

# TEXAS Blues



The Newsletter of the Texas Bluebird Society • Volume 7, Issue 2

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Register by June 15th for the Summer Bluebird Symposium and receive this Kathy Adams Clark photo!

## TBS President Pauline Tom Receives 2008 NABS President's Award

By Mary Leyendecker

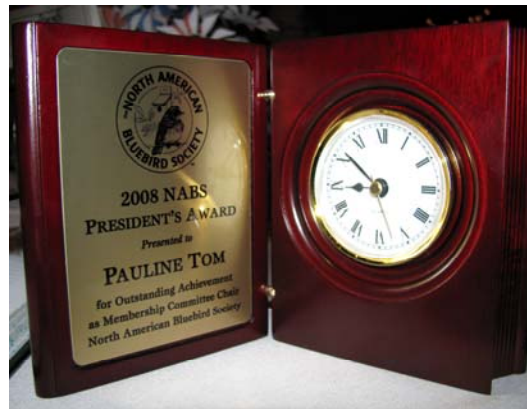
Pauline Tom blissfully accepted the 2008 President's Award from Jonathan Ridgeway, president of the North American Bluebird Society, during the March 2008 NABS convention in Kearney, Nebraska.

Pauline and Ron drove from Mountain City, Texas, straight up I-35 into Nebraska and turned left to Kearney, some 16 hours through snowstorms, to attend.



Pauline Tom speaking at award ceremony. Photo by Ron Tom.

"What a pleasure it was for me to serve as NABS' Membership Chair. I had fun developing and implementing plans to attract new members, bring back past members, and retain current members. Best of all, the flood of income from memberships revitalized a dear-to-my heart stagnant project, the funding of the Larry Zeleny Endowment Fund. The fund will underwrite special Board-approved projects and grants, now that the principal exceeds \$100,000," she said.



The plaque reads: 2008 NABS President's Award Presented to Pauline Tom for Outstanding Achievement as Membership Committee Chair North American Bluebird Society. Photo by Bet Zimmerman.

Pauline, succeeded by Sherry Linn as chair, is looking forward to refocusing on TBS' action plans.

# My Bluebirds of Unhappiness

By Nancy Nichols

**Four years ago** I was sitting in the living room of my lake house in East Texas when a pair of bluebirds landed on my fence. My heart leapt with joy. You see, I'd been waiting patiently to become a bluebird monitor, or in my case, mother. I'd done all the research: I'd bought the proper house and baffle. I'd studied the wind and weather patterns of my property and adjusted the house opening to face southeast to avoid the storms that tended to come from the northwest. And most important, I'd bought an ornate mealworm feeder so that my bluebirds wouldn't have to worry about foraging for food.

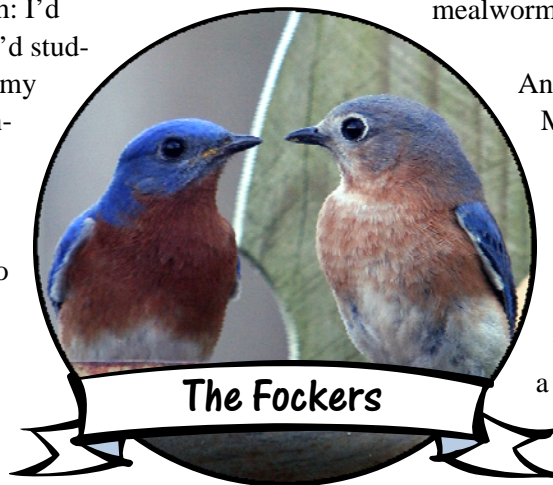
How perfect it all seemed to be. For there before my very eyes, just weeks after completing my setup, a pair of house-hunting bluebirds had landed on my fence. They spent the afternoon flying in and out of the house, taking turns checking it out. Within an hour they brought beaks full of pine needles and began building their nest. My three-year love affair with Bill and Hillary, my bluebirds of happiness, had begun.

Our first year together was a learning experience. But we managed three broods and graduated six new additions to the world of bluebirds. Bill and Hillary disappeared for the winter, but I kept my mealworm supply steady, imagining them flying in for a few when I wasn't looking.

The next March they returned, and we had a successful year hatching a total of eight healthy birds from three broods. My mealworm bill approached the national debt. Given their quality of life, I wasn't surprised when the happy couple decided to winter on my property. They flew to the house at the sight of my car. They appeared within seconds of my whistle. We were bonded, an extended family.

During our third season together, we literally weathered a lot of storms. When heavy rains blew sideways and leaked into their nest, I carefully removed the eggs, wrapped them in a warm towel, dried the nest, and replaced it. They thanked me with four bountiful broods.

During the off season, "we" made plans to remodel. I installed a new house made from recycled plastics, built to deflect water, mold, and bacteria. I bought a longer baffle. After completing the remodel, I upped my order on mealworms. And I waited.



