From the Editor

The Ohio Ornithological Society, Ohio’s Birding Network is proud to announce a revamped, updated, more interactive website! Members will soon be able to donate, join, and renew online, plus follow a variety of birding blogs, tweets, Facebook postings, and bird sightings at www.ohiobirds.org! See page 9 for details!

Please renew your OOS membership ASAP! Your expiration date is printed on the back of your newsletter, IN RED. We have a special “holiday membership” to offer: see page 12. Membership dollars are vitally important to continue the outreach of Ohio’s Birding Network! Plus, as a member in good standing, you’ll be able to attend the Eighth Annual Winter Raptor Extravaganza (page 8) at the Wilds on January 14, 2012!

It’s never too late to make a contribution to the OOS Conservation Fund or Carbon Offset Birding Project (page 2). Please make a generous year-end contribution to OOS. It’s tax-deductible to the extent allowed by your specific circumstances, plus, it’s a great way to give back to Ohio’s birds, and birding community, across the Buckeye State.

If you missed Midwest Birding Symposium ’11, recap the conservation initiatives and funds raised for birds and birding causes (page 1-5). Plus, watch a photomontage iMovie of MBS ’11 on YouTube (page 3)!

Happy Christmas Bird Counts!

Ann Oliver
Cincinnati

Midwest Birding Symposium ’11 raised $12,388 through generous attendee participation in a raffle, auction, and other fundraising events including sales of movie tickets, a MBS photo booth featuring mock-covers of Bird Watcher’s Digest, and an Adopt-A-Bird board. The Ohio Ornithological Society MATCHED $10,000 of funds raised: the GRAND TOTAL to disperse to local, regional, and national conservation groups is $22,388!

The MBS Conservation Fund keeps growing! OOS welcomes any additional contributions to the Carbon Offset Birding Project or MBS Conservation Fund: mail your check to our PO Box (see page 12)! Thanks in advance for supporting birding causes, near and far, benefitting resident and migrant birds in Ohio and beyond. Plus, major thanks to the Bird Watcher’s Digest team (center photo below) for procuring raffle and auction items from sponsors, vendors, and patrons. See pages 2-5 for details on how money will be allocated to Meadowbrook Marsh and twelve recipients of MBS grants.

Proceeds from the MBS photo booth raised money for the MBS Conservation Fund. Left photo: John T. Moore of Englewood, Ohio. Center photo: front row (Claire Mullen and Jessica Moye) and back row (Chris Blondel, Ann Kerényi, Laura Thompson Fulton, Elsa Thompson, Andy Thompson). Right photo: Official MBS Blogger Lynne Casperson Schoenborn from Minnesota. Photos courtesy Bird Watcher’s Digest/MBS.
Efforts to raise awareness about carbon usage, and bird habitat conservation, were a success at Midwest Birding Symposium ’11, as the pilot project for Carbon Offset Bird Project got underway benefiting Meadowbrook Marsh. Nearly $2,000 dollars was donated to COBP at MBS: OOS matched that sum bringing the total to $4000. Pending successful negotiations with a landowner, OOS has earmarked an additional $5,500 for this Danbury Township Park along Lake Erie’s Marblehead Peninsula.

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED: COBP c/o OOS, PO Box 14051, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Checks payable “COBP/OOS”.

Looking at several other carbon offset efforts, a short form and mini-questionnaire were implemented to gather information from birders about the level of commitment and concern for carbon offset projects. Calculations reveal 10% of MBS attendees participated in this pilot project. More than half of those donating responded to the questionnaire and felt the carbon offset project was important to support and should be promoted at other birding events. The preference for habitat protection were (in order of preference) wetlands, grassland, forest, and Latin American projects.

Our first and highest donors were Tim and Laura Dornan from Louisville, Ohio. Although unable to attend MBS, they calculated several months of carbon usage for all of their birding activities using a COBP form (see the summer issue of The Cerulean to calculate YOUR offset) and offset the figure with a generous donation to COBP. Thanks!

The COBP team is currently working with the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of Black Swamp Conservancy (LEIC-BSC) to secure additional land at Meadowbrook Marsh.

