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**Cover photo:** Jonathan Morgan photographed this hungry pair of Tree Swallows in western Michigan. More of his excellent photos are displayed and available for purchase on his website, www.friendofthebirds.com.
Summer Message to our Affiliate Organizations

Bluebirders by their very nature tend to be connectional and collaborative. We like to stay in touch with one another, meet together, perhaps in cyber space, and exchange experiences and ideas. NABS endorses this joining movement. Many of our NABS members are also part of an Audubon society or a local bird club. NABS itself has joined all of the Affiliates that have membership opportunities (at least to the extent that we could find or receive an application).

Having made this gesture toward the Affiliates we would like to encourage a reciprocal move by the Affiliates. One Affiliate has set a high standard by taking out a Life Membership so that $400 of the $500 membership fee will go into our Zeleny Endowment Fund to be used for research. We would like more Affiliates to follow suit.

While on the subject of memberships, the half-price offer for Affiliate members to join NABS is still in effect. Any members of your affiliate who do not already belong to NABS can go to www.nabluebirdsociety.org/aplus. There they will find a membership form just for Affiliate members. This offer also applies to renewals for those of you who are reading this periodical.

NABS is always sad to hear that an Affiliate has had to disband for lack of members or leadership. Unfortunately that is the case with the Georgia Affiliate. Founded in 1992, the dedicated officers and members of Bluebirds Over Georgia have seen bluebirds flourish throughout the state. A bird that was once struggling to hold on is now on solid ground.

At the same time we said goodbye to Georgia, we welcomed a new Affiliate in Wisconsin: the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society, headquartered in Stevens City, joined our ranks. They received the Lawrence Zeleny Bluebird Conservation Award at our recent annual meeting in Kearney, Nebraska.

Our new Bluebird editor, Scott Gillihan is anxious to gather articles from around the states and provinces for our newsletter. If you have something that you think others would be interested in reading and seeing, please contact Scott at NABSEditor@gmail.com. Scott will contact the original authors for permission to use their material.

As you read this, I hope that you are having a successful nesting season and that all your nestlings fledge.

Brian Swanson
NABS Vice President for Affiliate Relations
Greetings of peace. During the third decade after Dr. Zeleny and his associates established the North American Bluebird Society, the organization experienced a progressive decline but there were still some bright and shining stars and as a result, NABS was able to rise from the ashes as a Phoenix.

Titus Maccius Plautus, writer of Roman comedies, circa 254-184 BCE, wrote in his play named Epidicus, “Nothing is there more friendly to a man than a friend in need.” In NABS’s time of need, at the moment when everything was falling apart, Bernie Daniel was a friend in deed. He stepped forward and accepted the job of NABS’s President, regardless of any consideration of the challenges or the fact that it was so much in conflict with his personal career obligations, and he did that job well. And at the same time he accepted the job of the editor of the NABS journal, *Bluebird*, and performed yeoman service in that capacity for a much longer duration. More than a year ago he requested relief from that duty but it was not until now that it was forthcoming. I encourage you to read elsewhere in this edition my introduction of NABS’s new *Bluebird* Managing Editor, but here I simply wish to express my eternal gratitude to my good friend and mentor for all he has done for NABS up to this time and for what I know he will continue to do.

In one issue after the other I have written to you about NABS’s challenges. Now enough time has passed, enough dragons have been slain and enough new bridges have been built that it is clearly the dawning of NABS’s new era of success. In my message this time I want to tell you about some of the great accomplishments we have amassed and the reasons we can look at what is laid out before us with a heightened sense of optimism. Economic issues may not have been our worst concern but they certainly overshadowed everything else so that is where I will begin.

As best as I can understand it, during our first two decades NABS was essentially an all-volunteer operation. Then membership grew large enough that people got the idea that we could pay people to do some of the work. It could have worked out well if they were paying for products and services delivered but instead they hired staff and with staff comes overhead; time-keeping, supervision and performance evaluation, payroll management, benefits, more complex taxes and bookkeeping, office space and facilities management, to name but a few areas. It is very expensive to hire people, give them a mission statement and expect them to act with unlimited latitude for independent judgment and initiative. Volunteers work without pay and the contribution of their efforts is their compensation in its own right. A consequence of having a staff and facility is the constant drain on cash flow regardless of productivity. Money steadily flows out just as fast even when no benefit comes in.

As we enter into our fourth decade, we begin with a new business model. We have no staff but we do not hesitate to pay for products, goods, and services. We will pay our new Managing Editor for production of our journal, not for coming to work for some number of hours.

Our NABS economy is divided into two funds, our General Fund which accounts for the bulk of our activities, all of our ongoing operations (the segment which had a July 2006 balance of $8,200 that inspired the forecast that NABS would be bankrupt before year’s end); and our Zeleny Endowment Fund which was established with an initial $5,000, in memory of our founder after he died on May 27, 1995 at the age of 91. It was intended to be a repository for major donations with a plan that when its balance exceeded $100,000, the proceeds in excess of that threshold could be directed toward educational and research grants. The endowment grew little by little until the Board voted to contribute $16,000 from the General Fund in October 2002. By July 2006 its balance had grown to $63,452. Some obvious indications of the financial transformation
achieved since July 2006 are that the May 1, 2008 General Fund balance was $29,918 (up $21,718) and the Zeleny Fund balance was $124,739 (up $61,287). Approximately $50,000 of the Zeleny growth derived from the Board’s reallocation of money from the General Fund since July 2006 and the remainder from donations and newly implemented Board policies.

While it is important to understand that these trends clearly demonstrate outstanding improvement in our fundamental fiscal policies, it is also necessary to realize that for a variety of important reasons the same rate of growth is not expected to continue very long. At the top of the list is the fact that we are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit enterprise and it would be a violation of our public purposes to be in the business of stockpiling money. Since we eliminated the drain of non-programmatic costs we are in a position to reallocate expenditures in favor of the quality of our journal, e.g., a professional production that will be mailed according to a regular schedule, more pages, better content, full color, printing on high proportion post-consumer recycled paper; plus modernizing and improving our educational materials and providing benefit services which will assist our Affiliates in their roles in the areas of education and conservation of bluebirds and other cavity-nesting species.

From July 2006 through September 2007, one of the most demanding priorities was the preparation of our self-hosted NABS 2007 convention in Athens, Georgia. In all the previous years since NABS was founded, one of our Affiliates hosted our annual meetings. In the hopes of realizing a greater proportion of the revenues, our predecessors decided to eliminate the Affiliate host middle man. By the time the responsibility was handed off to our new team, the office in Georgia had been closed, there were no active Affiliate organizations within the State of Georgia who could be called upon to help, and essentially there was no one in close proximity to actively participate in the day-to-day arrangements other than the selection and scheduling of speakers. Without the support of University of Georgia Professor Dr. Patty Gowaty, we would have been doomed and credit is certainly also due to Dr. Helen Munro for all she did as Patty’s convention co-chair but she was severely challenged by living two states away in North Carolina.

