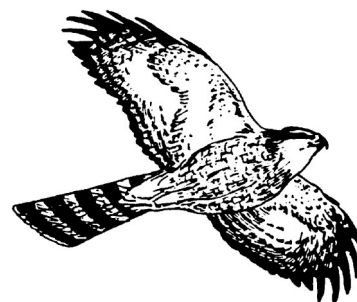


GOShawk

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society



Georgia Rare Bird Alert: (770) 493-8862

GOS on the web: www.gos.org

President's Message

By Bob Sargent

I generally use this column to bring you up to speed on noteworthy GOS activities, and this time will be no different. First and foremost, an attorney representing the estate of Bill Terrell, a GOS member who passed away early last year, recently contacted me. I was not prepared for what the attorney had to say. Bill bequeathed to GOS property (two homes) and cash valued in excess of 1.5 million dollars. No, this is not a typo. I was stunned by this extraordinary act of generosity, to say the least. As you might imagine, we have many more questions than we do answers at this time, and it's likely to be several more months before we have all of our questions answered. There are numerous legal and real estate issues involved, and we have been soliciting guidance from many talented, supportive people, especially Mary Lou MacNeil – someone who was very dear to Bill.

To give this remarkable gift the attention and thought it deserves, I've appointed a five-person committee, chaired by GOS treasurer Jeannie Wright, to manage it. The committee's responsibilities include acquiring legal, tax, and appraisal guidance, as well as putting together a proposal concerning appropriate uses for this gift. Regarding those uses, the proposal will likely focus on the educational and conservational aspects of ornithology (i.e., enhancing existing GOS goals and programs),

CONTENTS

President's Message	1
Member News	2
Update on <i>The Oriole</i>	3
2004 Birders' Lists	4
Audubon's <i>State of the Birds</i>	5
GOS Travels to Alabama	6
Spring 2005 Meeting	6
Winter Meeting Bird Checklist	7
Earth Share of Georgia Party	7

Mark Your Calendar!

Pinewoods Bird Festival

April 9, Thomasville, GA (see page 2)

GOS Spring 2005 Meeting

April 22-24, Columbus, GA (see page 6)

and will, of course, place particular emphasis on honoring Bill's memory. I hope to present a draft of this proposal to you, the membership, for feedback at our spring meeting in Columbus, followed by a more detailed proposal in the next issue of the *GOShawk*. As I said previously, we still have many unanswered questions, so please bear with us as we navigate this unfamiliar yet wonderfully challenging terrain.

As for other society business, the recent gathering of GOS members in Alabama proves that winter meetings can be a hit, provided we pick good locations. We are going to try to make winter meetings a fixture in our annual schedule, rather than something out of the ordinary. Although we still get together on the coast each fall to go bird watching, the highly successful Colonial Coast Birding and Nature Festival isn't a GOS meeting *per se*. We plan to continue to support the festival by arranging and leading the field trips, sponsoring the keynote speaker at the banquet, and arranging a scientific poster session. But for all intents and purposes, the festival has replaced our annual fall meeting. Holding an annual winter meeting is our attempt to compensate for the loss of the fall meeting, plus it provides a great opportunity for us to get together as a group and go waterfowl watching. Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS) has been holding winter meetings for years, so we feel that this can be successful on a regular basis. We'll be selecting a meeting location in the next few weeks for the January 2006 meeting, so please don't hesitate to contact me if you have a favorite winter birding location.

(continued on page 3)

Georgia Ornithological Society

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<i>President</i>	Bob Sargent 478-397-7962
<i>1st Vice President</i>	Bill Lotz
<i>2nd Vice President</i>	Anne Mursch
<i>Secretary</i>	Lori Freeman
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jeannie Wright
<i>Business Manager</i>	Steve Holzman
<i>Historian</i>	John Swiderski
<i>Past President</i>	Gail Russell
<i>The Oriole, Editor</i>	Bob Chandler
<i>GOShawk, Editor</i>	Jim Ferrari
<i>GOShawk, Asst. Editor</i>	Mim Eisenberg (www.wordcraftservices.com)
<i>Webmaster</i>	Jim Flynn www.gos.org

