

I REMEMBER GENE

WINSTON WILLIAM BROCKNER

It was with a sudden empty feeling in my stomach that I received news of the passing of Eugene Eisenmann on 13 October 1981. I first met this interesting man at the organization meeting of The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs on the weekend of 25-27 October 1947 in Amsterdam, New York. We struck if off well from the very beginning and we became good friends over the years. Annually we would huddle at Federation meetings, and each one of us looked for the other at the stated meetings of the American Ornithologists' Union. Of course, our first concerns and discussions pertained to the Federation. Gene was as intensely interested in the Federation as I was. His attendance and joining at the Amsterdam meeting bestowed upon him Charter Membership. At that time he was one of the delegates from the prestigious Linnaean Society in New York City. Being a lawyer, Gene was welcomed with open arms and he reciprocated by offering very valuable assistance in the drafting of our Constitution. From the organization meeting on, Gene constantly gave of himself freely to supporting and abetting the Federation in every possible way.

At the first annual meeting in Rochester, Gene and I were together on the field trip to the Lake Ontario shore. At Braddock's Bay, Gene suddenly spied a grebe a short distance out on the water. He quickly identified it as an Eared Grebe—the first record for western New York. This instantly taught me how sharp Gene was in the field. This was to be verified many times over in subsequent years.

In 1949, Gene chaired the Nominating Committee and the Constitution Revision Committee of the Federation. The improvements made in the Constitution were due to Gene's legal background and good judgment.

I was President in 1950 and 1951, and Gene was my Vice-President. Correspondence flowed back and forth between the two of us, much pertaining to conservation matters, an area in which Gene was very interested.

I was happy to receive a letter from Gene on 11 December 1950, with a most welcome P.S.: "I have just received a copy of 'The Kingbird.' I am writing to the editor to congratulate him on an excellent job." I, and others, had inveigled Allen Klonick into being the

first Editor of this new Federation undertaking. To receive such an approval from erudite Gene was sweet music to my ears.

Earlier in 1950, the pole-trap battle was on in Albany. Gene quietly and efficiently guided us through the mine fields of political ramifications and kept us on target, and progress was made in mitigating pole-trap problems.

Being a new organization, many requests were made of us. Many were requests for affiliation with other organizations and movements. As appealing and worthy as many of these were, Gene supported me in going slow on outside affiliations. In a letter to me on 5 September 1951, he cautioned: "Formal affiliation with other organizations, even worthy ones, seems to be something deserving consideration by the Council as a body, unless there is some special urgency." Subsequent events proved the soundness of this advice.

In 1952, Gene succeeded me as President. In response to a letter of congratulations, Gene on 2 January 1952 fired back: "Thanks again for your help, which I expect to draw upon from time to time. The work you and Gordon Meade have done in organizing the Federation and putting it on an even keel makes manning the vessel not too difficult. Let's hope we can have clear sailing ahead."

Gene's term as President was ably and competently handled. His administrative talent coped with all problems and the Federation prospered.

In 1955, Gene continued his Federation interest by serving on the Conservation Committee. In this capacity he contributed outstandingly.

I could go on, but I think these few excerpts indicate the sincere interest and contributions of Eugene Eisenmann, for and to the Federation. More than that though, I relived again the times with Gene. He was an outstanding individual, remarkable in many respects. The Federation has lost a very valuable member and true friend. We all will miss him, the world of ornithology will miss him too. I also miss him; I shall always remember Gene!

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