



TEXAS BLUES

The Newsletter of the Texas Bluebird Society

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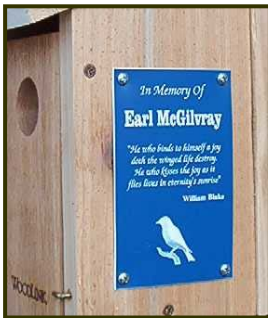
IN THIS NEWSLETTER...

This final issue of Volume 2 is mailed (and notifications are being emailed to those who accept an electronic version) just a few weeks before Volume 3, Issue 1. In the tradition set with Volume 1, the last bi-monthly for 2003 was created during the Winter Break holidays.

Our November 15th Convention in Bastrop is covered with an article about one of Doug LeVasseur's talks, news and photos from the ever-popular auction, and a list of those who received special recognition.

This front page gives details of a brand-new plan approved by the Board and announced at the Convention. It's the brainchild of new board member, Cheryl Anderson.

You'll recognize friends and fellow Bluebirders among the expressions of gratitude and appreciation. Memorial gifts from Marty & Julie Markovitz and JoAnn & Jack Lipscomb honoring Woodrow Lamberth have set the stage for the marvelous new plan we need your help to name! Happy reading!



Please vote on a name for our benefit program at our website by Valentine's Day

texasbluebirdsociety.org

Texas Bluebird Society asks all members and friends to cast a vote for a new plan.

- Heart of Blue
- True Blue Friend
- Blues for Texas

NEEDED: Individual(s) to ferry nestboxes from Williamson Co. in Central Texas to various sites in Texas. Gasoline allowance available.

Contact Pauline Tom for details
[pauline@texasbluebirdsociety.org] or
512.268.5678

Be There for the Blues!

The Texas Bluebird Society is starting a benefit program! Donations, tax-deductible as allowed by law, now can be made in recognition of a person, pet, anniversary or other special occasion.

The program needs a name and suggestions are provided for your consideration. Please go to our website and participate in our "electronic polling booth" which will be open through February 14th, Valentine's Day. Members and non-members are encouraged to help select a name.

We are very excited! This opportunity will draw more people to the cause of spreading nestboxes across Texas and give bird-friendly people a way to honor their friends and loved ones.

Each nestbox will have a 3"x5" plastic plate which will include the loved one's name and a brief message. The nestbox will be put up on a monitored bluebird trail somewhere in the state of Texas. Each plate will be high quality, weather-resistant blue plastic with white lettering, similar to the one shown in the illustration.

Each sponsor and their designee will receive a letter with the location of the nestbox, and a photo of the customized plate. At any moment, you and your honoree/family will be able to pause, and know that at an exact spot in Texas, bluebirds have a chance to nest and fledge, thanks to your remembrance gift.

A donation of \$125 will establish a new nestbox on a monitored bluebird trail with a customized plate.

A \$50 donation will attach a plate with your special message to an existing nestbox; or, we will ship the customized plate to you or the person or family you designate.

Upon receipt of the request, the Texas Bluebird Society will notify the designated person or family of the gift. Later, location details and photo will be sent.

Finalized details on placing orders will be posted on the website and published in an upcoming edition of the Texas Blues newsletter.

For preliminary information, contact Cheryl Anderson at 817.444.8581 or e-mail azlebird@aol.com

2003 Convention Honorees

Extensive Bluebird Trail

Cheryl Anderson

James Barnes

John Cys

Dean Gary

Dan Hanan

Don Howard

Don Hutchings

Maxey Kirkley

Keith Kridler

Moore McDonough

Ed Melson

Richard "Dick" Park

Charles Post

Doug Rohde

Danny Seale

The David Shiels Family

Ron & Pauline Tom

Jack Vick

Ricky Walker

Dr. Thomas M. Wheeler

Virginia Worsham

These members reported 24 or more nestboxes on their Membership/Renewal Form

"One Nestbox" Pilot Program

Johnny & Jennifer Fleming

Brian Hetherington

Bob Houck

Lee & Jordan Hutchins

Robert & Sharon Kersten

LeAnn & Anthony Sharp

These members played a special role in the success of the "One Nestbox" pilot project. They helped develop the process whereby TBS can offer a nestbox in exchange for a membership for specific time spans in limited locales when shipping is not required and nestboxes are available.

