

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.
ANNUAL MEETING
New York, New York
September 18-20, 1987

The 40th annual meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., hosted by The Linnaean Society of New York, was called to order on Friday, 18 Sep 1987, at the Days Inn, 440 West 57th Street in New York City by President Harriet Marsi at 2:15 P.M. Twenty-five member clubs answered to the roll call. Marilyn Schindler read the minutes of the 39th annual meeting, which were accepted as corrected in pen and filed.

The President's report was given by Harriet Marsi; the report is filed with these minutes. Stan Lincoln read the Treasurer's report. He stated that the Federation was in good financial shape and explained some of the recent changes. The report was accepted and filed with these minutes. Stan Lincoln also read a statement that on 10 Aug 1987, the auditors had met and approved the financial condition of the Federation. It was signed by Irving Cantor and Richard Sloss. The statement is filed with these minutes.

Harriet Marsi asked for ideas that might bolster membership. It was suggested that a specially colored application or card be put in *The Kingbird* or *New York Birders* to attract the attention of individuals who might wish to join the Federation. Another suggestion was to place this type of application in club newsletters, explaining the advantages of Federation membership. This would reach those club members who do not attend the club meetings, where the Federation is mentioned and where the publications are displayed. One delegate suggested that 10% of the monies received should be spent for recruitment each year with a special "push" to be held every other year.

Harriet commended Paul DeBenedictis for some new items of interest in *The Kingbird*. Paul, himself, stressed that members should send items to him – saying, "It is **your** journal and will reflect what you submit." He wanted Regional editors to be told of bird departure dates. All names and addresses of regional editors appear in the journal. Paul is pleased with the material being sent to him and wants clubs to be thanked. Applause was given to the editors who do a difficult job of writing the Regional reports.

President Harriet Marsi talked about the new column for bird clubs in *New York Birders*. One delegate suggested that a schedule of deadlines be put in the issues so that members of clubs can contribute other items of interest in the necessary time frame. Max Wheat, editor of *New York Birders*, urged delegates to check with their bird clubs to make sure a copy of the newsletter of their clubs was being sent to him. Max commented that much good writing is going on in newsletters and it is a good medium for communication. He can pick up interesting information from club newsletters if he receives them. A suggestion that Max made which clubs might like to remember was that a writer should not start an article with a date and number of people who

might have attended but instead might start with a phrase such as "Bald eagle sighted!."

An announcement of awards was made: Manny Levine stated that Bob Dickerman will receive the John J. Elliott Award. Dick Sloss announced that Eric VanderWerf of the Genesee Ornithological Society and Nicholas Bailey of High Peaks Audubon Society will be the recipients of the Lillian C. Stoner Award. Manny Levine suggested that the original intent of the award should be reviewed.

Myrna Hemmerick reported on Membership. Thirty-nine clubs have paid their dues. Jamestown Audubon and Schuyler County clubs have not. A new membership application or brochure has been developed by Connie Wilkins and received by Harriet Marsi. When these applications are printed, individuals and clubs will receive them along with an invitation to join the Federation. It was suggested that clubs who are not currently members be invited to join each year. Ron Dodson's list of Audubon clubs should be referred to as a source for such clubs.

Walton Sabin's report on ducks is filed with these minutes, although he was unable to attend the annual meeting. Allen Benton and John Confer were also absent and no Bibliography Committee report was made. President Harriet Marsi volunteered to serve on the Committee on Resolutions with Stan Lincoln at this meeting.

Because of an Audubon meeting in Arizona, Peter Berle and his staff members of the National Audubon Society were unable to attend this meeting to speak or answer questions of concern to the delegates.

Mike Peterson and Bob Long gave input regarding the elimination of regional officers, including Ron Dodson, by National Audubon. There will be nine candidates of thirty-six on the National Audubon Board – hopefully to speak for individual club interests. Ron Dodson has formed New York State Audubon Society, Inc. It was felt that our state can support an Audubon office of its own, although more financial help is needed. Mike thanked the Federation for allowing time to discuss this important matter, which certainly affects us all. We must urge Peter Berle and Ron Dodson to get together to talk about the misunderstandings between them. Ellie Long of Onondaga Audubon Society said that they had sent a contribution to the new New York State Audubon Society, Inc., but wanted some questions answered such as, "Is it tax exempt?" Apparently, there are many different ways that state organizations run in conjunction with the National Audubon. Charles Smith suggested that we not take sides and urged caution regarding a formal affiliation with any organization. Some sort of state Audubon is needed, he felt, but cooperation with the National organization is necessary. We need to know the bylaws and setup of the new organization from Ron Dodson's office. Dick Sloss suggested that support was appropriate but not financial support at this moment. He urged caution. A suggestion was made that a committee be formed to write a letter of support to Ron. Another suggestion was that a "resolution" be drawn to be considered on Saturday, 19 Sep 1987.

