

## FRED W. BEHREND

### NATURALIST AND LOVER OF ROAN MOUNTAIN

My father, Fred W. Behrend (or "Freddie," as he was better known), was born in Germany in 1896 and came to this country in 1926. He ended up in Elizabethton, Tennessee, when the rayon plant built there by the Bemberg Company of Germany advertised for a German-English stenographer. Up until then, Daddy had been living in New York City since coming to America, but that was his training, so he applied and got the job, not knowing exactly where or how far away Elizabethton was.

I don't know just when Daddy became interested in nature -- birds, the mountains, hiking, camping, the outdoors --whether it was before he came from Germany or afterwards. But it was always a part of our family's life. He and my mother met while both were members of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club. When I was a child, the local chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) met in our home many times, and our family camped at Standing Stone State Park for (I think) the annual statewide meeting of the TOS. Daddy had friends in high places, but I didn't know until I was an adult that the man I called "Grandpa Ganier" (Albert F. Ganier) was founder of the Tennessee Ornithological Society and someone important or that "Uncle Chan" (Robbins) was with the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and wrote "the book" on birds of North America.

When I was growing up, our family made frequent trips to Roan Mountain for picnics, showing out-of-town guests the beauty of the mountain scenery and (if they were lucky) the rhododendron gardens in bloom, or climbing from Carver's Gap up to the clump of trees on

the bald where Dr. Brown had had his experimental weather station. We also regularly attended the Rhododendron Festival atop the Roan. My sister and I played in the rhododendron gardens, making playhouses inside or under the close-growing bushes, fashioning seats out of thick clumps of moss, and decorating our hideaway with the ever-present bluets. I remember eating huckleberries off nearby bushes, and, believe it or not, my sister and I crumbled up dry rhododendron leaves, rolled them in pieces of paper torn from a brown paper bag, and smoked them! Looking back, I can't believe our mother let us do that, but I also remember her talking about having smoked "rabbit tobacco" when she was a girl.

One of my earliest memories of going to the Roan was when the road to the top was one way-one way going up before noon, and one way coming down after noon--because two cars could not pass each other on the narrow road. We were going up and passed a car pulled off on the side with its hood up and steam pouring out because the engine had overheated. We traveled the road from Elizabethton up to the Roan so much that I knew its curves and landmarks by heart. We always stopped at Dave Harrell's store in Burbank to buy a soft drink or an ice cream.

Daddy hiked the mountains every weekend for as long as I can remember. He would often be gone before we got up on Saturday morning and not return until after dark. "I walked my legs off," he would say when he got back. He hiked on Sunday, too, but often returned in time to attend evening services at his church. In later years, John Martin, his



pastor, went on hikes with him; and it was he who told the story of how my father became interested in wildflowers. After my sister, Shirley, died, Daddy said that when he went out into the mountains he couldn't look up as he had done for so many years watching the birds. With his eyes downcast, he began to notice the wildflowers and other plants on the forest floor.

I believe that Daddy got the idea for having a local wildflower event when he heard about the annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. "We have just as many wildflowers at Roan Mountain," he fumed, "and a greater variety because of the difference in elevation."

I was in high school, or about to graduate, when the Roan Mountain Wildflower Tour, in the spring, and the Naturalists' Rally, in the fall, were first held in Carter County. In those days, the Roan Mountain Citizens Club sponsored these events, but I believe Daddy did most of the planning, organizing, and arranging for speakers, leaders, and programs. He was already friends with botanists Dr. Herman O'Dell and Dr. Frank Barclay of East Tennessee State University. Steve Russell and Wallace Coffey, whom he had mentored as teenagers, were also involved early on. Others that I remember from the early years include Dr. Herndon; Dr. Aaron Sharp, of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Carter Hudgins and Garvin Hughes, of North Carolina; Fred Alsop, in the beginning a graduate assistant at UT and later a faculty member at ETSU; locals Tom Gray and Glen Eller; Charlie Smith and Bill Bridgeforth, young proteges of my father. Mr. and Mrs. Jim Potter, of Roan Mountain Village, always handled the meals, arranging for Friday evening suppers at Cloudland High School and cooking lunch on Saturday over a campfire at Twin Springs Picnic and Recreation area halfway up the Roan. Others of Daddy's friends who guest lectured were Arthur Stupka, naturalist with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Chandler S. Robbins, of the U.S. Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife.