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<i>Conservation:</i>	Carol Lambert 770-939-7668
<i>Earle Greene Award:</i>	John Swiderski 229-242-8382
<i>Earth Share of Georgia:</i>	Mark Beebe 770-435-6586
<i>Editorial:</i>	Marion Dobbs 706-291-6956
<i>Howe Research Grant:</i>	Bill Van Esseltine 706-543-3072
<i>Membership:</i>	Angela McMellen 706-372-9099

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<i>Georgia Rare Bird Alert</i>	770-493-8862 Jeff Sewell, Compiler
Internet Transcriber rotates among:	Steve Barlow, Michael Boehm, Jim Flynn, Steve Holzman, Marie LaSalle, Larry Russell, and Lois Stacey

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*Deadline for article submission is the 1st
of the month prior to publication.*

Welcome, New Members!

Life Members

M. R. Strait Bremen, GA

Patron Members

Travis W. Barlow Pooler, GA

Regular Members

Joan D. Cronin	Snellville, GA
Tracy Wise	Newnan, GA
Nita Wynn	Snellville, GA
Cheryl Adams Kanes	Decatur, GA
Connie Head	Commerce, GA
Tim and Alice Keyes	Atlanta, GA
Charles and Sandra McCoy	Marietta, GA

*GOS Membership lists are available upon request to
Angela McMellen, PO Box 181, High Shoals, GA 30645 or
mcmellen@uga.edu*

In Memoriam, William S. Passmore

William S. (Bill) Passmore, 83, died January 21, 2005, in Valdosta. He was a lifelong resident of Valdosta and was a World War II Army veteran. His wife, Barbara K. Passmore, has been a life member of GOS since 1988. While Bill was not an ardent birder, he frequently participated in Withlacoochee Watchers field trips in Lowndes County and vicinity.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pinewoods Bird Festival

The third annual Pinewoods Bird Festival will be held on Saturday, April 9th, at Pebble Hill Plantation near Thomsville, Georgia. Complete festival information is available via the prominent link on the home page of the GOS website.

GOS Executive Committee Meeting

Saturday, March 5th, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., at Dauset Trails Nature Center (360 Mt. Vernon Rd., Jackson, Georgia). Please contact Bob Sargent about agenda items and meeting format.

President's Message *(continued from page 1)*

Speaking of birds, we're currently working with the people who market the ground-breaking publication known as the *Birds of North America* (BNA). This multi-volume work provides current life history and management information for hundreds of bird species, and is used heavily by researchers and moderate to serious birders. It appears that we may be able to work out an arrangement whereby GOS members could access the BNA via the GOS website at a discounted rate compared to the standard annual online cost of \$40 per subscription. Furthermore, because GOS could receive a check for every one of our members who subscribes to the BNA, this arrangement could function as a fund-raiser for our society. We'll keep you posted via our website as we receive more details.

Good birding, and I hope to see you in Columbus!

Update on the Status of the Oriole

By Marion Dobbs, Chair GOS Editorial Committee

As many of you know, *The Oriole*, quarterly journal of the GOS, has undergone a transition in the past few months, acquiring a new editor, Bob Chandler, and an active editorial committee consisting of Bob Sargent, Eran Tomer, and myself. Any transition entails change and sometimes bumps and glitches...and this one has been no exception. After preparing two issues (four numbers) of the journal for publication, we recently received a quantity of previously edited, i.e., not reviewed by the present committee, material, and one of those issues was sent directly out to GOS members several weeks ago without further editing. Other of that material is presently under review by this committee. Please bear with us and be aware that, from time to time in future issues, content may appear out of the sequence in which it was submitted. We appreciate your understanding and patience as the four of us work hard to make *The Oriole* current as quickly as possible while also maintaining its quality at a level that will professionally present manuscripts of GOS members, thereby reflecting well on the organization.