The meeting then adjourned until the following morning. We reconvened on Saturday morning, at 9:30A.M. Roll call was again taken.

Harriet Marsi mentioned the contributions of Bob Arbib, who had the idea for the Breeding Bird Atlas, and who passed away this summer. She also thanked Connie Wilkins and Marilyn Schindler for their efforts.

Charles Smith of the Nominating Committee presented the slate of new officers:

President: Berna Weissman
Vice-President: Chad Covey
Corresponding Secretary: Mary Ann Sunderlin
Recording Secretary: Øivind Jensen
Treasurer: Stanley Lincoln

It was moved that the secretary cast one ballot that the slate be accepted. It was seconded and approved.

Harriet Marsi welcomed the new president, Berna Weissman, and Berna, in turn, thanked the outgoing president for her hard work and concern.

Gordon Meade announced that the Atlas is about finished. It will be coming out in May of 1988.

Paul DeBenedictis reported that Fritz Scheider has been acting as chairman for the NYSARC pending their formal meeting. The Committee has reviewed records for 1985 and 1986 and will try to have a report ready for the upcoming issue of *The Kingbird*. Fritz suggested that the number of members of the committee may have to be increased. Berna Weissman wanted Fritz to be thanked for the work of the committee in "catching up".

Charles Smith thanked people present for their help with Project BirdWatch. He said that 425 persons had paid the \$7.00 fee to participate and 333 had submitted reports. The data base now has 298 species represented. Charlie described Project BirdWatch like that of a "fishing expedition". There will be various possible uses of the information which is collected.

He also answered questions about "Project Feeder Watch". Shifts in agricultural practices affect numbers and the distribution of birds in New York State. There is a large regional attempt to know what is going on. Charlie said, "If we don't know what is happening to the birds in New York State with all these projects, we might as well give up!"

He further discussed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife breeding bird surveys. Machines do not like wrinkled, dog-eared reports. Information will be increasingly more available through new technology such as satellites. By 1989, Charlie hopes that all routes in New York State will be covered by observers. Fritz Scheider holds the record for covering 7 routes (a 25-mile automobile route with specific rules for observing every half mile during the breeding season) over a 20 year time span. An observer must be able to hear and see the birds. A long-time commitment is more important than ability. As experience progresses – so does the coverage.

Harriet Marsi reported for Peg Gorson on the conservation committee. The "Essential Habitats Bill" was defeated again. The Wild Bird Bill is still holding. There is much interest in the project that will determine the way in which state forests will be managed. Berna has asked Harriet Marsi to become the new Conservation Chairman.

The Jay Coalition in Rye, N.Y., which the Federation is supporting, was briefly explained to the delegates. The ancestral home of the John Jay family adjoins a nature preserve and only remaining salt marsh in the area. It is in the private hands of a developer. Many people want the property condemned so that it can be used by the public. Concerned citizens want the property preserved, rather than developed. Bob Arbib as well as other members of the Federation were very much involved in this effort. Its importance is that it is so close to a unique nature area. Berna Weissman asked that delegates bring problems of this nature to the attention of the Federation because "We do make a difference!"

One delegate mentioned that there is a growing concern from the grass roots regarding the lawn care companies and their use of pesticides which could affect all kinds of wildlife.

A motion was made and approved that Irving Cantor and Richard Sloss be appointed to serve on the Auditing Committee again. A motion was made and approved that Harriet Marsi, Manny Levine and Mike Peterson be appointed to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Mike Matthews from DEC's Urban Wildlife office in Albany was introduced. He spoke on the following topics:

1. There were 8 pairs of Peregrine Falcons in the state, 5 nests, and 3 chicks produced. There is a new Bald Eagle nest as well. At Montezuma, 1 male, 1 female and 1 unidentified Bald Eagle were attending 2 young eaglets – a unique situation with 3 adults.
2. The Essential Habitats Bill will be reintroduced by DEC, which will really push for it to be passed.
3. Loons are doing better than anticipated. There is conflicting information regarding the effects of acid rain. Mike quoted President Reagan as having just said the previous day that acid rain has no effect on the environment. There is much controversy about this and certainly many factors are affecting the environment. The "Acid Rain" Digest was recommended for reading.
4. Mike brought various pamphlets about subjects of concern to delegates. One was about Ridley sea turtles.
5. "Return a Gift to Wildlife" was discussed again. There are two committees that review proposals for funding. Basically, they rate projects that are submitted. Mike felt that the Fish and Wildlife Dept. was "on the ball" regarding where funds should go. About twelve uses of the fund ought to get money from other sources. Twelve million dollars is desired

from the Legislature to pay ongoing expenses. We should pressure the Legislature and Governor's office for more money. The amount of money collected by "Return a Gift to Wildlife" seems to be stabilizing in the amount of 1.5 million dollars. Some projects could or should be funded by the Conservation fund, rather than "Return a Gift".