TIDBITS, a report from the convention

The phrase, "a bluebird of happiness" aptly describes Doug LeVasseur, also known as Mr. Bluebird. Doug modeled the active member of a bluebird organization we all can be as he generated enthusiasm and joy at the 2nd annual Texas Bluebird Society Convention. Like the birds we were there to champion, the audience snapped up Doug's "tasty tidbits" during his talk, "Bluebirding Across America" and delighted in his keynote, "The Joys of Bluebirding."

"Bluebirding Across America" elaborated on the interesting variations among the Eastern, Mountain and Western Bluebirds. Each area has its own problems and differences. These differences need to give bluebirders tolerance for the variety among regional methods of coping with bluebird management.

Tree Swallows threaten the success of bluebird nestings in the NE. This situation responds well to the pairing of nestboxes to give the bluebirds even more cavity availability. Hopefully, this keeps the Tree Swallows from overtaking the bluebird nestboxes. The Tree Swallow's lovely white-feather lined nest is a beauty to see, especially if the Bluebirds also have an available nestbox. Tree Swallow territory is spreading to new areas. The North has been blessed with a decrease in snake predation.

The Western Bluebirds will nest in boxes hanging from tree branches. This creates its own special challenges for good bluebird management. Mr. Bluebird displayed a cherry picker type of apparatus made from a long PVC pole and an open wooden box that is used by Linda Violet and others in Southern California. This handy item is used to lift the nestbox down from the tree for monitoring. The nestbox hangs in the tree with an oversized hook!

Predator problems in the NW include bears. The drought of the last few years has forced bears to identify new food sources, and they've developed a taste for bluebird eggs and young. Eggs and fledglings are in tremendous danger. Resourceful bluebirders have developed several hot strategies. One effort to eliminate the problem is mixing peanut butter and an excessive amount of cayenne pepper into a nice big ball. The treat is placed about 4 feet from the bluebird house, entices the bear with its delicious aroma, and delivers a wallop that sends the creature racing for water, never to return!

In Alberta, Canada, 65% of the bluebirds are banded. Average bluebird life span there is 2 years, although a few 6-year-old birds have been found. One bluebird marriage used the same nest for 5 years.

Mr. Bluebird entranced us with anecdotes. Did you know that flying squirrels have taken over bluebird nestboxes in key regions, including Oklahoma? They can occupy up to 65% of the nestboxes in some problem areas.

By sharing his expertise and fellowship in the most appealing of ways, Doug gave each of us "a little something" to take home and use with success to help increase the populations in our areas... thanks, Mr. Bluebird.

Lysle Mockler

At the close of the November 15th Annual Convention, "Mr. Bluebird" received a TBS certificate of appreciation from Pauline Tom. Graciously, Doug LeVasseur drove from Ohio to Texas to be the featured speaker. Doug, immediate past president of the North American Bluebird Society, accepted the TBS speaking engagement when he thought he would be making a trip to Arizona. When his plans changed, he kept his commitment to the Texas Bluebird Society! What a privilege an joy it was to have him with us. Thanks, Mr. Bluebird!





Many thanks to those who contributed items for the 2003 Convention Auction and Raffle

Nature's Way
 Droll Yankees
 Gladys Brewer
 Pied Piper
 Terro Studios
 Ralph & Mary Bilbo
 Patrizia Vana
 Julie Zickefoose
 Johnny & Jennifer Fleming
 Texas Audubon Society
 Grubco
 JennaBird
 Floyd Van Ert
 Petsmart
 Lysle Mockler
 Clifford Shackelford
 Sunshine Mealworms
 The BirdHouse, Azle
 Evelyn Cooper
 Doctors Foster & Smith
 Jim Collier
 Shirl Brunnel
 Maureen & Rex Hall
 Woodlink
 Anthony & LeAnn Sharp
 Bain Walker
 David Shiels
 Lora B. Garrison
 Dan Hanan
 Doug & Karen Rohde
 Goldcrest
 Carol Schoch
 Ron & Pauline Tom
 Wild Birds Ltd., Houston
 Birds-n-Garden
 Erva Manufacturing



The Silent Auction ... Throughout the day on breaks, convention participants upped the bids on the bid sheet associated with each auction item. When "time" was called just before evening meal, the high bidder was the winner.