And waited. January, February, and March 2008 came and went. I whistled every time I replenished the mealworm feeder. No sign of Bill or Hillary or any other bluebird.

Then one evening I heard the unmistakable, soft *tur-a-lee-tur-a-lee* call of a male bluebird. I grabbed my binoculars and headed through the trees. To my horror I found Bill standing on top of my neighbor's 15-year

old dilapidated purple martin house. My first thought was that they were on their way home to my house. But my worst nightmare was confirmed when Hillary came flying out of the house and I heard the squeals of their newest brood coming from the open sides of the house. They'd chosen a tear down over the new digs I'd spent a fortune on. I was so angry I considered grabbing a ladder and plugging up the hole. On sight, I renamed them The Fockers.

“ My frequent foragers have been a constant fixture on my fence for two weeks. They are all fat as turkeys. ”

To make matters worse, they started returning to my yard to load up on mealworms. They spent whole afternoons sunning on the wires in front of my house, singing and waving their wings, and bathing in my bird bath before flying back to their pitiful dwelling.

One morning I looked out to find five bluebirds on the wire waiting for me to make my hourly contribution to the mealworm feeder. The Fockers were there with three

baby boys that became Larry, Curly, and Moe. My frequent foragers have been a constant fixture on my fence for two weeks. They are all fat as turkeys.



Above: The three young fledglings known as Larry, Curly, and Moe spend most of the day squatted in my mealworm feeder. Previous page: Meet The Fockers, my philandering pair of bluebirds. Photos by Nancy Nichols.

Mrs. Focker is back in the wretched house sitting on another batch of eggs. I can't see how many, but Mr. F. is shuttling worms from my yard back to the cruddy house next door.

But hark! This afternoon he flew to the hole of the recycled plastic house and popped inside. My heart jumped at the thought that they would make a mid-season move. He flew out, landed on the top and looked around as if pondering the thought. Then he dropped down to the worms squirming in the feeder, loaded up another batch, and flew away like a FedEx delivery man who is running behind on a delivery.

I went out to the front yard to do what I do best: keep the mealworm feeder full and wait.

**About Nancy Nichols:** After many years of bird watching, Nancy built a small cabin in East Texas where she raises bluebirds. In her spare time, she is the Food & Travel editor for D Magazine in Dallas.

## Special Thanks to...

New member Matt Jordan for ferrying nestboxes from Kyle to Carmine and new member Lucinda Owen for ferrying nestboxes from Carmine to The Woodlands for one of Linda Crum's presentations.

Richard & Ann Thames for providing a ferry stopover.

"One Nestbox" local coordinators and their team of volunteers for recent festivals:

- Lysle Mockler, Ellis County Lawn & Garden Expo.
- Linda Crum, The Woodlands Earth Day, with Bill Griffith, Vanessa Voisinet, Bill Jones, and Betsy Jones.
- David Gwin, College Station/Bryan Earth Day, with Ron & Pauline Tom, Jackie & Alexis Girouard, and Brazos Valley Audubon members.
- Barb Ohlman, Wills Point Bluebird Festival, with Bruce & Bev Frantz, Linda & Robert Almes, Lysle Mockler, Scott Strickland, and Norm Shoemaker.
- Pauline Tom, Smithville Wildlife Expo, with Ron Tom.

Presenters who offered our signature "One Nestbox" membership nestbox exchange at one of their programs: Judy Hetherington, LeAnn Sharp, Linda Crum, and Pauline Tom.

Mary Leyendecker, past TBS Board Member, who accepted the position of TBS Website Editor. Mary adds updates to the website between newsletters.

Julie Vaughn, Van Zandt Publications editor, for printing material from TBS in the annual "Bluebird News," which promotes the Wills Point Bluebird Festival.

Wills Point Bluebird Festival Committee for providing TBS with a large space at the entrance to the festival.

TBS Ambassador (Keller) Barb Ohlman and new member Jan Bills for creating new member packets.

Marie Woodward at the Kerrville Convention and Visitor's Bureau for donating plastic clip-on name badges (the supply they sent for NABS 2006 finally ran out).

Former member, Barbara Vinson (now renewed!) who agreed to monitor the nestbox trail at Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory (HBBO) in Austin. The trail was installed in 2001 by TBS in a joint project with Travis Audubon Society and HBBO. Barbara and Travis Audubon Society donated funds for replacing some nestboxes, and Barbara donated attractive waterproof signage. She reports her weekly visits to NestWatch ([www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org)).





# 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Bluebird Symposium and Silent Auction

**Saturday, August 16, 2008**  
 8203 Millennium Forest Dr. • The Woodlands, TX 77381  
 (just west of The Woodlands High School off Research Forest Dr.)