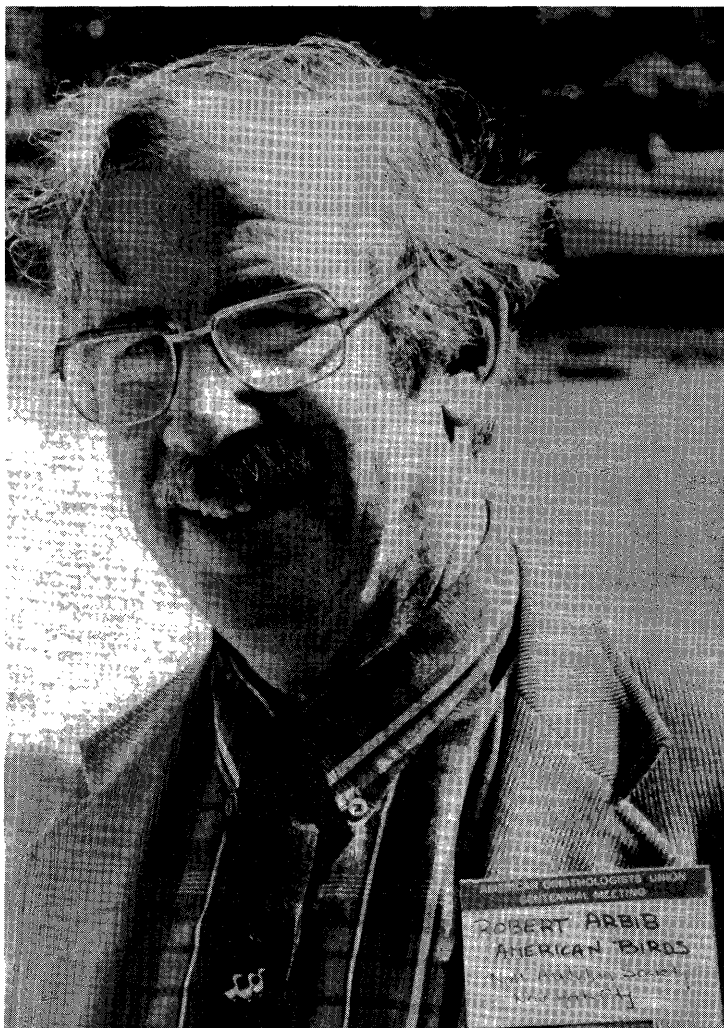
Stan Lincoln read two resolutions worked on by the Resolution Committee. A motion was made, seconded, and voted for that both be approved. Both resolutions are filed with these minutes. The committee was commended by Mike Peterson and Chad Covey. Charles Smith moved that the resolution concerning the Audubon Society's conflict be printed in the next issue of New York Birders. Copies of the resolution will be sent to Peter Berle, Ron Dodson, Dick Martyr, and Commissioner Thomas Jorling. This motion was approved.

The next annual meeting of the Federation will be in Rochester, N.Y., as is the custom every ten years. Gordon Meade and Øivind Jensen will serve as co-chairmen. We are still looking for a club to host the 1989 meeting. One has to plan for 150 - 200 persons and about 50 - 60 rooms. Staying in homes and camping are also possibilities. A group representing a club, rather than the president of the club, can host the annual meeting. Chad Covey suggested that perhaps a short notice about this need could be placed in *New York Birders*.

It was noted that the St. Lawrence-Adirondack Club was not currently a member of the Federation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marilyn Schindler, Recording Secretary



IN MEMORIAM ROBERT S. ARBIB, JR.

RICHARD A. SLOSS

Robert Arbib died on 20 July 1987 and with his passing the Federation has lost one of its founders and guiding forces. He ably served our organization for many years in many ways – as Chairman of the State Bird Book Committee; Vice-President (1962-1963); President (1964-1965) and Chairman of the Publications and Research Committee up until his death. A member of the Executive Committee, his counsel was listened to with respect. It was Bob who planted the seed that grew into the largest project ever undertaken by the Federation – The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas. What a pity he will not see the final result!