For anyone interested, here is a very brief overview of the editorial process: The editor receives submissions; checks, organizes, and formats them; then sends them to the editorial committee



Bill Terrell on an Audubon trip in Alaska, September 2003. *Photo courtesy Mary Lou MacNeil.*

for review. We then check things over, verifying items that seem to require it, and iteratively edit the entire issue following the CBE Style Manual guidelines, sending manuscripts and notes flying through cyberspace until a consensus is reached. When necessary, edited manuscripts are then sent back to the authors for proofing. When Humpty Dumpty is back together again, the editor has the final say on any changes, does any tidying up and hies himself off to the printer. From there, everything goes to Angela McMellen for addressing and mailing. A fairly complex process, but good people make it move along pretty well.



Address Changes

If your address changes, please notify us directly by mail (P.O. Box 181, High Shoals, GA 30645) or by e-mail (angela_mcmellen@yahoo.com). As a non-profit organization, we are able to mail items to you at a bulk (i.e., discounted) rate. This is a great cost savings for us, but it means that our items WILL NOT be forwarded to you if you move. We do not want you to miss out on any of our newsletters, meeting announcements, or journals!

Georgia Birders and Their Lists

December 31, 2004

Name	Home	GA Life List—2004	GA Life List—2003	GA Year List—2004	GA Year List—2003
Jeff Sewell	Tucker, GA	374	370	303	294
Pierre Howard	Atlanta, GA	368	360	317	-
Bill Blakeslee	Atlanta, GA	363	360	-	288
Bob Zaremba	Marietta, GA	360	353	311	301
Jim Flynn	Cumming, GA	359	356	290	288
Earl Horn	Lawrenceville, GA	359	353	306	310
Paul Sykes	Watkinsville, GA	359	354	-	-
Deb Zaremba	Marietta, GA	351	345	294	-
Karen Theodorou	Lawrenceville, GA	348	342	-	-
Carol Lambert	Tucker, GA	346	339	267	253
Jerry Amerson	Macon, GA	338	336	233	212
Marie Amerson	Macon, GA	335	333	228	212
Rusty Trump	Suwanee, GA	335	333	-	-
Marion Dobbs	Rome, GA	334	328	-	-
Anne Mursch	Woodstock, GA	333	-	-	-
Michael Bell	Bainbridge, GA	332	331	-	-
Gene Keferl	Brunswick, GA	332	326	244	253
Bill Lotz	Atlanta, GA	331	321	305	285
Mark Beebe	Marietta, GA	321	316	300	212
Dan Vickers	Lilburn, GA	321	306	293	275
Steve Holzman	North High Shoals, GA	308	-	-	-
Brad Bergstrom	Valdosta, GA	307	305	-	-
Joel Hitt	Lawrenceville, GA	304	303	-	-
Mark Freeman	Athens, GA	298	290	269	271
Jim Throckmorton	Dunwoody, GA	287	242	202	242
Michael Bender	Athens, GA	282	278	209	244
David Chafin	Cleveland, TN	279	273	140	-
Bill Groce	Roswell, GA	275	-	224	-
Elaine Johnson	Hampton, GA	240	-	212	-
Jenny Michaels	Tucker, GA	231	209	193	188
John Hintermister	Gainesville, FL	230	226	-	-

This was another fantastic year of birding in Georgia. The fact that many of us who have been birding here for many years added as many as eight new species says a lot. We were fortunate that most rare birds were reported quickly, stayed around long enough to be found and enjoyed by many, and were in accessible areas. The excellent communication systems we have in Georgia, Georgia Birders Online (GABO) and the Georgia Rare Bird Alert (RBA), continue to alert us to interesting and rare bird life in the state, often pulling us away from offices, classes, dinner tables and sleep. A special thanks to the many generous site hosts who opened their land, water, yards and homes to strangers loaded with equipment and what may have seemed a very strange mission.

Carol Lambert

NATIONAL AUDUBON RELEASES “STATE OF THE BIRDS”

By John Bianchi
Director, Communications
National Audubon Society

On Tuesday, October 19, 2004, The National Audubon Society released the “The State of the Birds,” a report documenting the health and abundance of North America’s birds. Appearing in the October issue of *Audubon Magazine*, “The State of the Birds” paints a disturbing picture. Almost 30% of America’s bird species are in “significant decline,” a situation that signals seriously degraded environmental conditions in the habitats these birds call home.