## Program Features

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Silent Auction Opens. Sign-in & Registration
- 8:15 a.m. Optional tour of Garden and Pond
- 8:45 – 10:45 a.m. Installation of nestbox
  - LeAnn Sharp: Bluebird Basics
  - Pauline Tom: Bluebird habits unique to Texas
  - Jennifer & Johnny Fleming: Growing Mealworms
- 10:45 a.m. – Noon
  - Kathy Adams Clark, Professional Photographer, KAC Productions: Photographing Birds
- 12:15 p.m. **Lunch**
  - Diana Foss, Wildlife biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife: Creating a Habitat for Bluebirds
  - Pauline Tom: Reporting nesting with NestWatch
  - Pauline Tom: Controlling Predators
  - Linda Crum: Controlling House Sparrows

Eastern Bluebird  
 by Kathy Adams Clark  
 (bonus gift for early registrants)



## Lunch Menu

Each of the following comes with potato chips, pickle spear and brownie.

- All Star**  
 A Traditional Sandwich with Lettuce, Tomato and a Meat.  
 Choice of Ham or Turkey Breast.
- Veggie Wrap**  
 Tomatoes, Lettuce, Pico de Gallo, Cheese, Sour Cream and Avocados.  
 Served with Salsa on the Side.

## Registration

Registrant #1 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name for NameTag \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail if you wish to be contacted with updates \_\_\_\_\_  
**Lunch** (Select One):  All Star with Ham  All Star with Turkey Breast  Veggie Wrap

Registrant #2 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name for NameTag \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail if you wish to be contacted with updates \_\_\_\_\_  
**Lunch** (Select One):  All Star with Ham  All Star with Turkey Breast  Veggie Wrap

Registrant # (Please Circle)	Description	Cost
1	Member	\$12
1	New Member*	\$12
1	Non-Member	\$22
<b>Total Due:</b>		

\* If you would like to join TBS, you may register as a "TBS New Member", and receive the discounted symposium rate. We will also reserve a complimentary nestbox for you. Please pay for your TBS Household Membership separately by bringing a \$15 check or money order to the event.

**Early Bird Registration BONUS:** Register by July 1 and receive a complimentary 5 x 7 photograph of an Eastern Bluebird by Kathy Adams Clark (shown on this flier).

**Pre-registration required for lunch.** Must be postmarked by August 5.

**At-the-Door Registration (no lunch):** Subtract \$5.00

**Contact Linda Crum, Symposium Coordinator, for more info:**  
 txorganicgardener@gmail.com or 281.292.4193

**Mail Registration forms with payment made out to "Texas Bluebird Society" to:**  
 Linda Crum, 9 Crescent Falls Ct., The Woodlands, TX 77381-2633

If you would like to donate items for the Silent Auction, please send them to the address above. The IRS recognizes TBS as a 501c3 "charitable" organization.



## Upcoming Events

**June 14, 2008**

**Blueberry Festival**, Nacogdoches

Norm Shoemaker, [otaybuckwheat@sbcglobal.net](mailto:otaybuckwheat@sbcglobal.net)

**August 16, 2008**

**Summer Bluebird Symposium**, The Woodlands

Linda Crum, [txorganicgardener@gmail.com](mailto:txorganicgardener@gmail.com)

**October 3, 2008**

**TBS Annual Meeting**, Mountain City

Pauline Tom, [ptom5678@gmail.com](mailto:ptom5678@gmail.com)

**October 4 & 5, 2008**

**Texas Parks & Wildlife EXPO**, Austin

Ann Thames, [semahta@yahoo.com](mailto:semahta@yahoo.com)

**October 11, 2008**

**Texas Master Naturalists Workshop**, Mason

Brian & Judy Hetherington, presenters

### **Volunteers Wanted!**

We need volunteers for each "One Nestbox" booth. Contact the coordinator if you will help. No experience or knowledge necessary!

If you'd like to serve as local coordinator for a "One Nestbox" booth at a festival in your area, please contact Pauline Tom.

## Barb Ohlman's "Big Thank You"

*Wills Point Bluebird Festival coordinator Barb Ohlman sent the following email to the volunteers who helped staff the booth for the event.*

Hello Bluebirders,

This time last week we were working at the Bluebird Festival and helping make the day a success for the Texas Bluebird Society.

The day ended with 33 new members and 2 renewals. These number were over and above the average for the last 2 years. Without your help, I'm sure a lot of opportunities would have been missed. Because you were there, I was able to take the Bluebird Bus Tour and report back to the Board with details. Because you were there, things were easier for all of us. But most important, because of you new members were introduced to getting started in "bluebirding." I thank you, the Board thanks you, and the bluebirds thank you.

I hope to see you all again at another Festival soon. For those of you interested, there is the Texas Blueberry Festival in Nacogdoches on June 14th, which Norm Shoemaker coordinates.

Don't forget the TBS Annual Meeting & Dinner on October 3rd in Austin—a chance to meet other TBS members. TBS will have a booth at The Texas Parks and Wildlife EXPO the following two days, Saturday & Sunday.