Several MBS participants, both within and outside of Ohio, are hoping to promote COBP projects of their own. All in all, this was a popular project with positive potential outcomes in Ohio, and possibly far beyond. Thanks to everyone who generously contributed to the project and special thanks to all volunteers who helped promote COBP efforts.

Cheryl Harner, OOS East-Central Regional Director - Crestline

Editor’s Note: This fall, Black Swamp Conservancy reached a milestone of protecting 10,000 acres including farmland, wetlands, meadows, and woods. Find out more: www.blackswamp.org/

MEADOWBROOK MARSH: Map for Marsh Migrants

If you are planning a trip to the Marblehead Peninsula for birding or general sightseeing, check out the trails at Meadowbrook Marsh. You can download and print a map for yourself by following the link below. Good birding to you!
At East Harbor State Park, on September 16, 2011 the Lake Erie Birding Trail officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony during Midwest Birding Symposium ’11.

The LEBT covers the Ohio shoreline, from Conneaut to west of Toledo, with information on 84 birding hotspots stretching across 312 miles of Ohio shoreline. Birding information is arranged into seven loops: 1.) Ashtabula, 2.) Cleveland, 3.) Huron & Lorain, 4.) Sandusky Bay, 5.) Lake Erie Islands, 6.) Western Lake Erie Marshes, and 7.) Oak Openings. The website has details on access, parking, amenities, trails, and directions as well as information on rarities and finding secretive species. Signs and brochures are in development for the future.

If you missed Midwest Birding Symposium ’11, or couldn’t fit everything into your busy attendee schedule, check the MBS website for photos and MP3 audio files from speakers such as Alvaro Jaramillo, Jim McCormac, Bridget Stutchbury, and Julie Zickefoose: www.birdwatchersdigest.com/mwb2011/about.php.

You can also watch an MBS iMovie photomontage, made by Ann Oliver, available for viewing on YouTube, featuring speakers, sponsors, vendors, volunteers, field trips, birders, and a few birds, too! http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxL3_fjLC1U

“Our experiences at Meadowbrook Preserve during MBS were outstanding – the place is certainly a ‘must visit’ during the fall. We started out at the marsh overlook at first light, seeing various ducks, cormorants, herons and egrets as the light levels rose, with Marsh Wrens, Swamp Sparrows, and other marsh birds in the reeds in front of us. Frequent Bald Eagles kept the watchers happy. Walking the paths, we found flocks of warblers, vireos, and other passerine migrants. As a native New Englander, the numbers of Philadelphia Vireos seen was impressive.

On the sunny afternoons, we also did butterfly and dragonfly watching along the paths and meadows.

“I can only imagine spring migrants at Meadowbrook will be as numerous, and possibly better than the fall numbers. Having been a hawk watcher and bander along the south shore of Lake Ontario in the spring, I would not be surprised if Meadowbrook gets a very good hawk flight on warm spring days, especially when the lake breeze kicks in and pushes the migrating raptors inland from the lakeshore itself. I’ll bet a coordinated hawkwatch at the Meadowbrook platform, anytime from late March into May, would yield some excellent hawk counts.” Clayton Taylor

*Meadowbrook Marsh was sponsored by Swarovski Optik during MBS. The optics company had expert birders, with loaner binoculars, at Meadowbrook Marsh during early morning informal birding sessions.
MIDWEST BIRDING SYMPOSIUM CONSERVATION GRANTS:
Funding for 12 organizations plus Meadowbrook Marsh

MBS ’11 raised more than $12,000 for conservation. The OOS Board provided a $10,000 match from the OOS Conservation Fund, bringing the total conservation dollars raised to more than $22,000. Twelve groups, on the local, regional, and national level, applied in advance for funding. OOS, MBS, and Bird Watcher’s Digest, along with all participants in MBS fundraising, are honored to support a dozen organizations with up to $1,000.

1.) American Birding Association’s Birders Exchange Program. Although Birders’ Exchange (BEX) relies on donations of equipment, such as new and gently used optics, ABA still has considerable expenses associated with receiving, evaluating, and shipping materials to couriers, as well as processing applications from potential equipment recipients. Support from the MBS fund will allow ABA to maintain the vital link in the chain connecting the avifaunas and birding communities of all the Americas. NOTE: MBS ’11 attendees donated two Sony cameras, nine binoculars, and one spotting scope to BEX: Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge donated an additional 12 pairs of binoculars!