Arbib was born 17 March 1915 in Gloversville, New York, and spent his youth in Woodmere, Long Island, near a large tract of woodland, stream and marsh called the Lord's Woods, where he was introduced to the wonders of the natural world. From these early years to that evening in 1985 when he was awarded the prestigious Arthur A. Allen Award by the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University for his fourteen year career as editor of *American Birds*, he distinguished himself as a widely known and highly respected member of the ornithological community.

In his youth birding, Big Days and Christmas Bird Counts were the stuff of life, then on to Yale University and graduation as a biology major. A short stint in radio was followed by enlistment in the U.S. Army's 36th Engineers Regiment, where he served for five years before and during World War II in France and England. While in England he wrote and published his first book, a delightful account of his experiences in England entitled *Here We Are Together*. During those years he also wrote articles for the London Daily Express and, as though he had already chosen his creative field, upon his discharge from the service he immediately took a position with Grey Advertising as a copywriter. For the next twenty-six years he wrote for Grey, Kenyon and Eckhardt and D'Arcy advertising agencies before retiring in 1968 and moving on to become editor of *Audubon Field Notes*, later to be *American Birds*, in 1970.

Robert became part of organizational ornithology in 1938 when he joined the venerable Linnaean Society of New York. In 1949, a few years after his military service, he was elected President and he became a Fellow in 1957. It is touching to reflect that 1987 marked the

fortieth anniversary of The *Linnaean Newsletter*, the Society's monthly publication, which Bob created and produced for many years before other editors followed. He was a founding member and Secretary of the Hawk Migration Association of North America; a director of Friends of Marshlands, Inc. of Rye, N.Y.; was appointed to the Coastal Zone Management Commission of Mamaroneck, N.Y., where he lived for more than twenty years with his wife Renee. An elective member of the American Ornithologists Union, he was also a member of the Cooper and Wilson Ornithological Societies and the author or coauthor of several books on bird finding.

Despite all these serious and impressive accomplishments there was a bit of the pixie in Bob. He had a wonderful sense of humor and appreciated a good story as well as the next person. He was a regular contributor to the AOU's annual spoof, *The Auklet*, under the pseudonym *Strix nebulosa*, the Great Gray Owl. And who of us who were there can forget his investiture as President of the Federation in Poughkeepsie. When the gavel was turned over to him at the banquet he made a few formal acknowledgments and blithely into an "ornithological" joke with an off-color punch line whose central character was called the Crunchbird. The gasps from some of the more staid members at the banquet were drowned out by roars of laughter.

The most significant contributions Robert Arbib made to ornithology were his tireless efforts to preserve our wildlife areas. He was passionately concerned with conservation and for many years he fought to preserve critical pieces of land. He was a dedicated fighter whose sword was not so much the spoken word as it was the pen. I believe that was his most precious gift – an ability to express himself lucidly, powerfully and with beauty. His greatest cry against the exploitation and destruction of our natural heritage was the publication of his book *The Lord's Woods*, those very woods he tramped through as a boy. It is a profoundly moving appeal for which he won the distinguished John Burroughs medal. As Susan Drennan wrote in her Memoriam to Bob: "if this book were Arbib's single lasting memorial, it would be quite enough." He leaves a message in those pages which should not be forgotten and it seems appropriate to say good-bye to Bob by quoting the beginning and ending of the preface to his book:

"Whose woods these are I do not know. I have never seen the man or heard his name. But whoever he may be, he is my mortal enemy. By right of title, deed, grant, or fee, or any measure of quiritarian ownership these woods belong

to him. It matters not that he is a distant and uninterested proprietor, he is the legal possessor of these acres nonetheless. I see the torn and faded caveats his watchmen posted long ago along his boundaries, and I ignore them. Unafraid I walk the green paths that connect his wells. The smoke from the stack of his pump house flaps down across his snowy fief in sullen folds, and I curse this gray flag of disgrace. By every measure of law and logic, he is the rightful landlord and I the trespasser... So long as these woods live for me to roam in body or in spirit, so long as the jewelweed hangs heavy in August on the stream banks and autumn whispers with the rustle of bracken-brown thrush, my spirit shall have a secret wellspring, my heart shall have a home, and my America...a beloved countenance. But when that dread day comes that has been threatened for so long, when these woods have been allowed to perish through neglect or destroyed for greed, then my spirit shall be dispossessed and I (and you) for all eternity bereft. And because that time seems near at hand, and the long vigil ended, and because the thousands of years that have witnessed their beauty grow and evolve now approach a final agony, I will write this personal memorial. For myself I write it, and for you, to keep the Lord's Woods alive and green forever on these pages and in our hearts.

Then at last, and too late, the trespasser will indeed become the final possessor."

1300 Seawane Drive, Hewlett Harbor, N.Y. 11557