



Wachiska
Audubon Society

Wachiska Audubon Society's vision:

To share the experience and love for nature—and help protect its diversity

The Babbling Brook

Our 53rd Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2026

JUNE 2026

Volume 35 - Issue 6

Wachiska Program and General Meeting — Thursday, June 11, 7:00 PM, Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, and also via YouTube link: <https://youtube.com/live/6yv2ald0t8k?feature=share>

BIRDS OF NEBRASKA: THROUGH OUR LENSE with Dr. Gabriel Rivera and Jennifer Blankenship Rivera

Dr. Gabriel Rivera and Jennifer Blankenship Rivera invite you to join them on a visual journey through the heart of Nebraska, a place where the Central Flyway stitches the continent together in motion each year. Millions of birds move through this corridor, turning the skies above into living maps of migration.

From their home in Omaha, they sit at a remarkable crossroads—where eastern deciduous forests begin to soften into prairie grasslands, and where the wide-open Great Plains quietly point the way toward the Rocky Mountains. It is a landscape of transition, and in that in-between space lives an extraordinary richness of birdlife, constantly shifting with the seasons.

Their presentation shares the story of how they first stepped into the world of birding and how, over time, photography became their way of slowing it all down—of noticing more, and seeing differently. With backgrounds in biology and psychology, they're drawn to the deeper questions of how birds live: their behaviors, personalities, and subtle ways they



Jennifer Rivera and Dr. Gabriel Rivera

interact with the landscapes they depend on. A passing glance becomes a behavior to interpret, a silhouette becomes a story, and each image becomes an invitation to look a little longer.

Gabriel Rivera and Jennifer Blankenship Rivera live in Omaha, where Gabriel is a biology professor at Creighton University and Jennifer works as a counselor. They have shared their work and presentations with audiences at Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, Creighton University, bird clubs across Nebraska, and a variety of

community organizations, with additional

talks scheduled throughout 2025–2026. Join us in person for the Rivera's presentation:

Thursday, June 11, 7:00 PM, Unitarian Church, 6300 A St.

LIVE: <https://youtube.com/live/6yv2ald0t8k?feature=share>

REMINDER: The program Wachiska uses to create the newsletter, Microsoft Publisher, is being phased out by Microsoft. Our newsletter will begin to look different as we transition to a new design program. You may have already noticed changes!

WACHISKA'S JUNE CALENDAR

- 1 Education Committee: 6:30PM/ZOOM
- 7 COMEDY IN THE PINES 6PM/ PPNP
- 8 Conservation Committee: 6:30PM/ZOOM
- 11 General Meeting: BIRDS OF NEBRASKA, THROUGH OUR LENSE. 7PM/UU Church
- 16 Board Meeting: 7PM
- 20 TOUR THE WILD SIDE: 9AM –12PM

JUNE PRAIRIE PINES PARTNERS EVENTS

Friday, June 12th 10:30-11:30AM

"Around Town Storytime" Tree themed story time in the arboretum with Lincoln City Libraries. Stay to explore the trails, bring a picnic. Geared towards 5 and under, all ages welcome.

Saturday, June 20th 10AM-1PM

"Pollinators, Plants and Prairie Pines" -- An interactive event celebrating the roles pollinator plants, insects and wildlife play in our ecosystems. Learn more about how you can make a difference!



Executive Director's Message by Mark Brohman

We had a wonderful presentation by Jerome Kills Small at our monthly meeting in May. If you missed it, be sure to watch it on YouTube. We had one of the largest crowds of the year, with 74 in attendance. This month's program features Gabriel Rivera, Ph.D., and Jennifer Blankenship Rivera, who will be speaking on Birds of Nebraska.

We want to say a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who donated to Wachiska during Give to Lincoln Day. We will share final totals in the July Babbling Brook.

We have five sites featured on the 2026 Tour the Wild Side. This free event will be held Saturday, June 20, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Be sure to explore the locations and stories included in this newsletter and save the date!