The demands of that priority bore down on us more and more every month until that milestone was successfully behind us. Even after it was over, we still did not have an Affiliate committed to hosting the convention that was to follow. Then our great friends at BAN (Bluebirds Across Nebraska) offered to host 2008. BSP (Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania) has since signed up for 2009, 2010 is set for Oregon, and several other venues such as Tennessee and Michigan are currently under discussion. I believe there are three significant reasons why we have finally been able to achieve this. At the top of the list is the outstanding work of Brian Swanson, our Vice President in Charge of Affiliate Relations; there clearly appears to be an increased confidence in NABS’s future; and I believe we have already earned the reputation that we will be cooperative and supportive of the people hosting these essential events for us. This circumstance is another indication of how we have moved from a paradigm of putting out fires to one of planning and implementing plans in an orderly fashion.

Convention hosts were not the only volunteers we had difficulty enlisting. Since that start date of July 2006, and more particularly since January 2007 when I became NABS President, there has been a long list of extremely responsible positions that needed to be filled, only a portion as the result of newly created vacancies. I am extremely pleased to report that in just the past several months our Board has been joined by internationally renowned bluebirder and creator of the magnificent website, www.Sialis.org, Bet

“I want to tell you about some of the great accomplishments we have amassed and the reasons we can look at what is laid out before us with a heightened sense of optimism”
Zimmerman of Connecticut, who also became a member of our Education Committee; the editor of the BRAW journal (Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin) and BRAW Board member, Pat Ready; Anne Sturm of Maryland who was NABS President about twenty-five years ago; a retired mechanical engineer and teacher, Tom Comfort from Michigan; and Terry Neumyer of Pennsylvania who is a retired science teacher.

Greg Beavers joined the Board in January 2007 and Board member Brian Swanson agreed to serve as Vice President for Affiliate Relations. Aside from all he does with respect to finding hosts for our future conventions, I believe he has brought at least a half dozen new Affiliates into our family and he has done outstanding work to serve our Affiliates’ interests. A month after joining the Board, Greg accepted the office of Treasurer. Since then he has been responsible for every aspect of our revenue and spending from budgeting, oversight, and bookkeeping to selection of and interaction with a new CPA who can more efficiently fulfill our tax and accounting needs. As treasurer, Greg is our Chief Financial Officer. Also in February, Jim McLochlin agreed to return to the position of NABS webmaster which he had held and performed exceedingly well in the past. As a result of the improved relationship he has with the new Board, Jim has been able to achieve wonderful improvements in the NABS website, www.NABluebirdSociety.org. In March, Sherry Linn rejoined the Board after she had been off for some years. In April, Maynard Sumner became Chair of the newly created Photography Committee and Board member Jimmy Dodson accepted the Speakers Bureau Chair. He has been working steadily to computerize the associated records, eliminate out of date and duplicate information, improve their accuracy and make them more manageable. In May, David Rutherford and Walter Mugdan joined the Board and Walter, who is a senior executive with the Region 2 office of the US Environmental Protection Agency, also agreed to serve as Chair of the newly created Law Committee. In October, without a moment’s hesitation, Sherry agreed to be drafted into the highly demanding job of Membership Chair as soon as she received notice that there was a vacancy. In the brief time since

she has taken that on she has already shown significant improvement in the management of that work. Of course it is beyond reason to expect that every member will renew as soon as their membership term ends and many of our former members have drifted away for lack of being reminded how much we value having them on our rolls. In order to maintain a constant level of membership we need to take on as many new members as we lose and the group of people who would most likely want to join are those who have already expressed their interest in the past. For this reason, Sherry has been working with the tireless help of Board member Phil Berry and former Board member Tena Taylor to send out thousands of “please come back” and renewal letters.

The challenge with membership is the constant need to motivate existing members to renew before their term expires. Toward that purpose, I urge you now to take a brief moment of interruption to look at the name and address label of this issue and see when your membership expires and is up for renewal. It sure would make our task easier if people renewed one or two quarters before their subscription was over or especially if they signed up for two or three years at a time. I know it is a big hit and I know it is not within everyone’s means but my wife and I did not want to be concerned with ever having to renew so we signed up for the life membership. There are a number of real advantages to that. In the first place it is a really significant show of confidence for the society, that you believe in what NABS is doing, that you believe NABS is on the right track to get it done and that you believe NABS will continue to exist well into the future. If you compare standard household membership at $30 to life membership at $500 then your free membership will begin after 16 years unless the rates go up. In that case your free membership will start earlier. There is a potential tax advantage, too. In April 2007 the Board voted that $400 of every Life Membership will be designated as a Zeleny Fund contribution. Since the member receives no tangible service benefit or product of value, the $400 is fully tax deductible as a charitable donation.

While membership dues and contributions are
our primary source of revenue, NABS does have a secondary source as well. A list of the reasons why NABS is doing so well financially would not be complete without due mention of Board member Dan Sparks and his dedicated work on the NABS online storefront. He manages every product on our website, every transaction that is completed, and every payment that is made from start to finish, essentially by himself, and every aspect of our PayPal account as well. Dan is a great team player on the Finance Committee and the Board and a true asset on our team.

There are several committee chairmanships that I have been trying tirelessly to fill, those of the Education, Grants, and Awards Committees. Of course Grants has become far more important since the Zeleny Fund surpassed its hundred thousand dollar threshold and a lot of care will be needed for this appointment. The Awards Committee has also been a challenge. There is so much responsibility for people who are giving anything away, regardless of whether it is funding or recognition. Just like Bernie Daniel with the Editor’s job, Greg has been coerced for far too long to carry this burden in addition to all his fiscal responsibility but finding him a replacement cannot be done haphazardly.

The Education Committee has the greatest challenge of them all. Most of the NABS educational materials are ten years out of date in style and some of the content. Somewhere along the way our slide show was copied onto a VCR tape. It certainly is not up to the standard of what one would expect from an international organization associated with dozens of local Affiliates. Our printed materials are hardly in any better condition. We can and we must do better. We need to replace our VCR slide presentation with CDs and/or DVDs, not just one but a set focusing on young children, adolescents, and adults, and perhaps one for experienced birders and bluebirders. And we also need the various levels for PowerPoint presentations, depending upon whether the presenter wants to have a more or less active role in their showing. I will leave it for another day to offer all the details of necessary printed educational materials we need because those details seem almost endless. Suffice it to say that finding someone qualified to provide the independent leadership and initiative to produce such an array of products seemed insurmountable and yet it is my greatest pleasure and privilege to boast that I believe I found just such a person, our new Board member, Terry Neumyer. If you care to know about Terry’s qualifications and background, I have provided comprehensive details in my article, “Introduction of the New NABS Chairman of Education,” which may be found elsewhere in this issue.

