

Now, New York exports wild turkeys to the entire northeast.

Although wild turkeys have a close enough genetic relationship to domestic turkeys for interbreeding to occur in captivity, selective breeding of domestic birds for meat production, has resulted in marked differences from their wild counterparts. This can easily be seen in the breast meat. It is all dark meat in wild turkeys, because the breast muscles are fully functional and necessary for flight. The wild turkey has been clocked at over fifty miles per hour in flight. It ranks with the swan as one of the heaviest birds still capable of flight. One record Tom weighed over thirty pounds, though most are much smaller. They can also swim if they have to! Other differences can be seen in their behavior. The survival instincts of the wily wild turkey are simply not present in its domestic cousin.

Wild turkeys are sometimes called the "vacuum cleaner" of the forest. They will eat any nutritious food they can get down their gullet. In the spring when the hens are producing eggs, their diet is composed of protein rich insects, spiders, snails, grubs, centipedes and millipedes. In the fall, they fatten up on acorns, beechnuts and dried fruits.

At certain times of the year, they are very gregarious. Flocks of over two hundred birds have been seen in the Andes' area. As you travel to Delhi, look at the fields on your left. You can usually find a lock or two gleaning the grain from the fields there.

Turkeys don't have it that easy. In spite of their obvious success, birds rarely live more than two years in the wild, even though they've lived over twenty years in captivity. Turkey eggs are preyed on by raccoon, red and gray fox, coyotes, weasels, skunks, domestic dogs, and black snakes. They are also vulnerable to many diseases that are caught from domestic birds. Their presence in high numbers in varying habitats is testimony to their rapid reproduction rate (average clutch of eggs is twelve), highly adaptable diet, tremendous flying ability and elusive behavior.

This spring, an estimated 30,000 hunters will attempt to harvest up to two Toms each, but only one out of eleven will actually be successful. Some of them will sit in mid-spring, concealed at the edge of a mature hardwood stand,

and witness a Tom in full display, strutting pompously for the hens around him. Whether or not they make a kill, they will have had a memorable experience. ~

## **ACS Construction Committee Meets to Resolve Building Issues**

On the evening of April 19<sup>th</sup> the ranks of the ACS Construction Committee were greatly expanded, as many interested members of the public joined in to find a solution to the school's construction requirements that the Andes taxpayers can accept. Thirty-five interested people met in the school's library to wrestle with this thorny issue.

They listened to each other's analysis about the reasons the last vote failed, and tried to design proposals that were more palatable. The architect broke the original proposal into segments that fit together in terms of building prerequisites, and gave itemized costs for their construction. In addition, the committee was provided with state aid information for each of these segments.

After listening to all the information and taking note of mandatory items, the committee broke up into groups to try to design proposals that would meet the children's needs, comply with state mandates, and address taxpayers concerns. For a while, it was like a flight attendant trying to come up with a menu to feed a planeload of vegetarians, kosher people, Hindus and diabetics.

After much soul searching, number crunching and sometimes heated discussion, with Mr. Burkhart moving from table to table to provide technical information, each group reported their proposals. The proposals were collated and compared. The entire committee gave their views on what they saw of each others, work and finally, three proposals were drafted.

These proposals will be given to the bonding agent for legal wording and the voters will be able to vote yes or no for one, two or three of them. I believe it is safe to say that a yes or no vote for all or any of them will not satisfy everyone but the committee believes that these proposals give the voters of Andes the

choices they need to make good decisions about taxpayer needs and the educational needs of our children.

The next job the committee will have will be to disseminate the information to the public so they can make an informed vote. To aid in this, an information sub-committee was formed. This committee will meet on Tues., May 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 7pm. If you want to help, join us then.

There is no denying the difficulty of this task but it was certainly gratifying to see so many interested Andeans, working so hard to collectively solve this issue. The committee was composed of Andeans who were proponents and those who were opponents of the previous vote, but they put their differences aside and struggled together to find a solution we can all accept. They listened to each other. They analyzed the information they received and most importantly, they didn't throw up their hands in despair and quit. It is clear to me, that these people care about our community a great deal and are worthy of our utmost respect, regardless of their point of view. We owe them our thanks. ~

## **Springtime Evensong**

by Wilma Mazo

Jubilant peepers  
Chorus in soggy pools  
Music to my ears.

## **LIFE IN THE 1500'S**

Since England was so old and so small, they started running out of places to bury people. To solve the problem they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a house and re-use the grave. In reopening these coffins, one out of twenty-five coffins was found to have scratch marks on the inside. They then realized that they had been burying people alive. So, they decided to tie a string on the wrist of the deceased before the burial and lead the string through the coffin and up through the ground. A bell would be attached to the string at ground level. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night to listen for the bell. Hence, on the "graveyard shift" they would know that someone was "saved by the bell." ~