

sports & outdoors

From the

MIDDLE SCHOOL

LACROSSE SIGNUPS

Signups for U15 boys' and girls' lacrosse will be next Wednesday, Feb. 6, from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Cyrus Peirce School cafeteria. A \$50 per player fee will be due that evening and parents must accompany children to signups. This program is for sixth, seventh and eighth graders. The season begins the third week in March.

DJ SKATE PARTY SATURDAY

Nantucket Ice is hosting a DJ skate party with DJ "Bo Selecta" this Saturday, Feb. 2, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Admission will be limited to students in grades six, seven and eight. There will be a \$4 admission fee, but no charge for skate rentals. Call Nantucket Ice at 228-2516 for more information.

BRANT POINT RUNNERS

Results for Jan. 22

Lou Gennaro	25:03*
Margrethe Mentes	26:09
Cris Farley	27:30

* Season Best

** Personal Course Record CR
Course Record

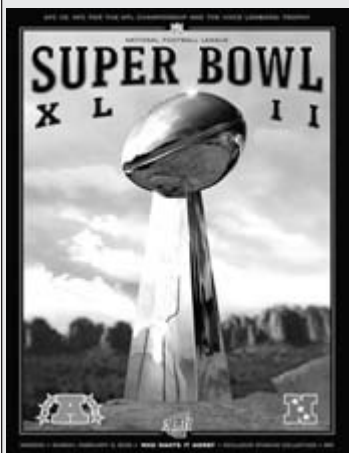
Runners meet Tuesdays rain or shine at 7:45 a.m. at the corner of Beach and Easton streets for an 8 a.m. start. The 5K (3.1 miles) run is on paved roads over a mostly flat course that is accurately wheel measured, with one hill and some moderate grades. Runners of all abilities, from beginners to veterans, are welcome. There are no entry fees. For information call 228-0206. Course records: Cam Stracher 15:45; Lindsay Wilkins 18:21.

New England Patriots vs. New York Giants

When Sunday, Feb. 3

Kickoff 6:17 p.m.

TV Fox (Comcast channel 13)



followed suit, taking the nightcap, 60-39.

As they have all season, the girls went after Sturgis with a balanced attack. Nine Nantucket girls scored, with Angela Paterson and Whitney Butler leading the charge for the Lady Whalers, each scoring 15 points. It was Paterson who set the game's pace, as 13 of her points came in the first period. Butler scored nine of her total, meanwhile, in the third period.

The depth of the Lady Whalers' bench was in



Sedge Wren

BIRDS OF NANTUCKET

by Kenneth Turner Blackshaw

SEDFE WREN — JENNY WREN?

Most of you know of Jenny Wren, and if you are under the age of 40 you are probably thinking of the 2005 Paul McCartney song with that name. Paul is actually singing about the Dickens character from the book, "Our Mutual Friend." But there are other connections since I'm told the wren is Paul's favorite bird.

So Paul and I have that in common. I particularly enjoy wrens, although the only one I see frequently is the Carolina Wren. Paul's wren needs no further name in England since there is only one species there. In our country that bird is called the Winter Wren.

As I was growing up I was lucky enough to have a complete set of the Thornton W. Burgess books. In them, Jenny Wren is one of Peter Rabbit's companions. Peter's pal arrives with bubbling song in the springtime and is undoubtedly a House Wren. House Wrens are fixtures in most summer gardens across the eastern U.S. and Canada but, alas, not on Nantucket where we are still looking for our first nest.

So our wren this week is not 'Jenny.' It is a fascinating little creature called the Sedge Wren. It is tiny, just four inches from beak to tail, although its tail is puny. Only hummingbirds are smaller. When I started birding in the '50s, there were two 'marsh' wrens in the bird book, Long-billed and Short-billed. Nowadays the Long-billed is simply the Marsh Wren and the Short-billed, the Sedge Wren. Habitat has always been the most useful way to tell them apart. The scientific name, *Cistothorus platensis*, was given by two German naturalists of the early 1800s, Jean Louis Cabanis, and Johann Friedrich Naumann, and means a creature that runs through the shrubbery from the Rio La Plata in

Puerto Rico. Oh my — how would it ever get here?