Visitor numbers at Prairie Pines have increased significantly this year as word spreads about this special place on the edge of Lincoln. Guests enjoy walking the many trails, and the Ninja Course remains a favorite for children. We are open Fridays and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Bring a lunch and relax at one of the picnic tables in the arboretum while enjoying the shade and the sounds of birds throughout the surrounding forest. From there, you can explore the native prairie, the windmill, and other areas across the 145 acres.

A new highlight is the Loren Eiseley sunflower garden near the windmill. Planted in early May by grade school and pre-kindergarten students, it now features three species of native sunflowers. By fall, it should become a vibrant display of yellow blooms with a walking path through its center.

COMEDY IN THE PINES

Mother Nature forced us to postpone our May 17 Comedy in the Pines event, but we are pleased to announce the rain date: Sunday, June 7. Gates open at 6:00 p.m.! Make sure you get here on time to park and get settled before the show starts!

We have sold over 150 tickets and are excited to meet the many people who will learn about Wachiska's important work for the first time while also enjoying a fun show!

Bring a lawn chair, your favorite drink, and enjoy food from Pepe's Bistro. Tickets are available until midnight on June 5 for \$25 each. All previously purchased tickets will be honored.

***We want to say thank you to our incredible volunteer crew led by Alyx Knight! Thank you everyone!*

OPEN HOUSE AT WILDCAT CREEK PRAIRIE

Ross Scott is planning an open house and tour at Ernie Rousek's Wildcat Creek Prairie on Saturday, June 13. This 80-acre prairie is located in Gage County, south-southwest of Virginia. We hope you are able to visit one or more of our ten prairies this summer.

For the first time in a few years, we have a new Wachiska T-shirt available! See details in the newsletter!

A VISIT WITH JEROME KILLS SMALL

ŠIŠÓKA LÚTA (ROBIN REDBREAST)

PHOTOS BY WJ BANTAM



Ross Scott made Jerome Kills Small a walking stick. When it was given to Jerome at Jerome's family breakfast, Jerome said, "Dogwood. You know how I know it's dogwood?" "No," everybody said. "How do you know it's dogwood?" "By its bark," he said. And everybody laughed, including Honeybear the Dog.



Breakfast for Jerome and his family.



Jerome speaks at Wachiska's Speaker Series.