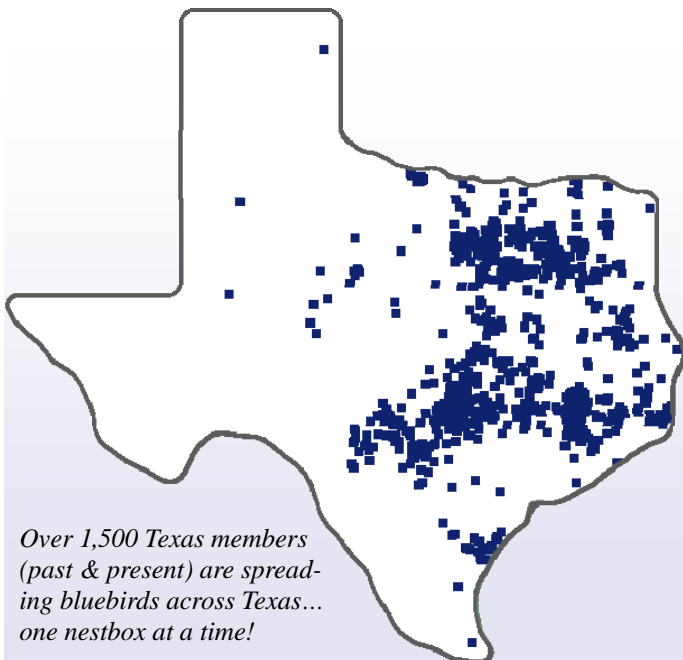
Happy Bluebirding,  
Barb Ohlman

## Nature's Niche Nestbox: Deathtrap!

TBS member Vanessa Voisinnet alerted us about the dangerous-for-bluebirds Nature's Niche nestbox at Wal-Mart. She notes, "What was strange about the box is that it had a seal from NABS."

NABS Nestbox Approval Chair Bob Benson explained: "The box...has so completely deviated from the original NABS-approved design as to make unfit for ANY cavity nesting bird!! We at NABS are aware of this problem and are currently investigating our legal options. I recommend that you return this box and demand an immediate refund as it is nothing more than a Bluebird deathtrap!!"

## TBS Texas Membership Map



Chad Adams  
 Jack & Pat Aitken  
 Sharon Alaimo  
 Martha Allen  
 Norm Ankenman  
 Jennifer Armentrout  
 Anita Ashford  
 Michael & Marie Averitt  
 Marline Ballard  
 George Barber  
 Mike Barrett  
 Rachel Bauer  
 Katherine Baxter  
 Charles & Sally Beard  
 Judy Beckham  
 Jennifer Belitere  
 Ron & Susi Bell  
 Rosemary Bendele

Eva Berger  
 Virginia Berger  
 Olivia Bernsen  
 Mike Berry  
 Jan Bills  
 D'Ann Binder  
 Karen Birtchet  
 Julie Blixt  
 Mary Bonin  
 Diane Boyd  
 Mitzi Boyd  
 Caryn Brewer  
 Jerry & Mary Dale Brewer  
 Marjorie Bridge  
 Saylem & Kai Brooks  
 Billie Brown  
 Wallace & Wanda Brown  
 Norma Bruns

Julie Bullock  
 Reasa Burton  
 Bob & Diane Cabiness  
 Mickey C. Campbell  
 Charles Carlson  
 Nell Carter  
 Fred & Mary Castillo  
 Diane Causey  
 Dianne Clark  
 Roger Clark  
 Marie Coody  
 Gloria Costello  
 Carter Crain  
 Katherine Crawford  
 Michele & Tate Crawford  
 Wes & Teresa Crawford  
 Cameron Crowder  
 DeLaney Crowder

Laura Cunningham  
 Robert Dailey  
 Art Davis  
 Becky Davis  
 Mary Ann Davis  
 Ruth Davis  
 Stacie Davis  
 Jackie DeClue  
 Charles & Ruth Densmore  
 Cheryl Drumheller  
 Charles & Vivian Dube  
 Neil Dunn  
 Sherry Dunn  
 Linda Eason  
 Ernest Eberle  
 Patsy Edwards  
 Kenneth Eisenhauer  
 Dayle Enderson

welcome  
 New  
 Members!

we've grown by 284 new  
 memberships since our  
 last newsletter issue!



Ron Tom at Smithville Wildlife Expo.

Photo by Pauline Tom.



Alexis Girouard teaches mirror viewing  
 of nestbox at College Station Earth

Day. Photo by Pauline Tom.

