

## Bird count

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Ed Johnson of Dallas started the Back Mountain Bird Club in 1958, which became affiliated with the Audubon Society by the early 1960s. Forty years ago, he and nine others ventured out at 4 a.m. into the eight degree morning to find owls. That day, they found 43 species and 1,184 individual birds.

"It was something going on all over the nation and I thought we'd do one for Dallas," explained Johnson, a professor emeritus at Wilkes University, who also taught English at Lake-Lehman.

The highest bird count in the area was made up of 69 species in 1993. Last year 66 species were found, Johnson says a lot depends on the weather.

Not even the weather keeps the counters from counting. No matter how cold, how rainy or snowy, they are there on the set date.

"It's exciting. You try every year to see how many owls you are getting. Nothing keeps us away. That's part of the game," said Johnson, who describes the count as something to do and by now a habit.

His interest in the winged wonders began in college. "It's a challenge of when and where to look. Every winter is going to be a surprise," said Johnson, 71.

Bird watchers learn to look for details quickly and acquire a keen ability to identify bird calls or singing. For example, the difference between a Greater Scaup and a Lesser Scaup is only a mat-

*"It's good that we can reuse it because there is so much of it."*

Sarah Jennings  
Shavertown

ter of a greenish head versus a bluish head and the length of a wing stripe. Try seeing that as they whiz above at 30 mph.

"I usually can tell the different birds. Sound is very important because it alerts you to where to look," said Johnson.

Sam Merrill of Shavertown, a mathematics professor at Wilkes University, has been a count participant for three years. He's one who likes to sleep in just a bit and heads out around 7 a.m.

"It's fun to get out of doors in the invigorating cold," he said. "And it's nice to go out with other people." Merrill said there many unknown little lakes and tiny ponds in the Back Mountain that attract many types of birds.

"It's interesting to keep track of nature," said Merrill, who has been a bird watcher for many years. Much like Johnson, Merrill enjoys the challenge of learning about the 900 different species of birds in North America, with all their unique calls and appearances. He and his wife, Susan, also go birding on their trips across the country.

Sandy Goodwin of Beaumont has been with the Audubon Soci-



Sandy Goodwin, left, and Jim Shoemaker peered into the woods, looking for birds to add to their life lists.

ety for 10 years. Bird counting is always exciting for the Lehman-Jackson sixth grade teacher.

"It's interesting. The people are nice and you get out into the fresh air," said Goodwin. "We have bird counts in the summer and fall also. It's interesting to see the trends (from season to season)."

Merrill said he looks forward to his fourth Back Mountain bird

count. Sandy Goodwin, Jim Hoison and Jim Shoemaker are other Back Mountain residents who participate in the count.

Anyone interested in taking part in the count is welcome to meet the group at the places and times listed above.

## Farmland

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sion control. One Manzoni acre, a storm water channel, will be under the CRP contract for 10 years.

Manzoni, who runs the dairy with his two brothers, Alfred and Francis, has been connected with the Farm Service Agency for a long time. The farm has been in the family for over 100 years, he says, and they grow their own hay, corn, and oats. The Manzoni farm over 600 acres, and their own 265 acres hold 200 head of cattle.

"I want to encourage all landowners to consider enrolling their eligible environmentally-sensitive land in the new CRP," writes Fedak in her promotions of the program. CRP is a highly-competitive program, and farmers must meet many requirements to be eligible.

CRP payment rates are determined by evaluating several productivity factors, and are calcu-

lated before enrollment. Farmers may offer their land at that rate, or lower, to try to gain acceptance. The number of landowners interested in submitting their land outnumbers those accepted, and preference goes to the most at-risk settings.

Pennsylvania currently has over 2,472 contracts, accounting for more than 89,701 acres, under the CRP plan. Land is categorized by practice codes which identify the solutions to the land problems. The most popular systems for land conservation include introducing permanent grasses and legumes, creating wildlife habitats, and establishing vegetative cover.