TOUR THE WILD SIDE

JUNE 20

9 AM - 12 PM

MAP

A. 46 ANTELOPE CREEK RD

B. 6324 STARLING CR

C. 6520 REXFORD DR

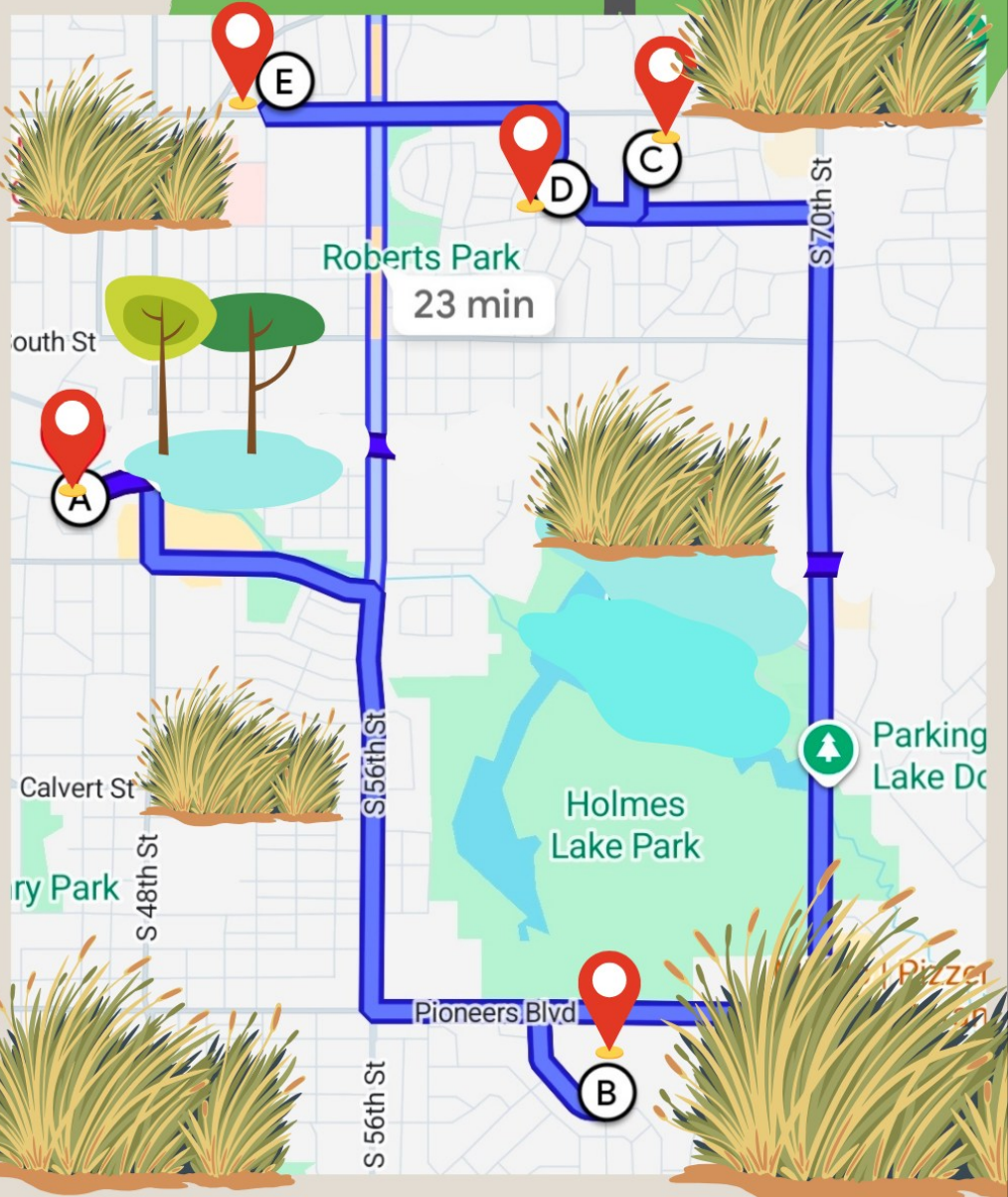
D. 6130 EVERETT ST

E. 1315 FALL CREEK RD

Explore local native plant landscapes with us!

Lincoln

Native Plants



THANKS TO OUR AMAZING SPONSORS!



TOUR THE WILD SIDE

with

Wachiska Audubon and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon

This year's Tour the Wild Side, hosted by Wachiska Audubon and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, will take place Saturday, June 20, from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Rain or shine, visitors are invited to meet dedicated individuals and organizations working to protect and restore healthy, diverse micro-ecosystems in our community.

We are grateful to this year's sponsors for supporting the mission of environmental stewardship and habitat conservation: Wild Bird Habitat Store, Midwest Natives Nursery, LES Pollinator Program, Schrader Landscape Design, Prairie Legacy Inc., U-Stop, and Runza.

EDEN PARK WEST: 46 Antelope Creek Road

Just west of the swimming pool and pickleball courts is a peaceful oasis with a diversity of life!

Bringing an idea to life in 2018 (*with permission from Lincoln Parks & Recreation*), Pete Stegen coordinated a collaborative effort to restore prairie in the heart of Lincoln. Come explore the pathways and prairie life in an urban environment!

This site will have activities for kids & families to explore birds, bugs, and more with Jason the Birdnerd and others! To learn more about Eden Park Prairie visit <https://www.wildlearninglincoln.com/edenpark> and Instagram: @edenparkwest.



DAVE and LINDA TITTERINGTON: 6324 Starling Circle

When Linda and I moved to the Colonial Hills neighborhood seven years ago, lawn was the predominant habitat. We knew we wanted to create a space for birds and pollinators similar to the one we had enjoyed so much at our previous home in the East Campus neighborhood. Our initial efforts were showcased on the Tour in 2022. Since then, we have added more pollinator plants along with a wide variety of bird- and pollinator-friends.