2.) Friends of Magee Marsh. To continue to improve the Magee Marsh Wildlife Area’s habitat and resources for the enjoyment of the public, MBS funds will be used to plant wildflowers adjacent to the Magee Marsh Boardwalk, concentrating on sections where invasive, non-native garlic mustard has been removed during volunteer “pull” events. Join Friends of Magee Marsh next spring for other volunteer events supporting the boardwalk.

3.) Friends of Maumee Bay State Park. MBS grant funding will help offset the costs associated with erecting a Barn Swallow nesting structure in the Maumee Bay SP campground. Nesting barn swallows provide excellent education opportunities to the general public while supporting important, insect-eating, migratory birds.

4.) Grange Insurance Audubon Center. Continuing the mission of the National Audubon Society, while serving Central Ohio and inner-city Columbus through education, research, and outreach, MBS funds will be used for two local birding projects: Bird Count Volunteer Training and “Birding 101” monthly education programs.

5.) Indiana Young Birders Club. Indiana Audubon Society, outreaching to youth, civic, church, school, and other groups, will use MBS funds for the “Indiana Young Birders 100 Field Guide Give-Away”.

6.) The Lakeside Association. Lakeside, Ohio, the location of Midwest Birding Symposium and co-host of the event, will utilize MBS funds to replace various ash species destroyed by the Emerald Ash Borer with native trees (basswood, hackberry, and chinquapin oak) to benefit wildlife and birds.

7.) Lake Erie Islands Chapter-Black Swamp Conservancy. In their mission to encourage conservation and protection of natural and agricultural lands in the Lake Erie Islands, MBS dollars will purchase trees for migratory bird habitat restoration at the Middle Bass Island East Point Preserve.

8.) Ohio Nature Education. Serving 18 Central Ohio counties, ONE will use MBS grant money to construct a viewing window overlooking a newly donated bird feeding station and water feature at the William C. Kraner Nature Center, in Newark.
9.) Ohio University, Department of Biological Sciences. MBS funds will be used to support research to discover how forest management practices and disturbances affect bird populations, by studying behavioral responses/adaptations occurring in areas of impacted/altered forest ecosystems.

10.) Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Association. Ottawa NWR Association, in its role as a non-profit cooperating association in support of Ottawa NWR, will use MBS funds toward construction of a shorebird observation deck overlooking migratory habitat. The plan includes a multi-car parking lot and safe walking path paralleling Benton-Carroll Road, south of Rt. 2, just outside of the official entrance to Ottawa NWR. See the right column for details and how you can help!

11.) RAPTOR, Inc. Dedicated to the preservation of birds of prey in the Greater Cincinnati area, through rehabilitation, education, and conservation, RAPTOR will use MBS funding to construct an 8 X 10 foot cage for non-flighted education birds such as a Barn Owl or Red-shouldered Hawk.

12.) Tri-Moraine Audubon Society. This chapter of National Audubon Society serves Allen, Auglaize, Hancock, Hardin, Logan, Mercer, Shelby, and Van Wert counties. Tri-Moraine Audubon wishes to restore 88 acres of grasslands currently overgrown with Autumn Olive. MBS funds will be used to increase plant diversity with native shrubs and seed mix. The restoration is a joint effort of The Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Pheasants Forever, and Tri-Moraine Audubon Society.

**SAW-WHET PALOOZA**

Ohio birders enjoyed fall visits to many Saw-whet Owl banding stations, including OOS’s evening at the Earl H. Barnhart Nature Center, south of Chillicothe. OOS donated $150 to the Scioto Valley Bird & Nature Club (www.svbncc.org/) to help replace a damaged mist net. “Owl” see you next year!