And finally, I have one last and most important credit I want to share. I guess most everyone reading this knows that somewhere over the rainbow, bluebirds fly, and there is a shining city just at the end of the yellow brick road where a guy stands behind a curtain. I guess I am that guy. I try to give people diplomas and medals and sometimes even a heart. The thing is that I do not actually make all the magic happen myself and it would not be fair or honest if I did not tell you who keeps it all together. NABS’s Secretary, my wife, Lynne Ridgeway retired from a 35-year career as a senior executive in a major New York metropolitan area health insurance company and became president of our town’s library board and our county’s library association. She did literacy training for ESL students. She is secretary of our town’s historical society. She is a member of our local Sierra Club group’s executive committee (as am I) and on the board of the John Boroughs Natural History Society. Lynne is secretary and a county coordinator for our state’s bluebird society, plus she does a lot of other stuff too. Lynne is the best organization secretary I ever met and perhaps it is a testament to her charity that I survived the number of times I proposed her for that duty for various associations in which we are both active (NABS, NYSBS, and ToPHS being only a partial list). I guess I do a lot of things for our groups and yet there is no reason to believe that more than a fraction of them would happen without Lynne, certainly not...
at the same level of quality and especially not on
time. Lynne participates with me in the prepara-
tion of agendas for all of our meetings and calls
and distributes them when they are ready. She
takes as active a part as other Board members,
keeps, prepares and distributes the minutes and
follows up on every commitment anyone makes,
especially me. She is fastidious in her record
keeping. Lynne is my greatest champion and
most demanding critic. Nothing gets past her and
she holds NABS, me and everything we work on
to a very high standard. We deliberate together
in almost every important decision and then I
go out to the spotlight while she seeks a place in
the shadows where she will not miss anything.
If there is anything you like about the direction
NABS is taking since we got involved, please let
me assure you, no credit is due to me which is
not, at least in part, also due to Lynne.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all
the players on the NABS team, all the people I
mentioned here, all the members of the Board,
be they veterans or freshmen, all our members
who have the confidence to stay with us, all
our Affiliates who have given us so much
encouragement and all our friends especially
the past officers and Board members who did
so much for the best interest of our Society and
our bluebirds. I am sincerely conscious of the
dedication and commitment they made and the
challenges they faced. And most of all I want to
thank my best friend, my wife Lynne. Thank you.

Yours in peace,
Jonathan Ridgeway

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**Officials of North American Bluebird Society, Inc.**

**Executive Committee**
- Jonathan Ridgeway - President
- Brian Swanson - First Vice President (Affiliate Relations)
- Phil Berry - Second Vice President (Community Relations)
- Greg Beavers - Treasurer
- Lynne Ridgeway - Secretary

**Board of Directors**
- Bob Benson
- Tom Comfort
- Bernie Daniel
- Jimmy Dodson
- Sherry Linn
- Walter Mugdan
- Terry Neumeyer
- David Rutherford
- John Schuster
- Dan Sparks
- Anne Sturm
- Dick Tuttle
- Bet Zimmerman

**Bylaws Committee**
- Brian Swanson - Chair
- Bernie Daniel
- Walter Mugdan
- Lynne Ridgeway

**Education Committee**
- Terry Neumeyer - Chair
- Susan Balenger, PhD
- Tom Barber
- Kevin Berner
- Bernie Daniel, PhD
- Chris Desjardins, PhD
- Jimmy Dodson
- Donna Harris
- Christine Hill
- Howard Hill
- Rhitaban “Ray” Raychoudhury
- John Schuster
- Lynn Siefferman, PhD
- Julie Zickefoose
- Bet Zimmerman

**Finance Committee**
- Greg Beavers - Chair
- Bernie Daniel
- Dan Sparks
- Jimmy Dodson

**Hotline Committee**
- Bob Benson - Chair
- Barbara Chambers
- Bernie Daniel
- John Schuster
- Dan Sparks

**Journal Advisory Committee**
- Bernie Daniel
- Benjamin Leese
- Lynne Ridgeway
- Dick Tuttle

**Law Committee**
- Walter Mugdan - Chair

**Membership Committee**
- Sherry Linn - Chair
- Phil Berry
- Nancy Crawford
- Tena Taylor

**Nestbox Approval Committee**
- Bob Benson - Chair
- Tom Comfort
- Dan Sparks

**Nominating Committee**
- Bob Benson - Chair
- Bernie Daniel
- Maynard Sumner
- Brian Swanson

**Photography Committee**
- Maynard Sumner - Chair
- Carolyn (Mainprize) Sumner

**Grants Committee**
- Anne Sturm - Chair
- Bernie Daniel
- Sherry Linn

**Speakers Bureau Committee**
- Jimmy Dodson - Chair

**Technical Advisory Committee**
- Bernie Daniel
- Jimmy Dodson

**Website Committee**
- Jim McLochlin - Chair
- Dan Sparks

**Webmaster**
- Jim McLochlin

**Bluebird Managing Editor**
- Scott Gillihan
The most public and probably the most important face of NABS is our journal, Bluebird. Therefore, the NABS Board has been particularly deliberate in making choices about the new direction we want it to take and how we want it to grow. We postponed giving it any consideration until after the NABS 2007 convention in Athens, Georgia because we did want to permit that priority to be a distraction. However, we began giving the journal its due attention as soon as the convention was behind us. Thorough and systematic management techniques were applied to the process.

First there was research and analysis of high-level industry standards. Then a job description, qualifications, compensation, a memorandum of understanding, and a job posting were developed, reviewed for content and legality, and proposed to the Board for approval. It was determined along the way that the title of the contractor position we were aspiring to fill was that of the Bluebird Managing Editor, the BME. A new BME selection committee was established and authorized to perform their functions. A detailed schedule of the process was approved to include the duration of posting, review, consideration, preliminary selection, interviews, final selection, negotiation, signing of agreements, start date, and date of first issue.

Particular care was given to balance the need for excellence in writing and editorial skills with a background in birding, cavity-nesting birds and most especially bluebirds. In writing and editing, we sought the ability to serve a broad audience of scientists, citizen scientists, and backyard bluebirders who began their interest this season or more than 40 years ago. We wanted to find someone who could reestablish the stature of our publication as a scientific/academic journal which we enjoyed without relinquishing the interest of the breadth of our membership. For two months we posted the job notice on our own website as well as a variety of national job banks specializing in freelance writing and editing as well as nature and ornithology, etc. We received and considered eight well-qualified applications which were reviewed by the selection committee individually and in concert. It is likely that several of them were quite well suited to fulfill our need to meet an exemplary standard, but it is hard to imagine that any could exceed the excellence of the candidate who was selected.

That said, I am extremely proud and privileged to introduce to you NABS’ new Bluebird Managing Editor, Scott Gillihan.

While executing his duties as NABS’ new BME, Scott will continue to serve in the half-time position he currently holds as Executive Officer of American Ornithologists’ Union. The AOU is the oldest and largest organization in the Western Hemisphere that promotes the scientific study of birds and is also the organization that bestows official names on North American birds. In addition to his work with the AOU and NABS, Scott will also continue doing contract work with various conservation groups and consulting firms. In his spare time, Scott enjoys birding, hiking, gardening, spending time with family, and learning to play the didgeridoo, an exotic wind instrument of the indigenous people of northern Australia.

Scott is a wildlife biologist and birder. He developed his appreciation of the outdoors...
at an early age and his love of nature was fed by time spent in the “wilds” of suburban Denver and the nearby Rocky Mountains. The natural progression of his interest earned Scott a Bachelor’s degree in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University, some temporary positions for state and federal wildlife agencies, and then a Master’s degree in Zoology from University of Montana, where he studied the winter ecology of shrews.

Scott was hired as the Forested Ecosystems Program Coordinator by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), where his primary responsibility was to conduct research on birds and how they respond to natural and human-created changes in Rocky Mountain forests, and to provide information to the agencies responsible for managing the land. While he was doing that work he found that he enjoyed creating educational materials that bridge the gap between the scientific community and the general public. He helped create RMBO publications including “Sharing Your Land with Shortgrass Prairie Birds,” “Sharing the Land with Pinyon-Juniper Birds,” and “Pocket Guide to Prairie Birds.” He also researched and wrote a book, Bird Conservation on Golf Courses: A Design and Management Manual, in which bluebirds played a prominent role. In addition, during his 12 years with the observatory, Scott summarized research from scientific journals for collections such as the online resource known as OWL (Ornithological Worldwide Literature) and published articles in scientific journals and popular magazines.