Daddy made many of the signs himself and arranged for the printing of brochures and program materials. I can remember sitting on the front porch with him and my mother stuffing envelopes. After I went away to college, I don't think I participated in many of the rallies, but one memory sticks in my mind: the time that someone had brought a snake for some exhibit or presentation. Daddy was so concerned that the snake did not have a water dish to drink from in its cage and would not be satisfied until he had found something to put water in for the poor snake!

It was especially fitting that the dedication of Bear Wallow Trail to his memory was part of the Roan Mountain Naturalists' Rally in 1977. My mother and I, along with my children, attended the event; and among those that I remember being there were Dr. Lee R. Herndon, fellow birder and longtime friend of our family; Dr. John Martin, my father's pastor and hiking buddy during the latter years; Glen Eller, one of the younger generation of birders who followed in my father's footsteps and learned from him; Mr. Frank Robinson, who had been my father's boss at the Elizabethton STAR and had suggested to my mother and me the idea of establishing a memorial for Daddy in Roan Mountain State Park; and Bob Burleson, himself a native of Roan Mountain, who, as state representative, had introduced and shepherded through the Tennessee General Assembly the bill dedicating the trail to Daddy's memory. No words could better express who my father was than those on the marker unveiled that day at Bear Wallow Trail: "Fred W. Behrend (1896-1976) - Naturalist and Lover of Roan Mountain."

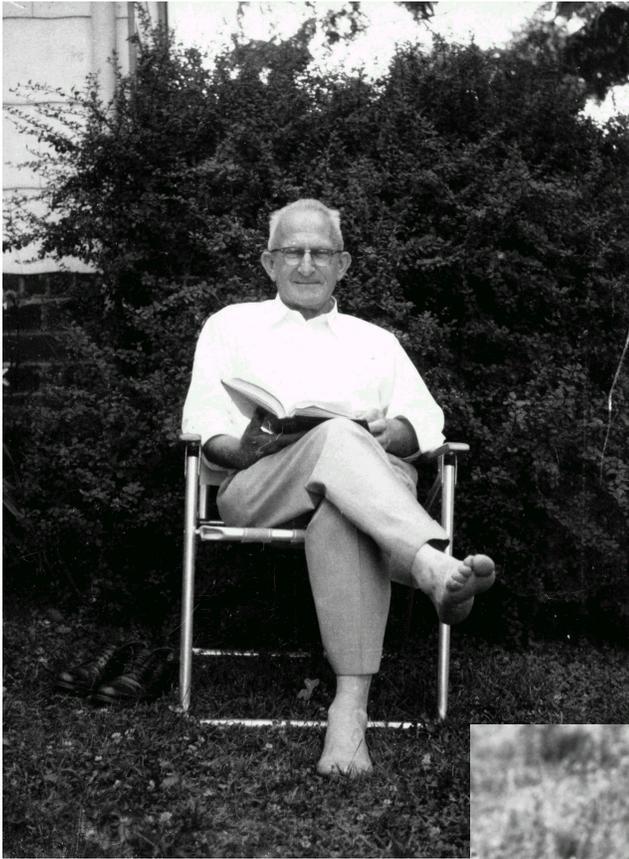
If I have omitted someone whose name I should have mentioned or have made any error of fact, please forgive me, knowing that I am remembering things from some forty years ago, many of which I have not called to mind during all those years.

## MEMORIES IN PICTURES

#1) My father in the front yard of our home on Range Street. I'm pretty sure that I took this photo. Note the open book that he is holding. Although his formal education consisted only of "Volksschule" (the equivalent of an eighth-grade education) and an apprenticeship, he was self-educated, reading and studying daily.

#2) Written on the back of this photo: "Arthur Stupka and Fred Behrend examining sneezeweed. Bradley Gap on Hump Mountain, Tennessee. Naturalists' Rally, Sept. 5, 1970"

#3) A scene at the motel in Roan Mountain Village, apparently at one of the Naturalists Rallies, with people gathering into groups for field trips. My father is third from the left, holding up a sign that says, "Salamanders."





