



Delaware Audubon Journal

Vol. XXVII No.3
Special Edition 2005

2005 DELAWARE AUDUBON CONSERVATION AWARD

RICHARD AND LORRAINE FLEMING: DELAWARE'S "DYNAMIC DUO"

Richard and Lorraine Fleming are superheroes for the environment. Michael E. Riska, Executive Director of the Delaware Nature Society, tells the *Delaware Audubon Journal*: "I do not think there is a greater 'Dynamic Duo' for the environment in the state of Delaware" than the Flemings. The 2005 Delaware Audubon Conservation Award is a tribute to their efforts.



Richard Fleming

Richard Fleming says he resolved to be a chemist when, in the 7th Grade, he discovered that "fireworks were really fun to make." Armed with books from the library, he spent his time experimenting in the basement at home on the south side of Chicago. His attempt to make a smoke screen was successful—albeit slightly ahead of schedule—when he accidentally dropped the bottle on the concrete floor and smoke

Lorraine Fleming

Lorraine Fleming's interest in the outdoors began when her grandfather gave her a bird book. Then, in the 7th Grade, a teacher led Lorraine as part of a small group on wildflower walks to view bits and pieces of remaining prairie in the greater Chicago area. Impressed upon Lorraine was the importance of preserving these sites and their rarities. The course of Lorraine Fleming's life was decided.

RICHARD FLEMING, continued on page 3

LORRAINE FLEMING, continued on page 3

SAVE THE DATE!

IT'S OUR 29TH
ANNIVERSARY!

ANNUAL MEETING & SILENT AUCTION

The Annual Meeting of the Delaware Audubon Society will be held on

Sunday, May 1, 2005
Cokesbury Village
726 Loveville Road
Hockessin, Delaware

Social hour and Silent Auction viewing will begin at 3:00 pm in the Atrium of the main building.

Invitations will be sent to all who receive the *Journal*.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



I am pleased to welcome back a longtime friend of the Delaware Audubon Society, Nick DiPasquale, as our Conservation Chair. Nick has joined our Board again after a brief absence. He served the State of Delaware admirably as the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Nick brings his unique perspective and knowledge of the State bureaucracy to our Board and has already represented Delaware Audubon in several meetings with the media and Senator Carper. As our legislators will vote on many "hot button" issues such as BP's proposed LNG facility on the Delaware River, and the possible purchase of open spaces by the State, we are fortunate to have Nick on our team. He will be a forceful and well-respected advocate for us. Please contact Nick if you can assist him or if you have any questions.

Asha Iyengar

Asha Iyengar

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Delaware Audubon Society 2004-2005 Officers & Committees

If there are any issues that you think Audubon should address that you feel strongly about, please write Issues, P.O. Box 1713, Wilmington, DE 19899, or call the office at 302-428-3959. Chairpersons can always be reached through the office answering machine, 302-428-3959.

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poured from the basement windows.

His enthusiasm carried on into his studies at Knox College, where he met his future wife. Due to their similar interests, one would think they met in science class, but they didn't. Richard spotted Lorraine when they were both singing in the choir and, as he charmingly puts it, "made her my objective."

Richard was in his senior year at Knox when his father, an accountant, encouraged him to attain an advanced degree. When Richard approached the dour and imposing head of the department to inquire about pursuing a Masters, the response was a dismissive "Can't do it." However, the department head continued, he would recommend Fleming for a Ph.D. program. Fleming applied to Iowa State, but about this time he was inducted into the Army, so his place was held for two years until he returned. Upon receiving his doctorate, he started looking for a job in what was a "Golden Era for people looking for employment" in the chemistry field. Fleming was narrowing his job prospects when a professor at the university, also a consultant for DuPont, encouraged him to apply. In the course of what would be a long and productive career at DuPont, Richard Fleming authored 20 technical publications, half of them on the topic of plastics recycling. He is also named on six U.S. and foreign patents. Upon retirement, he provided consulting services for several years until Lorraine got him involved at the Delaware Nature Society.

At the Delaware Nature Society he was drawn to advocacy, where he has devoted countless hours to environmental matters. When it comes to complex issues, "he is a master at getting things down to understandable terms," says Mike Riska, Delaware Nature Society Executive Director. He also praises Fleming's "statesman-like approach" and his being a "consensus builder." Riska continues, "I am more

After attending Knox College, where she met her husband, she went on to receive a B.S. in Zoology from Iowa State and a Master of Education in Biological Science from the University of Delaware. She was a Zoology instructor at Iowa State and a Teacher-Editor as well as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Delaware Museum Studies Program. She has been affiliated for many years with the Delaware Nature Society. Though now retired, she spends many hours as a Delaware Nature Society volunteer and serves on committees for advocacy, conservancy, annual giving, and publications.