Purple Martins. Photo by Susan Young

We have also planted five tree species in hopes of creating a little shade.

One of the greatest rewards has been enjoying the Purple Martin colony in the backyard. This spring, our focus has shifted to the front yard, where we are continuing to install more bird and pollinator-friendly habitat. Three tree species are being added, along with several winterberry shrubs, a variety of viburnums, and areas planted with coralberry and ninebark shrubs. Even with this, there is still a good amount of lawn remaining. We use corn gluten and occasional applications of alfalfa. The lawn provides a safe home for various burrowing insects.

MARK and DEB NICHOLSON: 6520 Rexford Drive

We purchased our home in 2022, drawn in part by its large 0.8-acre lot and the many trees and shrubs planted by the previous owners, one of whom was a Master Gardener. Beneath the beautiful landscaping, however, was a carefully maintained monoculture — a lawn made up almost entirely of a single turf grass species. We knew we wanted to transition the property to native plants, though we had much to learn. Our first attempts included ending chemical lawn treatments, experimenting with clover and native plantings, and creating a rock garden and small fruit orchard. In 2024, we partnered with native landscape designer to replace most of the turf grass with native prairie plants and pathways. Now in our fourth year, we are thrilled to see the landscape coming to life with greater diversity and habitat value. Benjamin Vogt will lead a half-hour walk-and-talk at 10:30 a.m. — please join us!



FRAN and TOM CLARK: 6130 Everett St

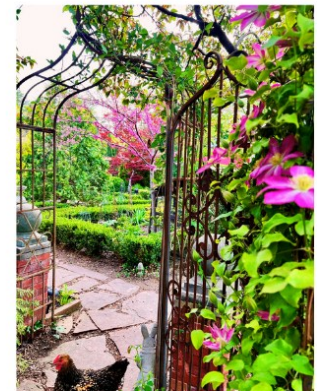
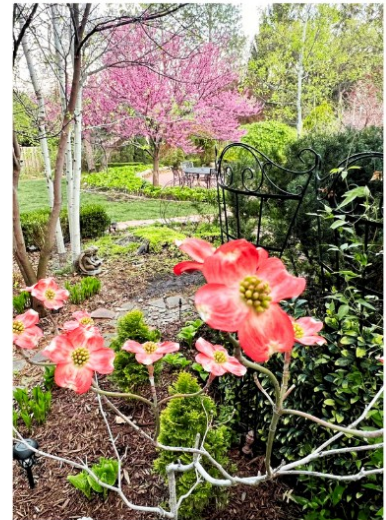
Butterflies, bees, moths and more surround our front garden. It's an honor to share our home with these fine pollinators. We watch the plants change, thrive and spread each year. No need to seed, fertilize, water or mow anymore. Our neighbors also enjoy the beauty our butterfly garden provides. Please visit anytime!



JANA "SUE" and DAN WURM: 1315 Fall Creek Road

The Wurm property was originally designed as an Asian-inspired garden when the home was first purchased. Over the past 28 years, Sue and Dan have thoughtfully transformed the landscape, replacing nearly all of the original trees and plantings to create what they describe as an English-style garden. Today, the property features an abundance of mature trees, colorful blooming plants, winding pathways, a spacious patio, and ponds connected by gentle streams.

Their gardens have become a haven for butterflies and bees, bringing constant movement and life to the landscape. Adding to the charm are the couple's chickens, which happily roam the grounds while gardening is underway. Several years ago, the property was featured in *Midwest Living* magazine, and Sue's expertise as a Master Gardener is evident throughout the carefully tended spaces.



WACHISKA AUDUBON'S UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE-JULY 2026

HOME OF WACHISKA AUDUBON: PRAIRIE PINES NATURE PRESERVE
11211 & ADAMS, LINCOLN

WACHISKA AUDUBON PRESENTS

COMEDY IN THE PINES

SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 6PM

FEATURING COMEDIANS
ZACH PETERSON, LAUREN VANA AND NATHAN HULTS

TICKETS \$25

BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS AND CHAIRS!