The progressively responsible nature of Scott’s work at RMBO steered him beyond biology and education on to administrative duties. The excellence of his performance in that area led the Board of Directors to install him as their Acting Executive Director in 2003 and then to the permanent position of Executive Director in 2004. Scott also served for two years as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists.

In 2007, Scott and his wife relocated from Fort Collins, Colorado to Farmington, in the northwest corner of New Mexico, because of important family considerations. He will conduct his NABS business from his home office, where he may be easily contacted via his email address, NABSeditor@gmail.com. Hard-copy materials may also be forward to him if addressed to the NABS Bluebird Managing Editor, PO Box 43, Miamiville, Ohio 45147. We particularly invite the leaders of our Affiliate organizations, their journal editors, speakers bureaus, and education committees, to submit materials to Scott which they may consider suitable for our readership throughout North America. We would be especially interested in receiving academic and scientific research papers, and pleased to provide a forum for the international publication of students’ work. We would also be anxious to publish lessons about our Affiliates’ successful efforts which could be of value to any of the other organizations.

Scott has been instructed that his position affords him broad latitude for independent judgment and initiative. He will make essentially unrestricted choices regarding what specific material is to be published or not in any particular issue and he will serve at the pleasure of the Board. It was the Board who voted to grow from 24 to 32 pages, to go from essentially black and white to full color, and to begin to print our publication on paper which has a large proportion of post-consumer recycled content. As time passes, the Board may evaluate and adjust the approximate proportion of scientific/academic material vs. citizen scientist and lay person/backyard birder material, stories and anecdotes, etc., boilerplate and advertising. Together, we anticipate that NABS can look forward to some outstanding results.

Speaking on behalf of the Board and our approximately 3,000 NABS members, we welcome Scott to our family and are extremely confident that he will quickly become an invaluable member of our team and a valued asset in our organization.
Greetings to all NABS members! I can’t tell you how excited I am to be the editor of Bluebird. I am extremely grateful that the Board of Directors chose to entrust me with your wonderful publication. My thanks to everyone who made me feel so welcome at the convention in Kearney, and to outgoing editor Bernie Daniel and former editor Jim Williams, both of whom provided guidance and kind words to ease the transition and address my concerns about taking on this task.

Of course, by now you have noticed that this issue of Bluebird looks different. The NABS Board made the wise decision to go with a full-color publication, which will make the bluebirds in Bluebird that much more beautiful to see. I applaud the Board’s vision. I have also made some minor changes here and there—picking new fonts and tinkering with the layout and so on. I hope you like the results. Consider this to be a work in progress — I will continue to make refinements with each issue.

Please consider submitting materials — photographs, articles, stories, anything you think your fellow bluebirders would find enjoyable or educational. Photos or other images can be submitted as prints, but the preferred format is digital (JPEG, PSD, or TIFF), either by email or on a CD-ROM. Images that are large and/or have high resolution reproduce better, so aim for at least 3 inches on a side at 300 dpi (900 pixels). If you’re unsure about the resolution, send it to me for evaluation. Please include information about the artist or photographer, subject, and date. For written materials, the preferred submission format is electronic (MS Word, WordPerfect, or within the body of an email), but typed or hand-written manuscripts will also be accepted.

As editor, I intend to maintain a low profile. I’m just the messenger, trying to deliver the important messages about bluebirds and other cavity nesters. My goal is to provide a journal that is entertaining, informative, and beautiful. Please do not hesitate to offer comments or suggestions for improvement — this is your journal.
Introduction of the New NABS Chairman of Education

Jonathan Ridgeway

As I told you in my President’s Message, there have been quite a number of committee chairmanships we have been trying tirelessly to fill and of them the Education Committee Chairman’s position has been the greatest challenge of all. The workload and level of responsibility are staggering, as is the associated necessary degree of latitude for independent judgment and initiative. Just like our Bluebird Managing Editor (BME), the person who fills this position needs to be a self starter and a self finisher, a person who works well alone in formulating the activities of primary leadership and as a team player who knows what decisions need to be reported to the Board and officers for guidance, direction, and approval. Unlike the BME, he also needs to be a skilled supervisor, able to delegate tasks and responsibilities to all of the exceptional scholars and other highly skilled, learned, and potentially productive members of the Education Committee. We also wanted someone who has experience in preparing the nature of materials we are seeking to create and someone who has a significant background in birding and bluebirding. We believe that just such a person has been found.

I am proud and privileged to introduce to you one of our new members of the NABS Board of Directors who has also agreed to accept the assignment as the new Chairman of the NABS Education Committee, Terry Neumyer of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Terry retired after 37 years as a teacher of chemistry, physics, biology and ecology. He coached wrestling for 30 years, baseball for 20, track for 8 and cross-country for 11. He also served as junior high school athletic director for 24 years and organized women’s sports at the junior high level. In his spare time he organized a March for Parks that raised money for an environmental amphitheater at his Middle School and over $8,000 for computers and birding software for the Wildwood Nature Center in his home town of Harrisburg.

Terry has been a National Audubon Society member since the 1980s. He served as President of the Appalachian Audubon Society in 2001-2002 and as its program chairman for 10 years. He led several birding field trips for them and the club’s favorite was always the weekend trip to Cape May, New Jersey in May for Red Knots and warblers. Terry has served as a member docent for the Wetlands Institute of Stone Harbor, New Jersey, for many summers. He leads Sunday morning bird walks, Friday evening beach and astronomy walks, and a variety of marsh walks at the Institute and was an announcer on the inter-coastal birdwatching boat, “The Crusin-1.” Terry also assisted bird walks and Beginning Birder classes as a member of the Cape May Bird Observatory and used some of his own photographs in the beginners’ birding classes.

Terry was recently employed by the New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, to do 120 Point Surveys, specifically looking for birds of concern, threatened birds, and endangered wildlife and birds. In this study, Terry was fortunate enough to locate 53 individual birds that fit the three criteria. The NJ-DEP is working to enter the spots where they were sighted into their top priority list for protection. A year later, the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife Department hired Terry to conduct a wildlife inventory of the Peasley Wildlife Management Area, an 85,000-acre area which is part of the Pine Barrens and has many different habitats and a great variety of wildlife.

Terry regularly works as an assistant photography instructor for the Elderhostel at The Geneva Point Ecumenical Center in Moultonboro, New Hampshire where he organizes, leads trips, and teaches Elderhostel programs called “Beginning Birding,” “Natural History of New England,” and “Natural History for the Geneva Point Center.” Terry was also the South-Central PA Interfaith Coordinator of Climate Change Campaign for the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

Terry and his wife have done a great deal of traveling the past several years, visiting 30 states plus Washington DC, Puerto Rico, and five countries on three continents. Terry is a seriously experienced bluebirder and has a vast accumulation of knowledge and skills as a birding lecturer. Between those travels and his prior birding experiences he has amassed a USA life list of 711 birds and over 2,400 on his world list. Terry says he does not keep good track of his life birds but his Thayer software tells him the numbers if and when he gets the time to put his trip lists into the computer.