Lorraine Fleming is well known as the author of *Delaware's Outstanding Natural Areas*, published in 1978 by what was then the Delaware Nature Education Society. When the book was being written, she says, many sensed the development boom in Delaware's future. "It was easy to see that the development was coming, but what was not expected was such explosive growth. Much of our wetlands border active farms, and we realize that whatever the impact of agriculture, the impact of development is greater. As years have gone by, some things have improved; but there has also been degradation of our water, air, and so on. All of our areas have tended to degrade, and particularly our upland forests have been the victims for the last two decades from constant whittling away. Fragmentation is taking a terrible toll in Delaware. These areas cannot exist as islands. We need to re-connect the fragments—farms connecting to natural areas. That is our last hope, in my opinion."

Habitats and conservation were again Fleming's topics when she co-authored *Birds of Delaware*. She also had the managerial tasks of assembling this significant reference work. "Finding a publisher was also my job," she says. A daunting responsibility, but to Fleming a welcome one. "I found out very early in my career that I really like producing a

MARCH

6 Sunday 7:30 AM
Delmarva Ornithological Society, Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at Refuge Headquarters. Beginner's trip to look for local waterfowl. Irene Goverts. Half day.

10 Thursday 7:00 PM
Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge Lecture Series: An Evening at the Hook, "Galapagos Islands," Bill Fintel, Naturalist. Meet in the Refuge Auditorium. For information contact William J. Jones 302-684-8419

12 Saturday 6:30 AM
Delmarva Ornithological Society, Thousand Acre Marsh. Look for waterfowl and early migrants. Meet at Veteran's Park, Delaware City. Half day. John Janowski, 302-834-9710.

19 Saturday 8:00 AM
Delmarva Ornithological Society, Gulls. Meet at Fox Point State Park. Please call Mike Smith 302-478-5918 for information. Half day.

19 Saturday 8:00 AM
Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, *Harbingers of Spring*. Meet at Refuge HQ. For information contact William J. Jones 302-684-8419. Half day.

APRIL

9 Saturday 8:00 AM
Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, *Early Returning Songsters*. Meet at Refuge HQ. For information: William J. Jones 302-684-8419. Half day.

23 Saturday 8:30 AM
Adopt-A-Highway Pick-up on Creek Rd. Meet at Hopkins Road Visitor Center. Dorothy Miller 302-366-8059

RICHARD FLEMING, *continued from page 3*

impressed by his leadership and his management style, not just his knowledge; by his ability to work with people” and get everyone on board with an issue.

Getting to this point was not easy, Fleming admits. “Environmentalists cast a jaundiced eye at people in the chemical industry and don’t trust industry types.” Eventually, he won them over. “I was viewed with suspicion by a lot of people when I went to these meetings, but I began to be accepted by various influential people in Delaware’s environmental community.” He began to establish his credibility and thus was “accepted by many people—but not all—as someone who could represent the conservation movement, as someone who understands their concerns and shares their vision.” Richard Fleming says he “comes at issues in an even and balanced way.” He is admired for his science-based approach in looking for solutions.

Richard Fleming has come a long way since those early chemistry

experiments in a Chicago basement. “After 33 years at DuPont, I was able to say, ‘That was really fun’; but I was not willing to give it up; so I consulted on technical issues; but I was still not willing to give it up; so Lorraine got me into the environmental area.” Richard Fleming considers himself born into his interest and has “had the good fortune to pursue it since I was 12 years old. I have had a very enjoyable time with technology.”

LORRAINE FLEMING, *continued from page 3*

product—something that can be held in the hand.” She is also intensely interested in land preservation. These two things, Lorraine Fleming says, are the most personally satisfying: Her land preservation efforts and her publications credits.

“I think of myself more as a person to start projects. I am not a good person to pick up on something that someone else has started and expand upon it. I like to initiate projects.” With such an entrepreneurial attitude, she

keeps very busy at Delaware Nature Society even in her retirement.

Lorraine has shepherded all the Delaware Nature Society publications. She has numerous titles to her credit, in a direct or indirect capacity, including her work as project manager for *Amphibians and Reptiles of Delmarva*, editor-manager for *Wildflowers of Delaware and the Eastern Shore*, and again in that role for *Butterflies of Delmarva*.

Books are powerful tools. Dorothy Miller, a longtime defender of White Clay Creek, one of the sites in *Delaware’s Outstanding Natural Areas*, was asked by the *Journal* whether she felt its appearance in the book helped raise awareness. Miller exclaimed, “Every time White Clay gets into print, it helps raise awareness! All publicity is appreciated!” Miller is sensitive to the cause and has worked with Fleming in the area of open-space and farmland preservation; and the more the word gets out, the better the chances for success.

Lorraine is always willing to help.



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