# Roan Mountain Christmas Bird Count

– Rick Knight

The 51st Roan Mountain Christmas Bird Count was held on 15 December 2003. Three observers in two parties covered the area from Ripshin Lake to Roan Mountain village and from the top of the mountain down to the State Park.. The weather was clear and cold, with temperatures just barely getting above the freezing mark at the lower elevations. Strong winds and 1-2 inches of snow and ice occurred at the higher elevations. Despite these conditions, a near-average total of 43 species were found, but just 805 individuals. Chipping Sparrow, a common summer resident, was new to this winter count. The observers were Don Holt, Reece Jamerson and Rick Knight.

Pied-billed Grebe - 2	American Crow - 36	European Starling - 204
American Black Duck - 7	Common Raven - 3	Eastern Towhee - 9
Mallard - 7	Blue Jay - 8	Chipping Sparrow - 1
Bufflehead - 9	Carolina Chickadee - 20	Field Sparrow - 1
Hooded Merganser - 7	Tufted Titmouse - 10	Song Sparrow - 22
Cooper's Hawk - 2	Red-breasted Nuthatch - 24	Swamp Sparrow - 2
Red-tailed Hawk - 1	White-breasted Nuthatch - 5	White-throated Sparrow - 23
Ruffed Grouse - 3	Brown Creeper - 2	Dark-eyed Junco - 139
Mourning Dove - 19	Carolina Wren - 7	Northern Cardinal - 8
Belted Kingfisher - 2	Golden-crowned Kinglet - 9	House Finch - 30
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 1	Eastern Bluebird - 4	Red Crossbill - 2
Downy Woodpecker - 3	Hermit Thrush - 2	Pine Siskin - 71
Hairy Woodpecker - 2	American Robin - 2	American Goldfinch - 85
Pileated Woodpecker - 1	Northern Mockingbird - 1	House Finch - 8
Eastern Phoebe - 1		

Rick Knight, Johnson City, TN, rknight@preferred.com

## J.B. OWEN MEMORIAL AWARD

The purpose of the J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment is to honor the memory of J.B. Owen, longtime Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) member known to thousands in East Tennessee through his columns in Knoxville newspapers. J.B. Owen was an active member of the Knoxville Chapter of TOS (KTOS) from 1947 until his death in 2001. He was awarded the TOS Distinguished Service Award in 1990 (Nicholson, C.P. 2001. "In Memoriam: J.B. Owen (1915-2001)," *The Migrant*, 72(1): 34-35, Knoxville, TN, March). The Endowment provides funds for the annual J.B. Owen Award, with expected value of \$250 to \$500 per year.

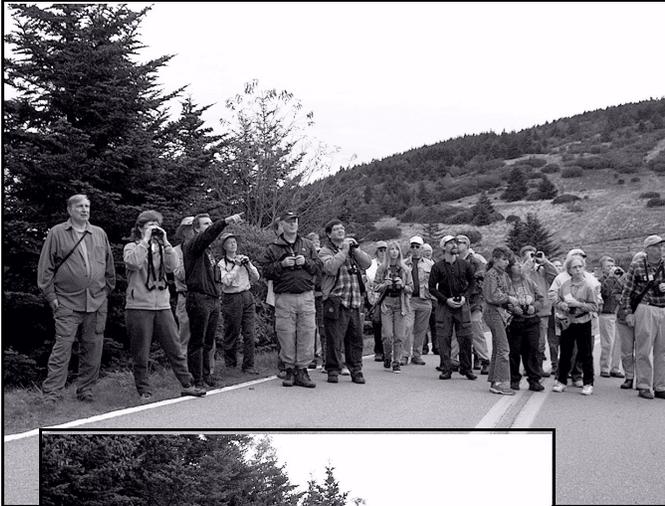
The J.B. Owen Award is open to anyone with a project that promotes the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee. Applicants should submit the following information:

1. Cover letter with short project description and applicant contact information
2. Resume
3. Project proposal, of up to three pages, showing topic of the project, problem to be addressed, objectives, expected results and significance, deliverables (for example, written report, journal article, presentation), project location, and project schedule.

Each year, applications are due by May 1 and should be sent (preferably) by e-mail to [marieoakes@msn.com](mailto:marieoakes@msn.com) or mailed to Jerry Hadder, 18 Rockingham Lane, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831. The J.B. Owen Endowment Committee of KTOS will evaluate applications and will typically announce the J.B. Owen Award winner the following September.