Terry has produced and organized lectures on more than sixty topics and has presented to audiences of all ages. He has also created more than fifty slide or PowerPoint presentation lectures comprised primarily of his own personal photographs, including many hours of materials pertaining to native cavity-nesting species. He clearly understands what audiences want to see and what lecturers want to present from his own personal observations and participation.

Terry has outstanding academic credentials suitable to the stature of this responsibility and he is eminently qualified due to his remarkable skill set, highly polished by years of challenging practical experience. Terry knows how to be a team player. He understands that his work will be an interactive team undertaking. He is personable and has outstanding leadership qualities. Terry is so eager and dedicated to this new mission that he inspires a most compelling assurance that we could not have made a better choice. An obvious example of his enthusiasm is the notice he already wrote for this edition of Bluebird in which he is already beginning to reach out for stories, pictures, and other work by and about children because they will be useful contributions for the first of the projects on which he is working.

It is my sincere hope that a great many of the people who read this message will do whatever they can to help Terry, the Education Committee, and the entire NABS organization achieve the most successful undertaking possible to provide our members, our Affiliates, and bluebirders all over the highest-quality package of educational materials about bluebirds and other cavity-nesters available anywhere. Thank you all for your participation and thanks for doing what you can to make Terry feel welcome.
Okay, admit it, maybe you’ve done it, at least once — petting or stroking a beautiful baby nestling. Or you are showing a nestbox to a child, and they ask if they can pet the babies. The nestlings sit quietly in the nest and seem almost tame. We feel close to them and love and care for them so — it’s like they are “ours.” And it’s amazing and tempting to get that close to a wild creature. Bluebirds (but not necessarily other cavity nesters) are remarkably tolerant of humans, and normal monitoring will not cause the parents to abandon the nest. But is petting baby birds a good idea?

I think there are several concerns.

• One is transmittal of disease, especially if you have pet birds you have handled, or if you are coming from checking another box where you touched nesting material or nestlings.

• Another is stress. Imagine how GARGANTUAN and alien we look to a bird. Yes, the babies may look calm, but is it because they are terrified and are instinctively pretending to be dead? Notice that the older babies are, the more likely they are to hunker down in the nest, pretending to be asleep or dead or trying not to attract attention.

• It can also stress out the parents, as they might think their babies are being attacked (although some parents are so used to monitoring they just observe). You wouldn’t want the parents to choose to nest elsewhere next time because of too much interference.

• Some folks might view it as a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act because it could be considered harassment (although lots of other things responsible bluebird landlords do, like changing out a nest when it is wet/infested with blowflies, could technically fall into this category).

• It’s harder to maintain an even temperature inside the box when it’s open. The babies could get chilled, especially younger nestlings that are unable to maintain a constant body temperature. The longer the box is open, the bigger the threat.

• Newborn nestlings are extremely fragile.

It is a gift that birds nest in the boxes we provide. They are wild creatures. They are not pets, and they are not really “ours” — we are just blessed with an opportunity to observe them. Their welfare should be our primary consideration. I know that responsible bluebird landlords would never want to harm or stress nestlings. Thus, I recommend minimizing any handling of babies. Conduct monitoring quickly but carefully.

Some bluebird monitors handle babies to protect their health and well being — e.g., to do a nest change, check for blowflies, remove an unhatched egg or dead nestling, or bring a bird to a rehabber. During these activities, it is best to put the bird(s) in a covered shoe box or paper grocery bag rolled shut at the top, with a paper towel on the bottom so they don’t slip. The darkness will help calm them. Of course it is also acceptable to handle young and adults for the purposes of banding.

On another note, it’s NOT a good idea to handle eggs unnecessarily! Eggs are so small and fragile that they can crack just from being picked up. Chickadee eggs can break if you just touch them lightly to see if they are warm or to count them. If a brooding female is picked up to count eggs, she may grab an egg with her feet and when it drops, it can break. The oil on our hands could prevent eggs from hatching (by interfering with respiration.)

I don’t mean to yell at anyone or make folks feel bad — I just want to provide some information and share my opinion for your consideration.

Visit www.sialis.org/monitoring for nestbox monitoring tips. For example, if you have a nest that’s high up or difficult to see inside of, Ace Hardware carries a great extendible auto inspection mirror that will allow you to see what’s going on inside the box.

May all your blues be birds!

Bet Zimmerman is a Certified Environmental Professional and a member of the local Conservation Commission. She maintains an educational website on small cavity nesters at www.sialis.org, and monitors several bluebird trails with about 80 boxes.
In the spring of 1994 a nest of Eastern Bluebirds was admitted to the Wildlife Care Center of the Blue Ridge. Some folks had been watching the nest box in their yard, and they noticed that the parents were no longer returning to the nest. They decided after 24 hours that they had better find help for these four helpless little treasures. Although I was a fledgling rehabilitator myself, this was my second or third nest of Eastern Bluebirds that I had raised, so I was feeling more confident about caring for them. When they arrived they were scared and tucked their little heads down and just lay flat so they wouldn’t be noticed. Their feathers had not quite popped out of the quills yet so they were pretty young. I had learned to mimic the bluebird song, so when I whistled the tune, their little heads popped up and opened wide! I fed them a mixture of mealworms, moths, and a baby bird formula made out of primarily kitten chow and other ingredients developed by other more experienced rehabilitators.

Little did I know that one of these little treasures would give me years of learning, friendship, and companionship.

When young bluebirds have adjusted to being in captivity with humans caring for them, they are very easy birds to care for, loads of fun, and oh so adorable. They are good and easy eaters, and close their mouths refusing to eat when they have had enough. Some other species will eat and eat until they are stuffed. Finches will eat until their crops are so full they appear to have a large goiter on the side of their neck and will still beg for more. Leona came with siblings who all grew up normally and were later released. From the nest, the babies fledged in a crab box (plastic aquarium), where they would start perching on the side of their nest then to a perch wedged inside. They would quickly graduate to a 10-gallon aquarium for a few days, then a 2’ x 3’ fledgie cage where they could fly a short distance and learn how to eat on their own. They still eat the formula, cat chow, mealworms, and fruit that we feed them, but they also begin to eat waxworms and moths that we collect around the outside lights on summer nights. When the babies see the movement of moths flying around their small cage, it stimulates their natural predatory instincts, and after a while they begin the chase. It’s so cute to watch them catch a moth for the first time and hold it in their beak, not quite sure knowing what to do with it. At first they just let it go; next time they keep it and just swallow it, and finally they figure out how to beat it on the perch and pinch it back and forth through their beak to kill it before swallowing it.

Sometimes one will be a particularly good hunter, and will quickly grab the first moths. It’s really cute when another will come over and try to steal it out of his beak. They always look so surprised, if you can imagine.

When the babies are picking up food on their own, they are ready for an outside flight cage, which is an 8’ x 8’ walk-in cage that is half covered with a roof where the birds can get out of the summer storms if they want. I have to watch them their first day out to see how they are navigating and getting around. If a storm comes at night, I sometimes go out and check to make sure they are under cover. Even though they are waterproof...
already, I just sometimes have that motherly protective instinct myself and want them to be safe their first few nights out in the flight. I will actually move them under cover as I worry that they can get drenched and cold from bad storms. Whether that is actually true is up for debate. At dusk when the babies find their roosting spot for the night, they all huddle together (unlike most other species), and when it turns dark I can hear them talking amongst themselves. It is adorable. It’s like they are discussing the days’ adventures and learning.