Display ta  
 Expo. P

Dr. Sylvie Kitzman  
 Carla Kocian  
 Harold Mack Kornegay  
 Susan Kraha  
 Kenneth Kramm  
 Cynthia Krueger  
 John Kufrovich  
 Jim Lacy  
 Rachel Lamb  
 Delbert & Beverly Langford  
 R.L. Langley  
 Melanie Lankford  
 Julie Law  
 Beth Lawrence  
 Judy Leek  
 Larry LeGrand  
 Nell Lopez  
 Lou & Mary Ann Lutz

Kathryn Mabrito  
 Teri MacArthur  
 Marcia Mackey  
 William Major  
 Ana Manrique  
 Patti & Bill Marshall  
 Mary Maxwell  
 Reubine Mayfield  
 Sharon McCall  
 Julie McCants  
 Lindy McCarty  
 Mark McClelland  
 Albert McCorkle  
 Ann McCormack  
 Chuck McCulley  
 C.R. & Pat McFarland  
 Angie McKune  
 Mike McMurry

William & Brenda McNair  
 Mike Mecke  
 Marie Medrano  
 Joe Mekalip  
 Patricia Michael  
 Sharon Michael  
 Edward & Martha Miesch  
 Betty L. Miller  
 George Miller  
 Carolyn Mixon  
 Pauline Mooney  
 Dorothy Moore  
 Kimberley Morgan  
 Mabel Moulds  
 Darlene Nagle  
 Billie Nast  
 Diane Neff  
 Helen Newkirk

Sheryl Noble  
 Barbara Noblin  
 Susan Norvell  
 Diane O'Brien  
 Melanie Obendorfer  
 Okie Okerstrom  
 Vic & Martha Ortiz  
 Beverly Patrick  
 Ed Patrick  
 Walter & Susie Patschke  
 Paula Pedrick  
 Anna Perry  
 Sheila & Roger Perry  
 Vickie Peters  
 Carolyn Pirkle  
 Larry & Tina Pitts  
 Betsy Polgue  
 David & Carol Pope



Elsie English  
 Tamberly & Adam English  
 Ed Findley  
 CeCe Fine  
 Larry & Cathy Fink  
 Ruth Firsching  
 Jean Fivez  
 Charlene Forse  
 Roy Freeman  
 Betty Gambrell  
 Taylor Garrison  
 Randy Garst  
 Jan Garvey  
 Lynn Gay  
 Bill Gibson  
 Dusty Gilliam  
 Melissa Gilmore  
 Denise Gineris

Becki Ginn  
 Alexis & Jackie Girouard  
 Tim Glover  
 Christine Gomez  
 Carolyn Goodloe  
 Jo Ann E. Graves  
 Michael Gray  
 Victoria Gray  
 Eleanor Griffin  
 Mary Ann Grohman  
 Betty Grymes  
 Shannon Gutowski  
 Carol Hagemeyer  
 Elizabeth Hall  
 Miriam Hall  
 Charles R. Hamilton  
 Mike Hanna  
 Fran Hardy

Scott & Joy Harsh  
 James Havel  
 Gerald & Betty Hay  
 Russ & Carol Hayward  
 Ashley Heard  
 Maggie Hendricks  
 Betty Henke  
 Trudy Henrichson  
 Audrey Herron  
 Janice Highsmith  
 Nancy Hightower  
 Sandra Hightower  
 Lola Hill  
 Frances Hitchcock  
 Luke Hoag  
 Pamela Hohman  
 Jacqueline Holmes  
 Walter Huegele

Kathy Hyatt  
 Toni Ivey  
 Jerald B. Jackson  
 Tammy Jackson  
 Terry James  
 Carl Johnson  
 Esther Johnson  
 Terry & Melinda Johnson  
 Matthew Jordan  
 Wanda Kaline  
 Becky Kauffman  
 Al Kazmir  
 Denise Keller  
 Sue & Mike Kersey  
 Kim Kilgore  
 Sarah Kilpatrick  
 Betty King  
 Abby Kinney



...ble at Smithville wildlife  
 photo by Pauline Tom.



Barb Ohlman and the TBS booth at Wills Point Bluebird Festival. Photo by Norman Shoemaker.

The TBS "One Nestbox" Booth designed by coordinator Lysle Mockler won the "Most Creative Booth" prize!



Lysle Mockler at Ellis County Expo. Photo by Dick Mockler.

Gene Prejean  
 Gwynn Priyett  
 Diane Querner  
 Anne Quinn  
 Lynn Ragain  
 Suzanne Ragan  
 Rance Raney  
 Deborah Rayfield  
 Alfonso Reyes  
 Carol Roach  
 Laurie Robertson  
 Allen Robinson  
 Steven & Susan Rodriguez  
 Barb Rogers  
 Pat Rubeck  
 Susan C. Ruldolph  
 Ammie Rose Salter  
 Susan Sander

Lilli Sanders  
 Paula Santagata  
 Rebecca Schner  
 Susan Schroeder  
 John Scott  
 Betty Shiflett  
 Lesia Shinn  
 Kay Shultz  
 Bruce Simpson  
 Catherine Skye  
 Rae Smith  
 Shannon Smock  
 Sallie Snow  
 Jerry Stacey  
 Jim Stanfield  
 Teresa Stanley  
 Wanda Starnes  
 Leon Steiner