Interested landowners should contact the Luzerne County Farm Service Agency office at 911 West Main Street, Plymouth at 779-0732 for additional information.

## Free ski clinic for seniors Dec. 9

A Ski Clinic will be held Wednesday, Dec. 9 at the Kingston Senior Center, 680 Wyoming Ave., Kingston from 6-9 p.m. The Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Bureau for the Aging is sponsoring the clinic and anyone 50 years of age or older is invited to attend.

In its fourth year the group will offer discount tickets, planned ski outings, Country Ski & Sports will offer the latest ski information and answer any questions you may have. Flyers will be available on ski warm-up and senior ski exercises. Refreshments will be served.

Anyone wishing to join or attend the clinic can register with Marianne Infantino or Kate Conologue at 822-1158.

## Fun Run for Cancer Society December 5

New Directions and the Luzerne County Young Lawyers Association are hosting the 2nd Annual Reindeer Run for Cancer on Saturday, Dec. 5. The start and finish line is the Wilkes-Barre Courthouse. It is a 5k run, with a fun walk, throughout downtown. Registration is at 9 a.m. with the races beginning at 10 for the walk and 10:30 a.m. for the run. Children's races will also be held with prizes for all. Following the race a holiday party will be held in the Luzerne County Courthouse rotunda. Prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers in each age group, with grand prizes given to the male and female overall race winners. The first 200 people to register will receive a fleece baseball cap. Registration is \$12 for pre registration and \$15 the day of the race. To register call the American Cancer Society at 825-7763.

## Recycling

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take the time to think about the little things."

Amy Jury, 19, of Orange, is happy to help. "We have the best recycling program in the area. It's nice to help the environment," she said, as she sorted through white and colored paper.

Sarah Jennings of Shavertown was surprised by the amount of would-be trash that can be recycled. "It's amazing how much people throw away. It's good that we can reuse it because there is so much of it," she said.

Winter is pleased with the students' response. "It's great to have help. They make all the difference. You really learn (why it's important to recycle) by sorting it. It's not an easy job," said Winter.

He also said the maintenance department, under the supervision of Charles Cary, has been very cooperative and helpful with the program.

In the 10 years of Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus recycling program, 313 truckloads of material have been brought to market, 49,000 lbs. of paper, cardboard, glass, metal, and plastic saved; more than \$10,200 in discarded supplies re-used, and \$5,590 in cash donated to the Annual Fund for scholarships. In this last year alone, \$2,914 worth of supplies were re-used.

Also, 1.3 million kilowatt hours of energy have been saved (1.3 million kW would power 21 homes for 10 years at avg. residential usage of 500 kW hr/mo) along with 3,300 trees.

The campus now collects books, magazines, transparencies (used for overhead projectors), styrofoam packing peanuts and copper wire. It turns out that the national collection point for transparencies is in Exeter.

Winter, who grew up in New York City, has been an avid recycler for years. He is the former recycling chair for the now defunct Back Mountain Citizens Council and was on the Citizens Recycling Committee in Wilkes-Barre.

"Environmentally speaking, it's the right thing to do," said Winter, as he looked over the recycling garage. "It saves money and energy. It always saves money to recycle rather than making something from scratch. It takes one ton of recycled paper to save 17 trees," he said.

All the money collected for the paper and aluminum cans goes directly into a campus scholarship fund for students.

Winter said it is important to keep recycling programs simple and easy for people. "That will get them to recycle," he explained.

"It's satisfying to know that you can keep a good program going for a long time without getting discouraged," he said. "I think a good idea catches on."

Penn State's recycling program is always looking for volunteers. If you would like to help, call Dr. Winter at 675-2171.

## Best dog

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tered a competition before this one.

The rigorous competition has been traditionally dominated by male dogs, because females have been thought not to possess the proper temperament. But, Loki and Banfield's win is changing that perception. "For a female to do as well as males really opens the doors for other females," said Banfield, after one of her training sessions at Lake-Lehman High School.

People are taking notice of the accomplishment and have even inquired if Banfield would be breeding Loki. No such luck. Loki is spayed and Banfield is not interested in being a breeder.