SCAN: INFO AND TICKETS

TOUR THE WILD SIDE

Save the date and explore local native plant landscapes with us!

JUNE 20
9 AM - 12 PM

Lincoln
Native Plants

Your Locations Coming Soon!

SPEAKER SERIES
WACHISKA AUDUBON

Gabriel Rivera Ph.D. & Jennifer Blankenship Rivera
THE BIRDS OF NEBRASKA: THROUGH OUR LENSE

JUNE 11 7PM **6300 A ST LINCOLN**

SPEAKER SERIES
WACHISKA AUDUBON

TOBIN BROWN: NEBRASKA BIG YEAR

JULY 9 7PM **6300 A ST LINCOLN**

1

WACHISKA SHIRTS AVAILABLE

LONG SLEEVE (\$40) or SHORT SLEEVE (\$30)
CREW NECK, 100% COTTON, ANY SIZE.

If you want one, email your order to: office@wachiskaaudubon.org

FRONT



BACK



WACHISKA AUDUBON
PROTECTING NATURE. CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

LAND PROTECTED BY
WACHISKA AUDUBON

- PRAIRIE PINES NATURE PRESERVE
- BERG EAST TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- BERG WEST TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- DIEKEN TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- FERTIG TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- GEWACKE TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- KLAPKA TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- KNOTT TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- LAMB TALLGRASS PRAIRIE
- WILDCAT CREEK TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

Public Officials

President Donald Trump

1600 Pennsylvania Av NW, Washington DC 20500-0001
Comment line: 202-456-1111
Phone: 202-456-1414 Fax: 202-456-2461
E-mail at website: <http://whitehouse.gov/contact>

Senator Deb Fischer

1248 O St Ste 1111, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-441-4600 Fax: 402-476-8753
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-6551 Fax: 202-228-0012
E-mail at website: <http://fischer.senate.gov>

Senator Pete Ricketts

1248 O St Ste 1000, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-476-1400 Fax: 402-476-0605
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-4224 Fax: 202-224-5213
E-mail at website: <http://ricketts.senate.gov>

Congressman Mike Flood (1st District)

301 S 13th St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4806 Fax: 202-225-5686
E-mail at website: <http://flood.house.gov>

Congressman Don Bacon (2nd District)

13906 Gold Cir Ste 101, Omaha NE 68144
Omaha phone: 888-221-7452
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4155 Fax: 202-226-5452
E-mail at website: <https://bacon.house.gov>

Congressman Adrian Smith (3rd District)

416 Valley View Dr Ste 600, Scottsbluff NE 69361
Scottsbluff phone: 308-633-6333 Fax: 308-633-6335
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-6435 Fax: 202-225-0207
E-mail at website: <http://adriansmith.house.gov>

Capitol Hill Switchboard

888-436-8427 or 202-224-3121

Governor Jim Pillen

Capitol Bldg, PO Box 94848, Lincoln NE 68509-4848
Phone: 402-471-2244 Fax: 402-471-6031
E-mail at website: <http://governor.nebraska.gov>

State Senator _____

District ____ State Capitol, PO Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

State Capitol Switchboard

402-471-2311

Lancaster County Commissioners

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10th St Rm 110, Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-441-7447 Fax: 402-441-6301
E-mail: commish@lancaster.ne.gov

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10th St Rm 301, Lincoln NE 68508-2828
Phone: 402-441-7511 Fax: 402-441-7120
E-mail: mayor@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln City Council

402-441-7515
E-mail: councilpacket@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln Journal Star

Letters to the editor, 21st and N St, Lincoln NE 68508
E-mail: oped@journalstar.com

Join now! Become a Friend of Wachiska Audubon Society!