- David and Andrew Shiels walked away as high bidders with the prized double-signed print donated by Julie Zickefoose, a bluebird switch plate, a Lenox plate, and a certificate for a weekend for two at the Bluebird Hill B&B in Utopia (a birthday surprise for David's wife, Carol).
- Linda Almes, attending her first TBS Convention, joined the fun. A nestbox kit and a bluebird spoon rest went home to Ennis with her and Robert.
- When the gong sounded, our guest speaker, Doug LeVasseur, was high bidder on TWO bluebird thermometers. (Notice the bluebird on his shoulder!)
- Active TBS Nestbox Builder Bob Houck REALLY wanted to be high bidder on a crystal bluebird. He was high bidder on THREE of the bluebirds. Later, when door prizes were awarded, laughter erupted as he won yet another crystal bluebird.
- Lynne Warfield, former TBS treasurer, was high bidder on some mealworm certificates at the 2002 Convention. After a good experience with the sponsors' product and service, she followed the auction instructions "bid high and bid often," and came away a winner.

Texas Bluebird Society was the BIG winner. The Auction and Raffle brought in \$1,207.50. Thanks to all who participated.

**Thanks to those who
added in an extra
donation with their dues
in 2003:**

Selette Hulseley Pearce
John & Nancy Cys
Lysle Mockler
Lawrence & Betty Jernigan
James C. Leavesley
Thomas Wheeler
Billie Hicks
John Kelly
Jane Tillman
Joseph Klotz
Bill & Donna Wilkison
Susan Vaughan
George Flood
Billy Watson
Charles Bartlett
Metha Leslie
Marvin Hershey
Albert Del Rio
Cathy Chilcote
Steve Young
Annette Sanders
April Lowe
Nancy Powell Moore
Barbara A. Ramsey
The John Burdett Family
Tim Domingue
Martha Pereson
Kathleen Cook
Sharon Bell
G.O. Baird
Tracy Elder
Jay & Betty Puckett
Joan Boecker
Charlotte Askew

President's Corner

At the close of 2003, our second full year in existence, we reached Membership #390. (At the close of 2002 we had about 100 members.) The wonderful news is that most of the new members put up their very first nestbox. This spring, many will know the joy of cavity-nesting birds in their own backyard. Others, who placed the nestbox in appropriate habitat, will have the HOPE of bluebirds one day selecting their nestbox.

PROVERB: A nestbox in the garage attracts no bluebirds. A wren, maybe. But, no bluebirds.

Peace, Joy & HOPE!!

Pauline Tom

To:

Special thanks to Billy & Ricky Walker for \$400 gift

Ricky Walker in Bandera sent Texas Bluebird Society a note thanking us for surprising her with recognition for her extensive bluebird trail. And, she sent a surprise for TBS - a check for \$400! Thanks so much!

Ricky has a remarkable bluebird story. From reading about bluebirds, she KNEW their ranch in Bandera would be good habitat for bluebirds. But, she was supposedly outside of bluebird territory; and, she had not seen a bluebird there. The missing ingredient was bluebird nestboxes. In July 1990, Ricky put up a nestbox. Within hours, a bluebird was sitting atop the nestbox. Typically, Ricky now fledges over 100 bluebirds in a nesting season.

Special thanks to ExxonMobil and Doug & Karen Rohde for \$2,000 gift

In 2003, Texas Bluebird Society received two \$1,000 checks from ExxonMobil through the generosity of Doug & Karen Rohde. Doug is retired from ExxonMobil. Doug and Karen participate in the company's plan that encourages volunteerism by paying the charity of their choice for the hours they volunteer on behalf of the charity. The Rohde's selected Texas Bluebird Society as the charity that would benefit from their volunteer hours. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!!

Texas Bluebird Society is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) "charitable organization." All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Texas Bluebird Society

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Website www.texasbluebirdsociety.org
Vice-President, Lamont Brown 940.891.4400 (work)

Annual memberships are \$10 **OR** \$15 for an entire household