When the young bluebirds are confidently flying around, catching bugs in flight, and appropriately fearful of me and other humans, they are ready to be released into an area that has other Eastern Bluebirds. They may get chased out of the immediate area, but sometimes are accepted into the flock. I remember one time we put them back in the fledgie cages and traveled to the home of the folks who had brought them to me. They set them up on the back of their pickup truck in the back yard and went back in the house and watched while the babies got acquainted with their surroundings for a while. As they watched from their window they could see the local residents landing on the fledgie cages talking with the babies. I can only imagine what they were saying. After an hour or so, the folks would open the cage door and the babies would join the other bluebird family.

Leona never made it that far. When she was in the fledgie cage I noticed that she had a feather out of place on each wing, but with my relative inexperience I didn’t know that this would actually cause problems with her flight. The flight caging that we build for songbirds is lined with nylon screening so as not to damage their feathers if they crash into the sides of the hardware cloth exterior of the caging. Leona was actually climbing the screen rather than flying from perch to perch as her siblings were doing. I brought her back in and what I discovered was that not only were a few of her primary feathers out of place, but they were growing in a spiral direction and were twisting in circles as they grew. It was obvious that she had some genetic defect in some of her feather follicles. I kept her over the winter hoping that this problem would resolve itself and she would be released in the spring, but it wasn’t going to happen. She was permanently non-flighted. It made me so sad to bring her back in, while her siblings chased moths out in the flight cage and eventually were released.

When I first started presenting animals, like most other wildlife educators, I only used raptors. But as it became obvious that this young bluebird was not going to be releasable, I began to think of expanding my crew of ambassadors to include songbirds. I named her Leona because she had a fiery strong personality and would not share her caging with any other birds, including her own species. After getting her on my permit, I began to show her in a parakeet cage. It didn’t seem right as it seemed too much like showing a pet bluebird rather than teaching about the importance of bluebirds for our ecosystems. I approached a frame company who had won awards for their shadowbox frames, and together we devised a portable three-sided Plexiglas songbird display with a light on top and a background photo of a field with flowers. After using it for about a year with Leona and another male bluebird, named Sialis, I presented the displays at the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Symposium. Because of this presentation, the other regions that had previously not allowed the use of songbirds in outreach programs now would allow this practice if the educators would build this type of display to present with.

Leona was a great presenter and took her job seriously. We would design the cage each time with plants and greenery to make it appear like a real habitat, and during the presentations I would drop crickets into the display and she would

Little did I know that one of these little treasures would give me years of learning, friendship, and companionship.
catch them, and beat them on her perch before swallowing them down. She never got nervous or stressed unless a big dog put his face up to the display window, or she saw a predator in the sky. Kids loved the fact that they could see this small bird up close. While the raptors were beautiful and grand, they still had a certain level of threat to their appearance. Leona was not a threat at all, and would display her normal bluebird behavior for the kids every time.

We have had many years together with travels and adventure. She would sometimes go on long trips with me in my truck to Wisconsin where my family lives. Leona loved long rides. She enjoyed looking out the window, and if she saw a hawk in the sky she would belt out her alarm call. I remember driving down the Lake Shore Drive in Chicago and when we got to Lake Michigan, she gave me her alarm call as she had never seen a bath tub as large as that! Her cage was situated in our dining area right at a window overlooking the bird feeder out back, so she could see all the species of birds, squirrels, and predators around the feeder area. She was the sentry for the bird feeder, and when she saw a predator, she would alarm the prey animals and they would scatter when they heard her call. In the zoo world this is called enrichment, where an animal has opportunities to behave in their normal behaviors in the wild by being provided stimulation. Maybe this is the reason for her long life. She was used to our cats and dogs, and they knew that she was off limits to even stare at, or else!

The Wildlife Care Center of the Blue Ridge was a home-based rehab center on the edge of the Linville Gorge Wilderness Area in Jonas Ridge, North Carolina, where I live with my husband, our dogs, cats, and many wild animals. Some are being rehabilitated, while others are permanent non-releasable animal ambassadors who serve to educate thousands of people every year through outreach wildlife presentations. We live deep in a deciduous forest close to 4,000ft elevation, which is not prime bluebird territory. Five years ago we moved the center to Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina, where the wildlife rehabilitation program is a concentration in the biology degree, and students actually care for the animals who are admitted for rehabilitation. Leona is not a part of that program. She is retired from programs and stays in our living room at home. She can no longer see the birds at the feeder as she has cataracts in both eyes and sees very little. She takes two baths a day, and eats all the crickets and mealworms I will give her. I have another male nearby named Chattie (he talks non-stop), who provides her with bluebird conversation. He is now the one who goes out on presentations. Leona is an old friend to me, and I treasure our experiences over the years together. What a wonderful friend and teacher she has been. If she makes it to this June (which I expect), she will be 14 years old!

Nina Fischesser is a wildlife rehabilitator, educator, and director of the Blue Ridge Wildlife Institute at Lees-McRae College where she works with 600-800 injured wildlife annually, mostly avian species.
I’ve been watching and photographing Eastern Bluebirds in my yard for more than thirty years. The last ten of those, I’ve been offering mealworms and have had so much fun with these little blue angels.

While fixing my hair one morning, I happened to look out the bathroom window to see two male bluebirds plummeting to the ground. Bluebirds have nested in my yard for years and I’ve seen a few squabbles here and there... but this is the first time I witnessed a fight that lasted for SIX MINUTES! I like to let nature take its course and so I grabbed the camera to capture this “first” for me... shooting three frames per second out the upstairs window. These birds would not give it up! I finally went outside and broke up the fight by walking very close to them. And they took it to the field next door!

I’ve never seen this kind of fight in all my experience and thought it would be good to document. I took about 200 photos! Many people think the gentle bluebird of happiness has no survival skills—this sure proves they can fight! If you’d like to see more pictures of their encounter here is the link: http://barbi.smugmug.com/gallery/4686600_nHH3.

Barbara Dunn is the Pennsylvania Field Editor for Birds & Blooms Magazine and posts her photographs of the natural world online at http://barbi.smugmug.com.
“Feeding live insects to the wild birds in my yard has helped me build a special bond with individual birds.”

–Julie Zickefoose
Donate Stock to NABS and Save Money on Your Taxes

Jonathan Ridgeway

The first and most important thing you need to understand before you read this article is that I am not a tax professional. While the information I am sharing with you here is certainly offered in good faith, I truly urge anyone who cares to help NABS with this program to speak to their own professional tax advisor to be assured that they understand the actual ramifications.

About the Program
If you buy a stock, bond, mutual fund, or other security and later sell it for a profit, you have to pay Federal income tax on the gain, but there is a very important incentive that can save you a lot of money and provide a wonderful benefit to NABS. If you buy that stock or other security, keep it for at least one year while the price goes up and then give it to NABS which is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, then you do not have to pay tax on the gain, plus you get to deduct the full market value from your taxes as an itemized charitable contribution.