This local chapter membership provides you with voting privileges and access to all our events, programs, and committees, **plus 100 percent of your membership donation goes directly to the Wachiska chapter. In addition, Friend members receive our monthly newsletter, *The Babbling Brook*, in their choice of print or electronic form.**

Friends of Wachiska (local membership)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

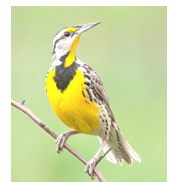
Phone _____

Email _____

- ___ \$25 Individual/Friend
- ___ \$35 Family Friend
- ___ \$50 Black-capped Chickadee Friend
- ___ \$100 Northern Cardinal Friend
- ___ \$250 Western Meadowlark Friend
- ___ \$500 Bald Eagle Friend
- ___ \$1,000 Peregrine Falcon Friend

Select the level of support that is right for you and make your check payable to **Wachiska Audubon Society**. All funds will remain with our local chapter and are tax deductible. Mail to:

Wachiska Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Committee
3100 N 112th Street
Lincoln, NE 68527



Eastern Meadowlark

___ **I prefer to receive my newsletter by email.**

Please note: If you are already a member of National Audubon Society (NAS) you automatically become a member of Wachiska, but not a Wachiska Friend member. Only Wachiska Friends receive the printed newsletter each month. If you wish to join NAS or receive *Audubon* magazine, please contact the National Audubon Society directly.

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Send address changes, newsletter submissions and requests to our office of publication, listed above. You may also email: office@wachiskaudubon.org



The Babbling Brook is printed on recycled and recyclable paper.

REMEMBERING WACHISKA'S HISTORY

Wachiska means "stream" or "creek" in the languages of Indigenous people of eastern Nebraska, the Omaha and Ponca.

The environmental stewardship efforts of the Wachiska Audubon Society take place on the past, present, and future homelands of the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, and Omaha Peoples, as well as those of the relocated Ho-Chunk, Sac and Fox, and Ioway. We humbly join our efforts with theirs in honoring and stewarding this land of prairies, rivers, and streams.

WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2026

Executive Director Mark Brohman
Office Administrator WJ Bantam

OFFICERS

President *Theresa Pella
Vice President..... *Ann Briggs
Secretary *April Stevenson
Treasurer/Finance *Carol Bodeen

STANDING COMMITTEES/POSITIONS

Director at Large *Dakota Altman
Director at Large *Andrea Faas
Director at Large *Al Davis
Director at Large *Ethan Freese
Director at Large *Nancy Bare
Director at Large *Tom Lynch
Director at Large *Roxanne Smith
Director at Large *Alyx Knight
Conservation *Ross Scott
Education/Outreach *Tim Knott
Membership Linda Brown

***Denotes voting Board member**

For contact information of officers and committee chairs, call or email the Wachiska office.

Mission Statement of the Wachiska Audubon Society

The mission of the Wachiska Audubon Society is to bring people together to preserve and restore tallgrass prairies and other natural ecosystems, promote birding, support native wildlife, provide nature education, and advocate for the sustainability of our natural community.

Wachiska Audubon Society

3100 N 112th Street
Lincoln, NE 68527
402-486-4846
office@WachiskaAudubon.org
www.WachiskaAudubon.org

If you missed a monthly program or want to view again, Wachiska Audubon's programs are available on YouTube via the homepage at www.WachiskaAudubon.org.

VOLUNTEER DAY

Come out to Wachiska for our monthly fellowship of community and caretaking. We meet once a month on a Sunday from 10AM-NOON to do chores together. We provide gloves and tools and work together to improve the land Wachiska stewards.

Donuts, bananas and bottled water provided! Just bring yourself!

CALL MARK 402.525.1504

Wachiska Audubon Society's financial records available for examination in the office.

A GIFT TO THE FUTURE: A bequest to *Wachiska Audubon Society* is a gift to future generations, enabling our natural heritage to continue. For wills, trusts, and gifts, our legal name is **Wachiska Audubon Society**. Our Federal Tax ID number is **51-0229888**.

DONATIONS: To make a simple donation and support our work, **VENMO** us @*Wachiska-Audubon* or **SCAN CODE** here:



STAY CURRENT! Follow WACHISKA AUDUBON on FACEBOOK.