**OTTAWA NWR: TWO PROJECTS WILL BENEFIT BIRDERS**

Two major projects are set to get underway at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, with support from the Ottawa NWR Association, and hopefully, many Ohio birders! Project #1 is a Shorebird Observation Deck, to be built on Benton-Carroll Road, just south of Rt. 2. Project #2 is a proposed birding path, the Crane Creek Trail, which would start near the west end of the Magee Marsh Wildlife Area parking lot and traverse habitat on federal land. The Ottawa NWR Association seeks $5000 funding for each project and volunteers to assist. Check the OOS website for a printable version of the pledge form below or contact Ottawa NWR Association at 419-898-0014.
A VERY “BIG YEAR” FOR GREG MILLER!

Greg Miller, of GregMillerBirding.com, sat down with birder Greg Miller and had a chat about how he feels after the movie has been released to the public. If you haven’t guessed, Greg Miller is interviewing himself! Ha, ha!

GMB: What was it like the first time you saw the movie trailer of The Big Year with Jack Black playing you?

GM: The whole thing was so unreal I sorta felt numb to the whole thing. I watched it several times. I just couldn’t bring myself to believe it was really happening. Unfortunately, I found I had strong conflicting feelings. Sure, Jack Black was portraying my character. How many people can say that? That was a very cool thing, indeed! But my stomach was tied in knots on the inside. Was this going to be good for birding? Was it going to have any positive impact on the birds? Or would it be negative? I probably worried far too much. It certainly made it harder to enjoy the moment.

GMB: Well that’s kinda lame. Don’t you think you should have enjoyed it more freely?

GM: Yeah. I know. <head down looking at ground; hands in pockets; shuffles feet>

GMB: So let’s get to the movie itself. You said you saw it the first time at a pre-screening in Richmond Heights, OH. Tell us about the experience of seeing it the very first time.

GM: Um. It was such a rush of emotions all coming together at once. I had a sense of complete and total AWE that here was a Hollywood movie with A-list actors and part of my life was going to be displayed (okay, it was really just a fictional story) on the Big Screen across America. I was surprised to see some things added and plenty that had been tossed out of the original script. I was pleased to see some of my changes made it in directly, and not so thrilled to see some were completely ignored. I guess I was most impressed that the acting and story kept my interest—enough so that I actually found myself missing some of the technical birding inaccuracies I had planned to catch. Oh, and there were several instances birding inaccuracies that just made me cringe. Yikes! But, overall I was pleased with my first viewing and proud that I did not have to make a quick exit to some remote cave where I would live out my years as a hermit. I was not ashamed of the movie. In fact, I liked it.

GMB: What was opening weekend like? Everyone else is gonna see this now. How did that feel?

GM: Exciting. Scary. Exciting. Scary. I had totally underestimated the popularity of the book, The Big Year. I didn’t know what to expect for a movie. It was exciting in that this was REALLY happening. It was scary because—well—

GMB: Because what? Go ahead. Spit it out already. Don’t be so wishy-washy.

GM: You’re right. It was scary because I was worried about what people would think about competitive birding…and about bird watching in general…

GMB: Alright, dude. Enough of that worry stuff already! What were your favorite scenes?

GM: I got a terrific kick out of the honeymooners going to Attu. <he laughs out loud—no really he does—even without the LOL to signify such activity!> My overall favorite is the owl scene though. I’ve seen the movie 9 times now and I still shed a few tears every time. I have moist eyes just mentioning it. This scene seems real to me, but it wasn’t Virginia: it was the small pine grove at Killdeer Plains near Upper Sandusky, Ohio. There was snow on the ground. My dad did not have to carry around an oxygen tank, but he did have advanced congestive heart failure. He was weak and birding with me had worn him out. He really did tell me to go on ahead and look for the owl—a Long-eared Owl, not a Great Gray Owl, although the latter is far more dramatic. Unlike the movie, my dad and I were really close. He was my birding mentor. I lost him to a heart attack 11 years ago this fall.
That day, we were not alone. Along for the owl hunt was the very young, sharp-eyed bird sleuth, Jen Brumfield. I really did feel awful in the pit of my stomach when I realized that I’d left my father alone. I turned around immediately, and as I approached the pine grove, I could see my dad looking up. Quietly he pointed upward. There, on a branch near the trunk, was a mysterious-looking Long-eared Owl staring down at us. Jen joined us in the triumphant viewing of that bird. And inside, I was totally relieved to find my dad in good spirits and doing well. But the movie version still makes me feel like I am re-living Killdeer Plains again. I really, really still miss my dad. I wish he was here for all of this now, the book and the movie.