Sedge Wrens nest in fresh water marshes across the north central part of our country, mainly west of New England. They construct intricate globular nests in the grass, just a few feet from the ground with an entrance skillfully concealed at the side. Normally seven eggs are laid and Mrs. Wren does most of the upbringing. The male's effort is expended building extra nests throughout the marsh to confuse predators.

This bird was unknown on Nantucket until 1970 when one was found in September. Now we think of them as winter residents when we can find them. They are extreme skulkers. When they fly they look like a bit of leaf litter blowing in the wind, quickly dropping back into the grass. Is it any wonder it took so long to find them? It's hard to imagine them having the spunk to fly here across Nantucket Sound, but then, it's too far to hop!

We have a single specimen in the Edith Andrews Bird Collection at Maria Mitchell and that tiny corpse has a tale to tell. In September, 1981, a local falconer was hunting with his Cooper's Hawk at Folger's Marsh. The raptor dramatically picked a tiny bird off the marsh grass just as Simon Perkins, now a Field Ornithologist for Massachusetts Audubon, was watching. Simon prevailed upon the falconer to call in the hawk and extricated the bird from the predator's talons. Now it resides in a specimen drawer with other wrens that suffered less spectacular demises. Call Maria Mitchell if you would like to see the tiny morsel that was almost dinner.

Sedge Wrens are listed as 'endangered' in Massachusetts. There are only two nesting records from the central part of the state. Nantucket is one of the only places to regularly find them and even so, a good look requires luck and patience. They prefer fresh water meadows but not too wet. If there are cattails, the marsh becomes Marsh Wren habitat. Sedge Wrens like the long grasses and sedges.

The key is to listen for their call notes: dry, sharp "chep" sounds. Then attempt to call "pishhhh" them out. Often just a tiny movement in the grass gives them away. They are streaked light brown with a tiny tail, often cocked over their back. They don't show the striking eye stripe of the Marsh Wren.

Birding Nantucket shows them as rare from mid-October until late January. They stay until the marshes fall into winter's icy grip. That still hasn't arrived this year so they may still be around. If you are walking a marsh near cattails watch for leaf litter blowing in the wind when there is no wind. Then listen for the call — and wonder about Paul McCartney and Jenny Wren. ■

George C. West creates illustrations for these articles. If you enjoy 'social' birding, join the Nantucket Bird Club at 8 a.m. Sundays in front of Nantucket High School for a two to three hour birding trip. Call 228-1693 for more information. To hear about rare birds, or to leave a bird report call the Massachusetts Audubon hot line at 1-781-259-8805. Ask Ken a question at: kenandcindy1@comcast.net.

BASKETBALL

Continued from page 25

evidence, as coach Willis Ferreira freely substituted throughout.

"It's always good to get back into the gym after a loss and get a win," he said afterwards. "It's also good to be 9-1."

He's also looking forward to the Valentine's Day rematch with Dennis-Yarmouth, a home game this time.

The win moved the girls closer to another appearance in the Division 4 South Sectionals, as they are one win away from qualifying.

Ashley Clinger contributed to the cause with 12 points, six of them in the fourth quarter. Also scor-

ing were Bianca Brown with eight points, and Stephanie Espinoza and Aileen Fredericks, who each had seven.

On the boys' side, Ferreira scored 14 first quarter points, 12 of them on four 3-point shots, and paced all players with 19 points. The boys pushed the ball inside in taking a 38-11 halftime lead and cruised from there through the fourth quarter. Eric Lowell had 13 points, while Mike Aucoin was strong in the post with 11 rebounds.

The Whalers are now 6-5, 3-0 in Lighthouse Conference play. ■