**

**COA Annual Meeting    March 20, 2010**

**Middlesex Community College • Chapman Hall • Middletown, CT**

**Early Registration:**    \_\_\_ Persons @ **\$15.00** (pre-pay only)    \$\_\_\_\_\_

(Must be received by March 8)

**[Registration at the door: \$20.00]**

**Hot and cold buffet lunch:**    \_\_\_ Persons @ **\$14.00** (pre-pay only)    \$\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL    \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please **print** name(s) as you would like to have it appear on name tag(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Send check (made out COA) & registration form to: Larry Reiter 32 West Mystic Ave Mystic, CT 06355**