**GMB:** Pass the Kleenex, please. <sniffle> Thanks. What a story! You’ve seen this movie 9 times?!?!! Aren’t you really tired of it by now?

**GM:** Nope. And this is not my style of movie. I like Action/Adventure, Thrillers, Sci-Fi, and comedy. When I see a movie, I like to escape. I don’t want reality. But *The Big Year* deals with real issues. It tugs at your heart more than just the owl scene. I am impressed by the actors and the job they did.

**GMB:** Cool. Tough question here—what parts of the movie didn’t you like? You mentioned “cringe” before. What made you want to crawl under a theater seat and hide on the sticky floor?

**GM:** Well, the Pink-footed Goose showing up all over the place—and in some pretty insane places was one. Those mangy ducks during the Attu footage got me, too. What were those doing there? They weren’t even pretty... or a species. Sigh. And then there’s the Great Gray Owl in Virginia. Awesome owl. Nice setting. Not so very true on the birding accuracy. Also, the Great Spotted Woodpecker in the Pacific Northwest is very far fetched. To their credit, the script guys put in language to emphasize what a rarity this represented.

**GMB:** You wrote in your blog this movie had the 29th worst weekend of all time for movies opening at more than 2,000 theaters nationwide. You mentioned it grossed just over 3 million dollars. Is 3 million really that bad?

**GM:** Yes it is. In fact, it is a dramatic failure.
Ohio birder Craig Holt found this ABA Code-4 Black-tailed Gull at Ashtabula on November 14. Scores of birders kept track of the sighting by following reports on the Ohio listserv (birdingonthe.net/mailinglists/OHIO.html), various posts by many individuals on Facebook, and through the assistance of Jen Brumfield’s website (northnw.wordpress.com/) which had identification tips, photos, and most importantly, maps to where the bird was being seen. Thanks to all who put a friendly face on Ohio’s birding community!

NEW WILDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORM AT CONNEAUT

Ashtabula’s Star Beacon newspaper reports construction is nearly complete on a $22,700 wildlife observation platform at Conneaut. A 2010 grant from Ashtabula County’s Civic Development Corporation helped fund the project.

Scores of birders recently visited this area to view a Black-headed Gull, common in the United Kingdom, seen here with outstretched wing.

If accepted by the Ohio Birds Record Committee, this Black-tailed Gull, will be the first record in the Buckeye State. Black-tailed Gull is a northeast Asian species. Both photos courtesy Pennsylvania birder Michele Rundquist-Franz.

OOS extends an invitation to all current members. RSVP to wilds@ohiobirds.org to reserve your space. Meeting time, maps, and group assignment will be emailed to registrants for preparation. See page 12 to renew your membership!

WINTER WILDS EXPEDITION

JANUARY 14, 2012

Mark your calendars with an icicle! The OOS and the Wilds are hosting our Eighth Annual “give-back”, the Winter Raptor Extravaganza! OOS members annually visit the reclaimed grassland in Muskingum County for Northern Harriers, Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks, and late in the day, Short-eared Owls. In the past, Golden Eagles have overwintered, a Prairie Falcon spent two winters, and a Northern Shrike is usually found. Waterfowl, woodpeckers, and sparrows also contribute to the daily tally at this 10,000-acre birding mecca. New in 2012: access to areas on nearby American Electric Power property, including open water.

Kentucky is the first eastern state to allow hunting of this species in recent times.

KENTUCKY SANDHILL CRANE HUNT: DECEMBER 17–JANUARY 15

Wear “Hunter Orange” if you’re planning to view congregations of Sandhill Cranes in Kentucky. Four hundred hunters will be issued permits to take up to two Greater Sandhill Cranes in the Bluegrass State. Kentucky Sandhill Cranes are a state-endangered species in Ohio. See the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) website for more information about Sandhill Cranes in the Buckeye State, background on breeding success, and maps of the recent fall flight path of Ohio’s satellite-tagged sandhills, across Kentucky, to wintering sites in the southeastern United States: www.dnr.state.oh.us/Home/wild_resourcessubhomepage/ResearchandSurveys/sandhill_crane_migration/tabid/18911/Default.aspx
SAVE the date! The Eighth Annual OOS Conference visits Lakeside, fall of 2012. The weekend focus will be shorebirds, but expect many other migrants, too! Join us September 28-30, 2012 for fun, friendship, and fall birding!