The bottom line: the state of the birds in 2004 was not sound. In particular, a disturbing 70 percent of grassland species; 36 percent of shrub-land bird species; 25 percent of forest bird species; 13 percent of wetland species; and 23 percent of bird species in urban areas are showing “statistically significant declines.”

According to “State of the Birds,” these declines are abnormal. Not part of the natural, cyclical rise and fall of bird populations, “statistically significant declines” are due to outside factors such as loss of native grasslands, overgrazing, development of wetlands, bad forest management, invasive species, pollution, and poor land use decisions.

Audubon’s President John Flicker sees a clear message in this report. “Like the canary in the coal mine warning the miner of danger ahead, our birds are an indicator of environmental and human health,” he said. “Birds signal that we are at risk next.”

But Flicker also sees a clear path out of trouble. “People may have created these problems, but people can solve them, if we act now,” he stated. To that end, Audubon is now addressing the findings of “State of the Birds” in its conservation agenda at the legislative and policy making level, and in the states where the greatest conservation challenges exist.

Compiled by Audubon scientist Greg Butcher, the “State of the Birds” analysis makes the case for private and public action. Based on the report’s findings, Audubon is advocating for improved grassland, forest, and wetland protection, stronger pollution controls, partnerships with private landowners, and backyard habitat programs for homeowners.

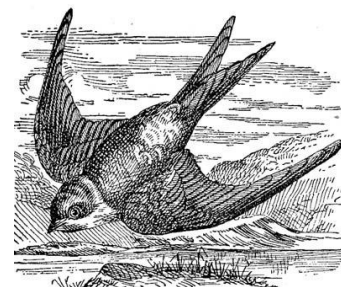
“State of the Birds” summarizes the status of nearly 700 birds species native to the continental United States, focusing on the condition of species in each of five habitat types: grasslands, shrublands, forests, wetlands,

and urban areas (the fastest growing habitat type in the U.S.). Written using USGS Breeding Bird Survey and Audubon’s WatchList, cross-referenced with Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count data, the report will be issued on a yearly basis and will inform Audubon’s conservation agenda, identifying key areas requiring immediate action.

Birds not only serve as reliable indicators of environmental conditions, they also contribute greatly to the U.S. economy. Keeping birds - and their home habitats - in good condition is not only a good conservation policy, it is also good business. The worth of birds beyond their aesthetic and conservation value is something that is beginning to be more fully appreciated, a situation that has created allies for bird conservation in small and large businesses, and local governments - entities that have been historically unlikely conservation partners.

“According to the U.S. Forest Service, 70 million Americans - one-third of all adults in this country - call themselves birdwatchers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service notes that they contribute at least \$32 billion in retail sales, \$85 billion in overall economic output, and \$13 billion in state and federal taxes, creating 863,406 jobs,” continued Flicker. “Birds also contribute to the bottom line in more subtle ways, providing free pest and weed control, distributing seeds, and pollinating flowers and crops. American businesses and communities simply cannot afford to ignore the state of the birds.”

A digest of the report was published in the October issue of *Audubon* magazine, and a further analysis is available on the Audubon website, www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds.



GOS E-MAIL LIST

In order to more efficiently communicate with our members, GOS is establishing an e-mail list. The e-mail list will be used to communicate with you about bird conservation issues, membership renewals, birding events in Georgia, and occasional items that may be of interest to GOS members. If you wish to add your e-mail address to the GOS database, please contact Angela McMellen, GOS Membership Chair, at angela_mcmellen@yahoo.com.

GOS Travels to Alabama

By Bob Sargent

The second winter meeting in the nearly 70-year history of GOS was held jointly with Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS) during January 28-30 in beautiful Guntersville, Alabama. I arrived early on Friday afternoon so that I would have some additional time to explore the countryside of northeastern Alabama and so I could participate in a field trip to the "Hawk Farm." I was not prepared for the truly stunning scenery. Guntersville is located on a peninsula that juts out into a lake formed where the Tennessee River makes a dogleg turn to the northeast, following the Appalachian ridgeline into Tennessee. Looking west and north from the hotel, I could see ducks in the lake just beyond the parking lot, and the view to the east was dominated by the rugged Appalachians, which were mostly wrapped in low-hanging clouds throughout the weekend. Field trip destinations often included a drive across the causeways that span the lake, radiating from points on the peninsula. Every time we started across one of the causeways we discovered that the lake, which was just a few feet from our vehicle, was chock-full of birds: ducks, loons, grebes, etc. Stop-and-gawk driving was the standard for the weekend.