# BIRDING WATCHING AT THE FALL 2003 RALLY

WITH KENN KAUFMAN

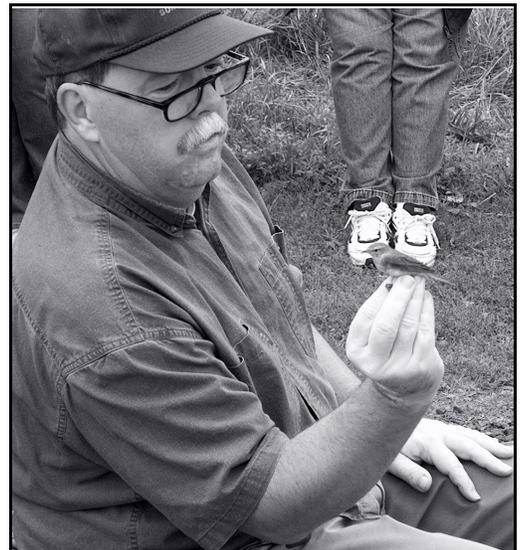


"IF YOU GUYS WILL JUST GET IN THE PROPER POSITION, YOU'LL HAVE MUCH GREATER SUCCESS!"

AND BIRD BANDING WITH RICK KNIGHT



WARBLER  
WOES:  
THE ANNUAL  
MIGRATION  
CHECK -UP



# Roan Mountain Research Grant

In December, the Friends of Roan Mountain awarded their first Roan Mountain Research Grant to Ms. Mary Schmidt, a graduate student in the Department of Biological Sciences at East Tennessee State University working under the supervision of the nationally recognized ornithologist, Dr. Fred Alsop. The \$500 award will be used to defray some of the expenses associated with her thesis project. The objective of her project is the re-introduction of the Appalachian race of the Black-capped Chickadee to the Spruce/Fir habitat at the top of Roan Mountain. Historical records document that at one time this species was found at the top of The Roan but disappeared following extensive timber cutting during the 1950's. The very similar Carolina Chickadee is a common resident of Roan Mountain at lower elevations but has not invaded the Spruce/Fir habitat in the absence of the Black-capped Chickadee. Ecologically, chickadees are known as "gleaners" which explore the twigs and leaves of trees seeking small insects. The absence of chickadees at the top of Roan Mountain means that an important component of the Spruce/Fir



ecosystem is lacking, especially in the winter when the migrant neotropical gleaners have left for warmer climes. So far, Ms. Schmidt has worked at establishing nest boxes suitable for chickadees and going through the tortuous process of getting multiple permits needed to move Black-capped Chickadees from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This spring

she will devote her efforts to capturing chickadees in the Smokies and moving them to Roan Mountain.

The Roan Mountain Research Grant program was established by the Board of Directors of the Friends to encourage research projects dealing with the natural history of Roan Mountain. The program is primarily supported by the proceeds from the raffles and silent auctions held during the spring and fall naturalists' rallies but, at the discretion of the Board, may be supplemented from the general operating fund. It is hoped that these grants can be awarded on a regular basis to support and encourage research on the biota of Roan Mountain.

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## SUMMARY OF TREASURER'S REPORT YEAR 2003

As of December 31, 2003, The Friends of Roan Mountain has 195 members which includes Life members, Corporate members, individual members and family members.

We have five LIFE members: Sally & Jerry Nagel, Edna Potter, Steve & Susan Wolfe, Gary & Nancy Barrigar, and Lynn Brown. (Note - In January 2004 one new lifetime member joined: Kenn Kaufman)

We began the year 2003 with \$4,660.95, and ended 2003 with \$6,428.78.

Monies spent over the year include the following:

Honorariums to speakers: \$450.00

Printing and Mailing of Rally Brochures and Friends Newsletters : \$1271.68

Printing of stationery, membership cards: \$294.68

Two signs for Naturalists Rallies: \$177.09

Cabin Rental for Director of Fall Rally: 217.08

Cost of Friends hats: \$436.67. Sale of hats at Spring Rally: \$125; Fall Rally:\$45

Fundraisers for Roan Mountain Research Grant

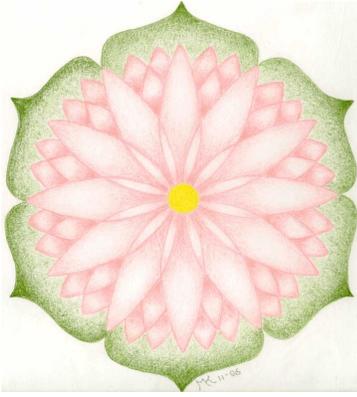
Proceeds from Raffle: Spring \$104.05; Fall \$291.00 Total: \$395.05

Proceeds from Auction: Spring \$233.75

Total Proceeds from Grant Fundraisers: \$628.80.