Not only has the high score earned one for the females, it also showed what drive and hard work can do. Banfield, who trains as a hobby, competed against profes-

sional trainers.

"For me to compete against professionals and still have the honor means so much to me. I raised and trained the dog without any help and was still able to attain this honor," explained Banfield, with a steady smile on her face. "You've got to work hard to even enter into such a competition."

This is a feat considering that many dogs purchased from Europe are already trained to a certain degree. Banfield buys her puppies in Germany untrained. She gives them one year to be puppies before she begins the more intense training.

Her next goal is to win the national competition next year with her new male puppy, Evo. Banfield will serve as a competition judge next year. In a different category, of course.



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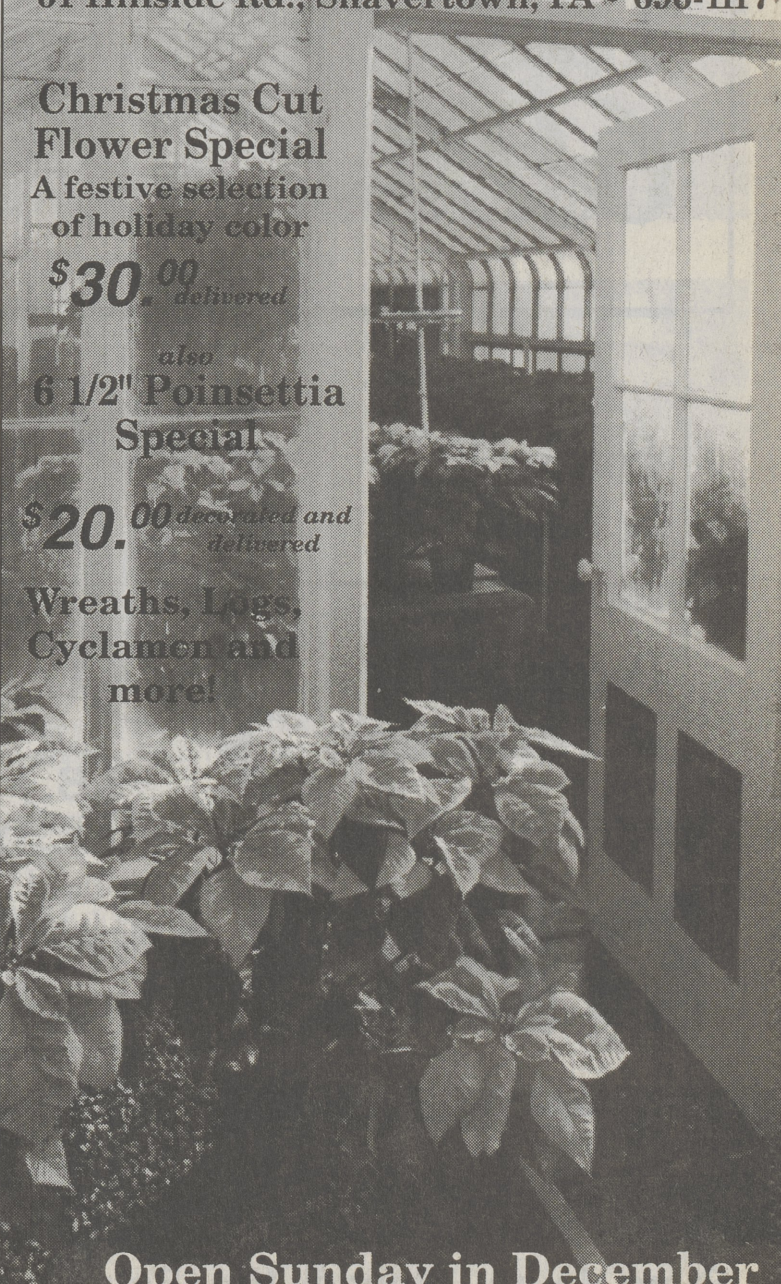
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