Also, mark your calendar for the next Midwest Birding Symposium: September 19-22, 2013. MBS ’13 returns to Lakeside, Ohio, by popular request!

Ohio’s Birding Network is becoming more interactive to outreach and unite birders across the Buckeye State. We have links to information on birding locations around Ohio, links to birding blogs, Twitter and Facebook feeds, and much more. Also, The Ohio Birding Forum, featuring discussions on conservation, identification and other bird related stories is now easier to access and interact with: www.ohiobirds.org
OBBA II and OOS have created a Sponsor-A-Species online auction to help fund the publication of the OBBA II book! Follow the link above to bid on one of the species accounts in the upcoming Atlas! Winning bidders will have their name published in the official book. Another great way to help OBBA II and Ohio’s birds!

SUPPORT OHIO’S WILDLIFE LEGACY STAMP (OWLS)

Nina Harfmann, of Pleasant Plain, Ohio is the winning photographer in ODNR’s Third Annual Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp (OWLS) competition. Funds from sales of OWL stamps fund projects including tracking migration of Sandhill Cranes, research of wildlife habitat, support of endangered and threatened species, education of students and wildlife enthusiasts, plus generation of funds for habitat restoration, land purchases, and conservation easements. In 2010, the inaugural year for OWL, more than $20,000 was raised for wildlife conservation.

To purchase your stamp: www.dnr.state.oh.us/Home/ExperienceWildlifeSubHomePage/ohiowildlifelegacystamp/buystamp/tabid/22506/Default.aspx Many thanks to ODNR/DOW.

OBBA II: GREAT HORNED AND BARRED OWL DATA NEEDED!

Help the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II put Ohio’s owls on the map! Birders participating in Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) have a great opportunity to obtain new owl records. With help from several regional owl coordinators, OBBA II plans to survey priority blocks lacking records from now through 31 December, with your help!

Great Horned Owls enter OBBA II safe dates on December 20th, however, many individuals began courtship in November. Early Barred Owl pairs start to duet in late December. FYI: this is the last (but not least!) push for field data collection in OBBA II, so please get in touch with OBBA II to connect with a Regional Owl Coordinator. Details: www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/owling2011.php

JEN BRUMFIEL D ILLUSTRATES CALENDAR FOR CMNH

A 2012 calendar by artist/naturalist Jen Brumfield will showcase birds including Barred Owl, Wood Duck, and Cerulean Warbler, as well as habitats such as bog, fen, sand barren, sedge marshes, and deep swamp bottomland protected by Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Watch the CMNH website for information on calendar sales: www.cmnh.org/site/Index.aspx. Details on special ordering original artwork or matted prints, and information on Ohio birding, can be found on Brumfield’s website: www.jenbrumfield.com/.

Spotted Salamander will be featured on the 2012 OWL stamp. Photo courtesy Nina Harfmann.

Great Horned Owl in Cincinnati. Photo courtesy Bruce Leonhardt.

Spotted Salamander will be featured on the 2012 OWL stamp. Photo courtesy Nina Harfmann.

Great Horned Owl in Eastern Red Cedar. Illustration courtesy Jen Brumfield.
Calendar of Events


OOS Eighth Annual Conference at Lakeside, Ohio: September 28-30, 2012. Fee: TBA. Save the date for the Eighth Annual OOS Conference, with special focus on shorebirds, plus many other migrants, next fall, in Lakeside, Ohio.
**Special Winter Memberships
Limited-Time Offer!**

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**ORGANIZATION**

**ADDRESS**

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**EMAIL**

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You can now join and renew ONLINE!
Visit us at www.ohiobirds.org TODAY!
Questions about your membership? oosmembers@gmail.com

*Offer valid through January 31, 2012 + Membership valid for 1 year Checks Payable to OOS + PO Box 14051 + Columbus Ohio 43214

Please Check Your Membership Renewal Date, IN RED, Next To Your Address! Thanks!