Grant award: \$500 to ETSU for graduate student, Mary Schmidt, working under Dr. Fred Alsop to bring the Appalachian black-capped chickadee back to Roan Mountain. (See *Roan Mountain Research Grant* above.)

If you would like to see the full report contact our treasurer, Anne B. Whittemore at 423/477-2235 (We extend our gratitude to Anne for all the work she does in her position as treasurer!!)



## ‘THE SACRED DEPTHS OF NATURE’

--JOHN MARTIN

As Carolyn and I were approaching Carver’s Gap on the Roan and turning in at one of the last pull offs near the crest of the mountain we got out of the car to look at the valley below. We were not prepared for what happened. We had been listening to a CD and had left the car door open. The brilliant light of the early morning sun was shining through puffy remnants of clouds that hung far below us and the fall color of the valley floor was checkered with moving patches of finely sculpted shadows. Then, unexpectedly, we heard from our car the opening notes of the slow movement of Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto. The lucidity of the light, the peaceful valley, the majesty of the Roan and Mozart! It was almost more beauty than we could take.

Now it is time for a recently retired Presbyterian minister to make a public confession: actually, two confessions. First, this happened on a Sunday morning. Second, it was probably the most powerful experience of worship that I have had on any Sunday morning in a very long time. We were not in a church, we were not hearing a choir and no one was talking about God. Yet we were in the presence of the Mystery that envelopes us all, that is nearer to us than our breath and is waiting only for us to open ourselves to it and the gift it has to offer us.

Ursula Goodenough, one of American’s leading cell biologists, has written a book whose title describes for me perfectly what Carolyn and I encountered that morning, *The Sacred Depths of Nature*. Yet, if we are to rescue such moments from dissolving into a mushy sentimentality, we must realize that something is demanded of us if we are to experience this sacred depth. We must pause, and not be content with merely looking, but to actually see; nor merely listening but to actually hear, and in the process allow the Mystery its time to create its space. This means perhaps that at some point we shall have to stop counting and measuring and identifying and adding to lists, and ...on and on we could go.

Although by all accounts a staunch atheist, Friedrich Nietzsche understood this when he wrote critically of “the person who wants to understand, grasp and assess in a moment that before which he ought to stand long in awe as before an incomprehensible sublimity.” For me, this means that if we are going to experience the sacred depths of nature, then we will be willing to slip out of the shackles of our all-consuming egocentricity and acknowledge to ourselves, if to no one else, that we are not the center of the universe. Rather, we will realize that this position is occupied by the Mystery that eludes us even as it, often unexpectedly, fills us with the tender terror of incomprehensible awe.

John Martin, D. Min., and Carolyn Martin of Elizabethton, TN, are charter members of Friends of Roan Mountain and long-time Naturalists' Rally participants. John served as director of the Spring Wildflower Tour and Bird Walks in 1981.



# CONGRATULATIONS, JENNIFER!

In November 2003 Jennifer Bauer, well known to Friends of Roan Mountain as the smiling face of the Spring Naturalists' Rally, was selected as manager of Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area in Elizabethton.

Jennifer began her career with Tennessee State Parks 24 years ago with a summer job at Warriors Path State Park in Kingsport. She moved to Roan Mountain State Park one year later where she served as a ranger naturalist and interpretative educator. She became a loved personality at Roan Mountain where she designed and coordinated a host of festivals, workshops, concerts and special events. Jennifer brought not only her knowledge of natural and cultural history, but an enthusiasm and warmth for the place and the people of the region. In 2001, when she was transferred to Sycamore Shoals, the Friends of Roan Mountain were sorely disappointed to see her leave our beloved mountain. But she has taken her same talents and enthusiasms to her new position. We wish her all the best as she assumes her new responsibilities.

Jennifer succeeds Herb Roberts who has taken the position of Regional Manager of East Tennessee State Parks. Herb has volunteered his time as a hike leader for our Naturalists' Rallies for many years. We extend our sincere congratulations to Herb as well.

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