Donate Stock & Become a NABS Life Member
This example focuses specifically on NABS Life Membership at the current rate of $500. If someone bought several shares of stock a long time ago or even just a year ago or more, and its current value is at least $550, they can donate them to NABS and not have to pay tax on the gain. Say they bought that stock for $50. If they were in a 25% bracket the tax on that $500 earnings would be $125 that they would not have to pay, plus they would save another $125 for their charitable contribution because they get to deduct the full appreciated value of the stock from their gross income, a double win for the giver and a great win for NABS and the bluebirds; the money goes directly into our Zeleny Endowment Fund where it can do the most good.

Normally when you sell stock, you pay a fee based on the number of shares, the total value of the transaction, and usually a premium if you are selling lots of less than 100 shares of each company’s issue. NABS has negotiated a very favorable arrangement with a particular trader who has agreed to sell small odd lots, regardless of the number of shares, for a fixed rate of $50 per transaction. That is why the stock value needs to be at least $550 to meet the value of the Life Membership, $500 for NABS and $50 for the agent. By the way, if your stock is worth less than $550, you may pay the balance to bring the total up to that amount to qualify for the Life Membership.

Limitations for the Most Generous Benefactor
We at NABS think of a $500 gift as extremely generous and we appreciate every contribution we receive, no matter how small it may be. Nonetheless, I would like to explain one of the limitations of this tax incentive, just in case there might be an incredibly generous benefactor who wanted to donate an enormous sum to NABS or any other charity or group of charities. You are not permitted to deduct stock donations in an amount greater than 30 percent of your adjusted gross income, except that any excess deductible amount can be carried over for as long as five years to offset income or capital gains taxes.

If you care to participate in this program, please contact NABS Treasurer Greg Beavers at (812) 824-2431. He will call you back with the necessary details. Before embarking on these types of gifts, please consult with your attorney or tax advisor to determine the actual current impact on your own personal income tax situation. Thank you for your generous consideration.
NABS Education Committee is Looking for Material

Have some interesting photographs, stories, or activities involving bluebirds? The NABS Education Committee is soliciting materials from, or for, preteens for inclusion in our future publication of educational materials on bluebirds, bluebird trails, and/or tales and adventures of preteens in bluebird-related activities. This could include photographs, stories (fiction or non-fiction), and interesting anecdotes about kids for kids. The NABS publications will be in the form of CD-ROMs, paperbacks, handouts, and other educational materials to promote learning and the involvement of youngsters in bluebird and other bird-worthy activities.

At the moment, we are looking for materials for elementary students, to be followed soon by collection of materials directed toward adolescent education. Credit for all materials will be given to the person or persons who produced and/or submitted them. Once the material is received by NABS it will be considered for use in NABS publications. Materials may be submitted in hard copy or electronic format on CD. No materials will be returned, so please do not send originals. If your materials have been published before, please include reprint permission from the company who used your materials previously.

Respectfully yours,
Terry Neumyer
NABS Education Chairman
PO Box 43, Miamiville, Ohio 45147
The North American Bluebird Society annually recognizes individuals and groups who have made major contributions to bluebird conservation. The following 2008 awards were presented on March 8, 2008 at the 30th Annual Meeting in Kearney, Nebraska.

Carol LaPres
Muskegon, Michigan

*Lifetime Achievement - Bluebird Conservation*

Carol and Bob’s involvement with Bluebirds started in 1966 and flourished in 1976 with ten boxes. Their first ten boxes were vandalized within days of installation. They knew they had to educate. Countless hours were spent over the years educating youth, volunteering at nature centers, coordinating and presenting workshops for the DNR, civic groups and schools. Having boxes in so many locations, Carol has gotten volunteers in place to help monitor the continuous growth and patterns of bluebird populations. With forty years of experience and 165 nestboxes Carol has fledged over 9,000 bluebirds, 6,000 Tree Swallows and 3,000 chickadees. Carol has been a long time member of NABS and promotes the organization with every opportunity.

Greg and Terry Tellier
Penticton, British Columbia

*John & Nora Lane Award - Bluebird Conservation*

The team of Greg and Terry started their small trail in the early 1990s. They attended their first NABS convention in 1998 in Regina, Saskatchewan. They were instrumental in planning and implementing the NABS 2002 Silver Anniversary convention in Penticton, British Columbia. Greg constructed a portable display that would travel around the province and the United States to educate individuals about native cavity-nesting species and promote bluebird conservation. The display has visited 3-4 NABS conferences over the years. In 2005, Greg and Terry purchased property at Osprey Lake where they began developing a small fishing resort with cabins and camping. They have a whole new group of residents and vacationers they have been introducing to bluebirds. Greg and Terry are current members of the North American Bluebird Society. Their message is to spread the “Bluebird Word”.

Bluebird 20 Summer 2008
Bet Zimmerman  
Woodstock Valley, Connecticut  
*John & Nora Lane Award - Bluebird Conservation*

Bet observed her first Eastern Bluebird in 1998 and was hooked after that first flash of blue. Bet and husband Doug have established several trails totaling 70 boxes. Bet is a life member of NABS. She maintains an educational website about bluebirds and small cavity-nester conservation at www.sialis.org. Its purpose is to provide open access to accurate, comprehensive information to anyone interested in cavity-nesters. The website covers history, resources, activities for children, feeding and plantings, myths, nest and egg identification, nest box styles pros and cons, predator control, starting and monitoring a trail, supplies, photos, videos, and more. From 2002-2007 Bet fledged 616 native birds including 154 Eastern Bluebirds.

Aldo Leopold Audubon Society  
Stevens Point, Wisconsin  
*Lawrence Zeleny Award - Bluebird Conservation*

In 2001, the society had 620 members and began a trail with 89 boxes. The first year they had an occupancy rate of 50%, fledging 188 bluebirds. In 2002 they introduced an “Adopt A Box” program that in four years generated $6,080 for the society to expand their trails. In 2006, they achieved a 92% occupancy rate and in six years fledged 9,526 bluebirds. This year they will have 928 boxes in place for native cavity-nesting birds. Kent Hall is the coordinator of their bluebird project. This award was accepted by Pat Ready on behalf of the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society.

Jim McLochlin  
Omaha, Nebraska  
*Mary Janetatos Award Distinguished Service*

Jim became active in bluebirding as a volunteer at the local nature center in Omaha in 1986. In 1991 he began participating and discussing bluebirds on internet news groups. In 1992 he created one of the first bluebirding web sites, “The Bluebird Box” (http://audubon-omaha.org/bbbox/index.htm), the goal of the site being to make bluebirding resources available to as many people as are interested. Over the years Jim has maintained or started web sites for six NABS affiliates. Jim has served as a past board member and is a life member of NABS. He currently serves as the webmaster of the North American Bluebird Society’s website at www.nabluebirdsociety.org. Jim was instrumental in implementing web-based data collection for the Transcontinental Bluebird Trail (TBT).
Tony Dohmen  
Norfolk, Nebraska  
**Individual Award - Bluebird Conservation**

Tony promotes bluebirds in four counties in east central Nebraska. He coordinates at least ten workshops per year since 2004 resulting in approximately 200 new members for NABS’s affiliate organization, Bluebirds Across Nebraska (BAN). Tony fledges in excess of 800 bluebirds per year on his trails totaling 170 boxes. Tony’s great admiration for bluebirds and his people skills are great assets to the area. Tony is a current member of the North American Bluebird Society.