Sam & Christiane Stevenson  
 Vickie Stogner  
 William Stone  
 Bidley Swiney  
 Lynnette Taff  
 Yvonne Tallent  
 Nannette Tanner  
 Constance Tatum  
 Dixie Taylor  
 Robert & Martha Taylor  
 Sue Thomas  
 Gene & Cynthia Thornton  
 David Timmerman  
 Phyllis Tobias  
 Anne Toroxel  
 Ken & Debra Turner  
 Nancy Turner  
 Brenda Vance

Elinor Vandergriff  
 Sharon Walling  
 Sandra Walters  
 Connie & Phil Watkins  
 Jeannie Weigl  
 Camille Weisinger  
 Monterey & Richard White  
 Page Wilhite  
 Mary Williams  
 Susan T. Williams  
 Wayne Williams  
 Sandra Willingham  
 Glen & Vivian Wooddell  
 Terry Woodson  
 Pamela Yeaman  
 Eugene Young  
 Michael Young  
 Mark & Cathy Zimmerman

## 497 Nestboxes Ready to Roll!

Where would we be without the dedicated efforts of the volunteer woodcrafters who construct our official nestboxes? They obtain quotes, select lumber, rip nestbox panels, add fine details (such as kerfs inside the front panel), assemble the nestboxes with screws, brand the fronts with the TBS logo, and deliver the finished nestboxes from West Texas to Central Texas.

Experienced woodcrafters Brian Hetherington and Bob Houck make this process look easy, but they surpassed themselves by delivering an astonishing 497 nestboxes! Here's some of what went into this effort:

- Brian burned the TBS logo brand for up to 1½ minutes on each of the nestbox fronts. It took 12 hours to do the branding alone.
- According to Judy Hetherington, “Bobby and I can assemble 10 boxes an hour using our jigs (so 6 minutes per box). Brian assembles 19–20 per hour!”
- Even at that speedy rate, it took 6 weeks to construct nearly 500 nestboxes from start to finish.

A big thank you to Brian and Bob for their amazing work!

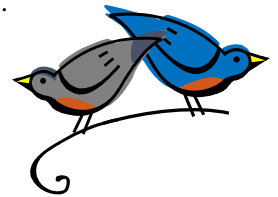


*Hard-working woodcrafters Brian Hetherington (left) and Bob Houck (right) with their 497 nestboxes. Photo by Judy Hetherington, who helped with assembling the nestboxes.*

## Prolific Presenter Linda Crum

Since November 2007, Linda Crum has done six bluebird presentations—two at Arbor Gate Nursery in Tomball, two for Wilkerson Intermediate School for fifth graders, one for her local Master Gardening group in Montgomery County, and one for the Academy for Lifelong Learning at Lone Star College in Conroe. She also recruited Texas Bluebird Society members to staff a booth at Earth Day in The Woodlands. At one of her outdoor presentations at Arbor Gate in February, Linda was talking about bluebirds looking for nesting sites during the month of February. Right on cue, a pair of Eastern Bluebirds flew into view and perched on a nearby snag.

Everyone was thrilled to see those beautiful bluebirds. Linda had no trouble signing up a lot of new members for TBS that day!



## Nature Quest promotes Bluebirds

Nature Quest (NQ) and TBS VP LeAnn Sharp are a winning combination! From three presentations, LeAnn had 95 attendees and welcomed 32 new members into TBS. First, at NQ events April 22–23, LeAnn's thorough knowledge delighted attendees who were excited to learn what kind of birds were nesting in their birdhouses. Next, “76 people attended my Bluebird Program for the Retired Teachers Association on April 28th,” said LeAnn. Third, her careful “Show and Tell” of the baby titmice in June Osborne's nestbox at Neal's Café won hearts. LeAnn will be recommended as a speaker for other groups, affirm folks now eager to help spread bluebirds across Texas. Congratulations, LeAnn!

## Donations Needed for Symposium

The 6th Annual Summer Bluebird Symposium will include a silent auction. If you have any items to donate, please send them to Linda Crum, 9 Crescent Falls Ct., The Woodlands, TX 77381-2633. Though most items are bird related, anything will do for the auction! (Contributions to TBS are tax deductible as allowed by law.)



## Online Bluebird Forum

Want to learn more about bluebirds? Looking for a friendly community of bluebird enthusiasts? Check out <http://nature.gardenweb.com/forums/bluebird/>. Get help, make friends, and have fun!



# Nestbox Management for Landowners

## Style of nestboxes

Nestboxes should be designed for protection from the Texas heat. Landowners can contact Texas Bluebird Society about purchasing nestboxes (delivery not available) or building their own nestboxes from TBS plans found on [www.texasbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.texasbluebirdsociety.org) (click Building Plans).