About 130 GOS and AOS members registered for the meeting, though the grim weather forecast forced some birders to turn back. Saturday morning found us chopping ribbons of ice off car windows and doors. Things weren't looking much brighter when we found ourselves standing in a cold rain on the edge of a wheat field at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge later that morning trying to see Snow Geese, which appeared to be at least two counties away, through fogged-over binoculars. I confess I found myself wondering why I left the hotel. A half hour later it was still very cold, but the rain had eased and we were looking across a mud-flat at an enormous flock of Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, Sandhill Cranes, Pintails, and Canada Geese. In a word, the birding was spectacular, and remained that way throughout the weekend. All told, birders saw 115 species, including an Iceland Gull, Western Grebe, five species of geese, and 18 species of ducks (see species list on page 7). Several Bald Eagles were seen around Guntersville, including one on a nest. Along with hundreds of Common Loons, Guntersville Lake also provided sanctuary for a lone Pacific Loon and a few Red-throated Loons.

There was more to rave about than just the birding. The Friday night program featured a series of slide shows, mostly by AOS members, showing off their best bird pictures and favorite Alabama birding destinations. Jim Wilson also gave a brief overview of the Important Bird Area (IBA) program, and Rick West provided de-

tails concerning the Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) recently started by AOS. For those of you who enjoyed participating in Georgia's BBA, Alabama needs volunteers to help with their atlas field work. Saturday night's program featured Pat and Jack Casselberry, members of the "outreach team" for the International Crane Foundation. Their program gave us a behind-the-scenes look at Operation Migration, the massive effort to train Whooping Cranes to migrate from Wisconsin to Florida. The Casselberrys concluded the program by enticing audience members to come up front and imitate crane behaviors, including dancing. Among the dancers were our very own Bill Lotz and Anne Mursch.

Obviously, the weather didn't really put much of a damper on the weekend. As always, the GOS team, especially Bill Lotz, Anne Mursch, and Steve Holzman, did a great job handling all the details. Thank you to the AOS folks, particularly Bob Reed, Stan Hamilton, and Linda Reynolds, for the invitation, the wonderful hospitality, and for introducing us to a corner of their beautiful state. Come see us in Georgia next time!

SPRING 2005 MEETING

By Bill Lotz

1st Vice President

On April 22-24, 2005, GOS will have our Spring Meeting in Columbus, Georgia. We have not met in Columbus since the Fall 1978 Meeting, although we have had several meetings in Eufaula since then. Our presenters Friday night will be two of our own: Dr. Bill Birkhead of Columbus State University and Walt Chambers, who will give a presentation entitled "International Education Initiatives at Columbus State University and the opportunity to bird in Gondwanaland." After the program we will talk about the various field trip opportunities, and you will be given a chance to sign up for your choice.

The field trips that we are planning for on Saturday and/or Sunday include such great birding areas as Oxbow Meadows, Standing Boy Creek W.M.A., Lake Oliver and the Riverwalk, all in Muscogee County; the Bradley Unit of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in Stewart County; Boat Ramp Road and other areas on Fort Benning, (Chattahoochee County); and Callaway Gardens (Harris County).

Following the banquet on Saturday night, our featured speaker will be Dr. Peter Frederick, who teaches at the University of Florida. Dr. Frederick's area of expertise and research is wading birds and the wetlands that are so important to their survival. His talk will be entitled "The Conservation of Long-legged Wading Birds in the Southeastern United States".

Please plan to attend our Spring Meeting in Columbus.

2005 Winter Meeting Species Checklist

This checklist includes the 115 bird species seen or heard at the recent GOS/AOS Joint Winter Meeting held in Gunterville, AL. Among the highlights were an Iceland Gull, five species of geese, 18 species of ducks, three loon species and three species of grebes. List compiled by Bill Lotz.