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Bob Walshaw  
Coweta, Oklahoma  
**Commendable Service in the Field of Bluebird Conservation**

Oklahoma master naturalist Bob Walshaw maintains a 100-box trail in rural areas surrounding Coweta, Oklahoma and has been “bluebirding” for fifteen years. He routinely fledges over 300 bluebirds per year. Bob’s thirty-plus presentations per year reach in excess of 1,000 individuals. He aggressively promotes House Sparrow control and is open to new ideas to improve his trail results. Bob is very involved on the All Experts web site lending educational advice to all that inquire. He is a current NABS member and is on the Speakers Bureau. He actively shares his knowledge of bluebirds with schools, garden clubs, and retired/service groups.

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Pauline Tom  
Mountain City, Texas  
**President’s Recognition Award**

As former Membership Chair and with the work of her committee, NABS’s membership was increased 43% during 2006 to 2007 to a new level of 2,065 memberships. Pauline assisted in creating and initiating the “Please Come Back” campaign to re-attract those in the NABS database who have expired memberships. She was influential in motivating the Board to make a major contribution from the general fund into the NABS Zeleny Endowment Fund, which now has a balance that exceeds $124,000. Pauline maintains a trail in her home area and is very active in the management of the Texas Bluebird Society.
Judy Guinan was introduced to bluebirding while she was a graduate student at the University of Georgia. In 1994, she established two study sites with over 100 nest boxes around Flagstaff, Arizona for her dissertation work on Western Bluebird reproductive behavior. She quickly became addicted to observing these beautiful birds. Over the course of her four-year project, she witnessed the successful completion of 109 new Western Bluebird families, as well as a number of successful Mountain Bluebird, Pygmy Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Mountain Chickadee nests. In 2000, she co-authored the Western Bluebird account of the Birds of North America series with Patty Gowaty and Elsie Eitzroth. The updated version of that account will be available online in 2008. She is now an Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the Environmental Center at Radford University in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia. By necessity, her passion for Western Bluebird watching is now from afar but she is partnering with some colleagues from Radford University and the Virginia Bluebird Society and soon hopes to be active in bluebird work once again, this time with the eastern branch of the genus.

North American Bluebird Society Awards 2009

Do you know of an individual, group, or business that deserves to be recognized for their outstanding contributions to bluebird conservation? If so, we want to hear from you! Please submit a NABS award nomination form by August 15, 2009. The 2009 Awards will be presented during the 2009 NABS Convention, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Bluebird Society in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, September 30 - October 4, 2009.

Visit the NABS website (www.nabluebirdsociety.org) to complete the nomination form online, or download a copy to fill out and mail to us.
Not Your Nestbox:  
Convincing Someone to Monitor  
Bet Zimmerman  

**Question:** Any advice on how to get a neighbor who has boxes up to monitor them? I offered to do it for her, but she didn’t seem interested even in that.

**Suggestions:** Bluebird nestboxes should be monitored at least once a week, preferably every 4-5 days. However, some people with nestboxes seldom, if ever, check or maintain them. Do try to learn why they don’t want to monitor the box or have you monitor it, as this may help you figure out the best approach. Here are some ideas:

1. Let them know you are collecting data to report to a bluebirding organization (whichever one you report to) and maybe they will let you monitor it for them, as part of a bluebird trail. Some folks get excited about participating in a citizen-scientist project.

2. Give them a brief flyer (example at www.sialis.org/handout.htm) that provides more information about why monitoring is important.

3. Reassure them that it is okay to monitor, as long as it is done carefully and correctly. Many people are afraid that birds will abandon the box if they check it. They do not realize that bluebirds are very tolerant of monitoring. Others are terrified of getting attacked (e.g., by swooping Tree Swallows).

4. Chat with them about what happens in boxes that are not monitored. For example, wood can rot or separate, allowing chilling rain to wet nestlings. House Sparrows may attack and destroy eggs, nestlings, and incubating adults. House Wrens may fill up boxes with dummy nests, making them unavailable. Paper wasps or fire ants can invade boxes, preventing nesting altogether, driving parents away, or killing babies. Squirrels may chew and enlarge entrance holes that then allow starlings and other predators access to eggs or babies. Snakes and raccoons can raid nests, eating eggs and young. Mice can take over boxes. (However, try to avoid panicking them, as we can all learn to deal with these challenges.) If they love birds, hopefully they will want to see them successfully rear young that actually live to fledge.

5. Talk to them about how it will impact YOUR boxes if theirs are not monitored (the guilt trip.) For example, if House Sparrows breed in THEIR boxes, they may attack and kill eggs, nestlings, and adult native birds nesting in YOUR boxes. Give them the House Sparrow advisory flyer at www.sialis.org/neglect.htm.

6. If you really like them, “gift” them a book on bluebirds to get them interested (if you think they’ll read it). Zickefoose and Stokes both wrote great short booklets. *The Bluebird Monitor’s Guide* is for more serious folks, but has great photos.

Checking a nestbox regularly allows the host to address problems. A box with a cracked roof allows rainwater to enter, chilling and possibly killing nestlings. An entrance hole enlarged by woodpeckers or squirrels is an invitation to predators and starlings.
and is chocked full of interesting information. *Bluebirds Forever* by Toops is pricier but has lovely photos and is sort of chatty. Giving them such a nice present might also make them feel guilty enough to either monitor themselves or let you do it.

6. Ask them along one day as you walk your trail, so they can see what you’re doing and what a monitor might find that needs to be addressed. They can also experience firsthand the excitement of opening a box to find that first egg or newborn nestlings.

But be prepared for the reality that there will still be some folks who absolutely refuse to do anything, including cleaning out the box once a year.

Bet Zimmerman is a Certified Environmental Professional and a member of the local Conservation Commission. She maintains an educational website on small cavity nesters at www.sialis.org, and monitors several bluebird trails with about 80 boxes.
A great big THANK YOU to these NABS Sponsors!

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<td><strong>Anonymous</strong></td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silver Level (at least $1,000)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Droll Yankees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>George Petrides</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wild Bird Centers of America</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Wild Birds Unlimited</strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bronze Level (at least $500)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature’s Way</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunshine Mealworms</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Texas Bluebird Society</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ellis Bird Farm</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Anonymous                      |
| **Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project** |
| **Grubco**                     |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True Blue Level (at least $250; available only to NABS Affiliates)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Carolina Bluebird Society</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virginia Bluebird Society</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York State Bluebird Society</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Indiana Bluebird Society**                                 |
| **Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society**                |
| **Southern California Bluebird Club**                      |
The North American Bluebird Society serves as a clearinghouse for ideas, research, management and education on behalf of all bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting species. NABS invites all state, provincial, and regional bluebird organizations to become NABS affiliates in a confederation of equals all working together toward a common goal, a further partnership in international bluebird conservation. No cost is associated with affiliating with NABS. Your affiliated organization will be recognized and listed on the NABS web site and in Bluebird. If your organization has a newsletter, please forward a copy to our headquarters. To find out more about becoming a NABS affiliate, read our Affiliate Letter. Notice: If you are listed below, please check listing to see if it is current. If not, please contact web@nabluebirdsociety.org with correct information.

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bluebird@creb.com

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www.ellisbirdfarm.ab.ca

*Mountain Bluebird Trails Conservation Society*  
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**British Columbia**

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**Colorado**

*Colorado Bluebird Project*

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Summer 2008  
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