*This is not the only nestbox suitable for Texas conditions.*

## Placement of nestboxes

Nestboxes should be placed in a somewhat open area with short grass. Some landowners mow paths or perform controlled burns to provide the short grass bluebirds prefer. Afternoon shade, if possible, gives added protection from heat. A tree, fence, high line, snag or pole should be nearby for perching. To encourage multiple families of bluebirds, place nestboxes 100 yards apart. To encourage bluebirds plus other cavity nesters, place them closer together. Leaving nestboxes up year round furnishes protection for birds in the winter.

## Mounting nestboxes

Nestboxes should be mounted five feet or higher; however, TBS does not recommend mounting them on trees or posts that would make nestlings accessible to predators. The ideal posts to use are 1-inch galvanized steel pipes or 3/4-inch EMT conduit sleeves over 5/8-inch rebar stakes. A telescoping pole, which provides extra distance from predators, is another good option. In addition, TBS

strongly recommends adding a Kingston or another type of predator baffle\* to deter snakes, raccoons and cats. Visit [www.sialis.org](http://www.sialis.org), [www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org) and [www.texasbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.texasbluebirdsociety.org) for more information about predator control measures.

*\* To deter snakes, a 4- to 5- foot section of PVC can be slipped over the mounting pole and greased. Clean with a solvent at the end of the nesting season.*

## Monitoring nestboxes

Monitoring nestboxes includes looking in the nestboxes, correcting any troublesome situations (such as removing wasp nests and fire ants), recording what is observed and reporting the data to NestWatch at [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org). Ideally, nestboxes should be monitored weekly from February through September. Landowners may want to team with others in the community or hire someone who can check the nestboxes each week. If weekly monitoring is not a practical option, monitor as often as possible and report findings to NestWatch. Bluebirds will nest 2 to 4 times per season in Texas so used or abandoned eggs and nests should be removed to allow subsequent nesting (dispose far away from nestboxes to avoid attracting predators). Between September and January, all nesting material should be removed. Note that it is against the law to keep old nests, eggs or feathers of any native birds without permits.



## 1st Bluebird Egg of 2008!

Egg-citing! The 2008 "1st Bluebird Egg" report to TBS came from Carmine in Central Texas with a first egg date of February 7. On an eggs-tremely early date for the milestone, March 13th, Papa Bluebird coaxed his birds to a successful fledge! Congratulations to Ann and Mike O'Hara who invited the pair to their yard by providing an essential nesting site.

Through NestWatch ([www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org)), Texans and the world can view dates of first eggs and other nesting activity in real time.



*Top: Proud Papa Bluebird at the nestbox. Photo by Richard Thames. Right: Horse hair is woven into the nest cup. Photo by Ann Thames.*

# CLASSIFIEDS

## TBS needs your help!

We want to expand our efforts to spread bluebirds across Texas, but we need “a few good bluebirders” to make it happen. TBS has no paid positions—our programs, services, and products depend on your generous donations of time, effort, and money. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Pauline Tom at [ptom5678@gmail.com](mailto:ptom5678@gmail.com) or (512) 268-5678. Thank you!

## GENERALIST

### Philanthropist

Supporters to endow our Special Projects Fund for non-administrative, non-budgeted expenses (e.g., installation of nestbox trails and digital frames for “One Nestbox” booths). Send your tax-deductible donations to Linda Crum, TBS Treasurer, 9 Crescent Falls Ct, The Woodlands TX 77381. Make your checks payable to “Texas Bluebird Society” and designate them for “Special Projects Fund.”

### Booth Staffer

Booth staffer to talk about bluebirds and TBS with attendees at Texas Parks and Wildlife EXPO (choose shift length between 3–8 hours long, Oct 4 & 5, 2008). The EXPO is an annual outdoor extravaganza held at Texas Parks & Wildlife headquarters in southeast Austin. About 40,000 attend the event over the 2-day period.



### Coordinator – People

NestWatch Ambassador to serve as liaison between TBS and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Responsibilities include answering questions from TBS members and promoting NestWatch.

“Start with Five” program coordinator to serve as liaison between TBS and individuals/groups who have received

a set of five nestboxes. Responsibilities include answering questions about the program, getting new individuals/groups started, following up on data entry into [Nest-Watch.org](http://Nest-Watch.org), and acquiring funding for the program.

### Coordinator – Things

New member packet organizer to assemble and mail new member packets within 10 days of notice. Most new members receive their packets in person at a booth or presentation, but up to 30 per month need to be mailed.

New member packet organizer for special events. Expect to assemble and mail new member packets in batches of 15–150 with peak demand in the springtime.

Newsletter content coordinator to gather and organize newsletter articles and photos. Needs to have a broadband internet connection to receive large photo files.



Assistant secretary to audit 2-hour monthly teleconference board meetings (and attend the face-to-face meeting near Austin in October, if possible) and publish minutes of the meeting within 5 days. This is not a seat on the Board of Directors.

Silent auction coordinator to organize auction event for the October Annual Meeting in Austin area. Responsibilities include gathering items and bringing them to event.

### Coordinator – People & Things



“True Blue Friend” coordinator to serve as liaison between purchaser of nestbox dedication plaque and the company that creates it. Responsibilities include proofreading completed plaque and mailing it to purchaser.