Red-throated Loon	Lesser Scaup	Barred Owl	Northern Mockingbird
Pacific Loon	Bufflehead	Short-eared Owl	Brown Thrasher
Common Loon	Common Goldeneye	Belted Kingfisher	European Starling
Pied-billed Grebe	Hooded Merganser	Red-headed Woodpecker	American Pipit
Horned Grebe	Red-breasted Merganser	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Western Grebe	Ruddy Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Bald Eagle	Downy Woodpecker	Pine Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Northern Harrier	Hairy Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Great Egret	Cooper's Hawk	Northern Flicker	Eastern Towhee
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Red-shouldered Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	Chipping Sparrow
Black Vulture	Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Phoebe	Field Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	American Kestrel	Loggerhead Shrike	Savannah Sparrow
Greater White-fronted Goose	Peregrine Falcon	Blue Jay	Song Sparrow
Snow Goose	Wild Turkey	American Crow	Lincoln's Sparrow
Ross's Goose	American Coot	Horned Lark	Swamp Sparrow
Cackling Goose	Sandhill Crane	Carolina Chickadee	White-throated Sparrow
Canada Goose	Killdeer	Tufted Titmouse	Dark-eyed Junco
Wood Duck	Wilson's Snipe	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Lapland Longspur
Gadwall	American Woodcock	White-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Cardinal
American Wigeon	Bonaparte's Gull	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
American Black Duck	Ring-billed Gull	Brown Creeper	Eastern Meadowlark
Mallard	Herring Gull	Carolina Wren	Rusty Blackbird
Northern Shoveler	Iceland Gull	House Wren	Common Grackle
Northern Pintail	Forster's Tern	Winter Wren	Purple Finch
Green-winged Teal	Rock Pigeon	Golden-crowned Kinglet	House Finch
Canvasback	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Pine Siskin
Redhead	Mourning Dove	Eastern Bluebird	American Goldfinch
Ring-necked Duck	Eastern Screech-Owl	Hermit Thrush	House Sparrow
Greater Scaup	Great Horned Owl	American Robin	

2005 Earth Share of Georgia Earth Day Party

By Mark Beebe

GOS is a member group of Earth Share of Georgia. Each spring Earth Share of Georgia holds a fund-raising event called the Earth Day Party and Silent Auction. The party celebrates the contributions local companies and environmental non-profits have made to preserve and protect Georgia's natural resources. The gala will be held the evening of Saturday, April 23, at the Interface Showroom in Midtown Atlanta and will include music, an open bar, plentiful hors d'oeuvres courtesy of Whole Foods market and Pleasant Peasant Restaurants, a silent auction, and a video montage by Lab 601 showcasing the best practices and achievements of our sponsors and member groups.

What You Can Do:

- Attend the party. Tickets cost \$30/person for member groups and \$50/person for non-member groups.
- Become a Patron of the Party. Patron level tickets are available for \$250 and include two tickets to the party and access to the VIP reception beforehand, one ticket to the Earth Day Leadership Breakfast, recognition on the party invitation (if pledged by Feb. 25) and the commemorative Earth Day poster/program.
- Recruit your friends and colleagues to become Patrons of the Party. Contact information can be sent to Mark Beebe (GOS Earth Share Chair) by e-mail at mark_beebe@mail.dnr.state.ga.us or to Annie Nixon (Earth Share of Georgia) at annie@earthsharega.org.
- Donate items for our silent auction. In the past, these items have been environmentally themed. Please consider donating or soliciting an item or trip that fits this theme.

We look forward to seeing you at the Earth Day Party!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

TO: Georgia Ornithological Society
P.O. Box 181
High Shoals, GA 30645

Please enroll the undersigned as a member of the Georgia Ornithological Society for the calendar year.
Dues are enclosed as follows:

_____ Regular \$20.00 _____ Sustaining \$30.00
_____ Patron \$50.00 _____ Student \$10.00

(The above are annual rates for individuals or families.)

_____ Life Membership \$300.00

_____ Please send me a list of publications available from the GOS.

NAME(S):

MAILING ADDRESS:

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

PLEASE SEND ADDRESS, PHONE OR E-MAIL CHANGES TO:
Angela McMellen, GOS, P.O. Box 181, High Shoals, GA 30645

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