Coordinator for 2009 Summer Bluebird Symposium and 2010 Summer Bluebird Symposium (please contact Pauline for a detailed description).

“One Nestbox” booth program coordinator to manage inventory and staffing for “One Nestbox” events. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating transfer of supplies from one booth event to the next.
- Ordering new member materials, nestboxes, and other supplies as needed.

- Creating “One Nestbox” booth opportunities by matching a festival with nearby “booth” volunteers.
- Recruiting local coordinator for booth events and serving as liaison between that person and the Board.

## SPECIALIST

### Computer specialist

Renewals coordinator to sort membership database monthly/quarterly and prepare mail merged renewal letters. Needs to know Excel & Word (preferably 2007).



Map coordinator to update TBS Volunteer Map monthly. Needs to know Access & Excel 2007 and HTML.

Documents editor to update TBS Resources documents, create PDFs, and update HTML files. Needs to know Publisher & Word 2007 and HTML.

Graphic artist to create documents (e.g., brochures and fliers) as needed.

Excel specialist to create/format documents (e.g., treasurer reports) as needed.

### CPA

CPA to review TBS financial records at year end and give occasional pro bono advice to the Treasurer or Board.

### Elementary educator

Elementary educator to create short game for EXPO to go with Nest & Egg Display that can be played by large groups (due by 10/4/08).

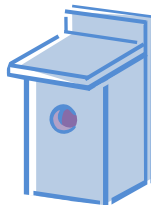
### Handyperson

Handyperson to build five sample Sparrow Spookers for “One Nestbox” booths.

### Woodcrafter

Woodcrafters located west of Abilene to assist in construction of nestboxes.

Woodcrafters to rip and detail doors for Texas Blues nestboxes in batches of 250. Detailing includes:



- Creating a 1 1/16" hole and sanding or beveling it.
- Adding kerfs on inside under door (this is a requirement for NABS nestbox approval because Tree Swallow fledglings cannot jump to the hole).
- Adding 2 small screws (to equip nestbox for a Van Ert House Sparrow trap, if needed).
- Branding center front with the TBS logo using electric branding iron.
- Shipping doors to Nestbox Construction Team (located west of Abilene).

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Texas Blues nestbox builders to make nestboxes on an as-needed basis.

### Visual artist

Visual artist to create photo presentation for EXPO for digital frame (due by 10/4/08).

## TBS Board of Directors & You

A Board of Directors, elected by the membership, governs TBS. An Executive Committee, elected by the Board, makes day-to-day operating decisions.

The Board establishes the organization’s mission and purposes; decides and monitors TBS’ programs, services, outreach efforts, and overall direction; elects and supports TBS officers; ensures and manages resources through an annual budget and approval of key financial transactions; and sets fiscal and governance policies. It is accountable to TBS members as well as to the general public as a 501(c)3 organization.

TBS has no paid positions. Board members do nearly all the work of the organization, such as making presentations, staffing booths, and creating this newsletter.

### Recent Board accomplishments

- Approved an annual budget of \$12,000, with \$6,000 earmarked for nestbox construction materials.
- Approved “Nestbox Management for Landowners” handout (reprinted in this issue and available as download in the Resources section of our website).
- Approved a 1 1/16" hole for TBS-constructed nestboxes to accommodate Western Bluebirds.

**Interested in joining the TBS Board of Directors?**  
Please contact Pauline Tom at [ptom5678@gmail.com](mailto:ptom5678@gmail.com) or (512) 268-5678.



## TBS Annual Meeting & Dinner

Come to the TBS Annual Meeting & Dinner hosted by Ron and Pauline Tom! We'll have informal reports on the 2008 nesting season, a brief business meeting, an EXPO booth orientation, as well as a silent auction (by the way, if you have any items to donate for the auction, please let us know).

Bring \$2.50 (donation towards TBS-provided chicken), one or two side dishes to share, and your own beverage (e.g., water, soft drink, beer, or wine). We look forward to seeing you there!

**When:** Friday, 10/3/08, 6–8pm (appetizers at 5:30pm)

**Where:** 332 Live Oak Dr, Mountain City (near Kyle/Buda, just south of Austin)

**RSVP:** By Sunday, 9/28/08, to Pauline at (512) 268-5678 or [ptom5678@gmail.com](mailto:ptom5678@gmail.com)

## “Not tonight, dear. I have a headache.”

In order for females to lay viable eggs, they must be fertilized by the male. Photo by Dave Kinner.



Texas Bluebird Society  
PO Box 40868  
Austin TX 78704



Register early  
for the Summer  
Symposium!

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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Buda TX 78610

RETURN SERVICE  
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### TBS Board of Directors

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Linda Crum, Treasurer, The Woodlands  
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### TEXAS BLUES

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is published about 4 times a year

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[www.texasbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.texasbluebirdsociety.org)

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