



The President's Perch

by Stan Fisher

Greetings, fellow blue birders. It has been a cold, late spring and our bluebirds usually active in February have held off checking out nest boxes because of the cold. Unfortunately, tree swallows, not influenced by our temperatures, only by day length and their local conditions, are showing up in our area. I hope our bluebirds wake up and don't let the tree swallows take over the choice boxes.

Results from our 2017 nesting season seem to be mixed. Some areas reported better than average number of birds fledged and some reported average results. My trails were pretty much average and some trails had more than the usual occupation by house wrens and lots of tree swallows.

We still need to be concerned with the issue of bluebird fatalities from tree planting tubes. These are hollow cylindrical plastic tubes installed to protect young trees. The problem comes when the young tree dies and the tube is left empty. It is an attractive potential nest site for bluebirds. I have heard several accounts of dead bluebirds found in Maryland in these tubes. We know of the severity of the problem because thousands of bluebirds have been found in the west, having died in similar hollow pipes used for marking mining claims.

Please keep your eyes open for these tubes; they are frequently used in reforestation efforts in Maryland. They usually plant many acres at a time. If you see them, please check the plantings out. Look along the edges of the plantings. Look into and under any empty tubes that you find to see if there are bluebird feathers or bodies. Please report your findings to me and include:

- Number of empty tubes investigated
- Location of plantings
- Number of birds found dead in them
- Thank you for this effort. It is something that will take all hands to solve.

Good luck this nesting season. Keep monitoring and helping our bluebirds. Please check out our MBS website and Facebook as well as the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) website too. Lots of good, local, timely information.



Bluebird nest with 6 eggs in Knoxville, MD
photo by Kathy Kremnitzer

Bluebirds Forever Festival Sunday, May 20th, 2018 1 to 4 p.m.

MBS will be hosting our Bluebird Forever Festival on Sunday, May 20th this year, from 1 to 4 pm. The festival will be held at the Agriculture History Farm Park in Derwood in the Agricultural Extension Building. Activities will feature bluebird presentations, information, children's activities, trail walks. Come to the festival and visit the historic Bussard Farmstead, its farmhouse and animals next door. The event is FREE and open to the public. Hope to see you there!

The Backyard Naturalist an interview with Debi Klein By: Jodi Hewitt

The Backyard Naturalist has been in business 28 years. It is the oldest independent retailer of wild bird products and gifts in the area and the first MD store



to be awarded the Droll Yankee's Five Feather Platinum Premier status. Co-owner Debi Klein is very proud that they are not a franchise, but a regular mom and pop storefront.

Debi was a business consultant and was contacted by the local Audubon Society to advise and consult on management of their program and bookstore. Debi had always been a nature lover, but not so much a birder. She spotted a chickadee and a goldfinch, decided to buy and assemble a bird feeder (the instructions said for persons 6 years and older). After 2 hours and much frustration, she and Mike (husband and co-owner) finally got the bird feeder together, and from there she was hooked. Once hooked on feeding the birds, she began gifting birding supplies to her friends, in turn creating more birders. Debi still sells this particular bird feeder.

Debi was asked to be a founding member of MBS by Fawzi Emad, she was mentored on bluebirds by Mary Janetatos and in turn mentored, coached and educated the monitors of the bluebird trail on Gregg Road that has been active for over 30 years and in the beginning had a snake

problem. Debi credits Jerry Nolan and his son Ryan for keeping this trail going.

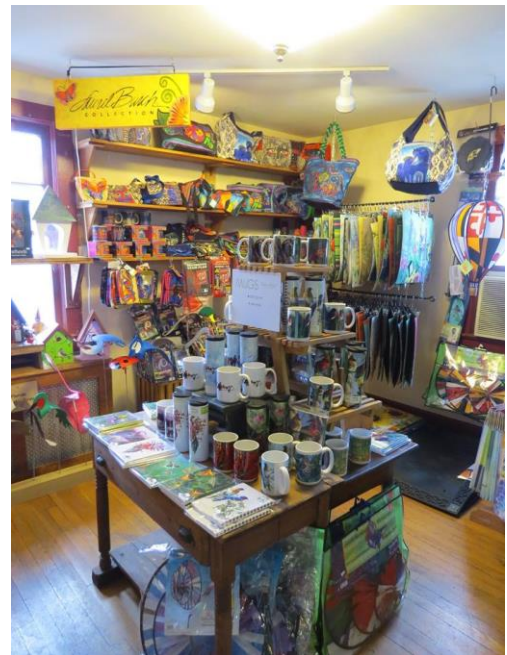
Debi considers Mike and herself the people in the trenches of the front line on sparrow and predator control for bluebirds and other bird species. She will ask prospective clients when interested in a bluebird house, if they are willing to monitor and control predators to keep the blues safe. If they are not, she will guide them towards a wren house, which the blues cannot nest in. She has refused to sell a bluebird house to a customer if they were not prepared to do all that is necessary to keep the blues safe.

The products in their store are the better products available on the market. Her seed is from a private manufacturer and is the freshest crop available. Their products may be more expensive than the run of the mill feeders you may buy elsewhere, but they stand behind their products and will help with any issues you may have.

I am lucky to have stumbled into The Backyard Naturalist when looking for new feeders. Debi encouraged me to put out winter water (heated bird bath) to give the birds fresh water as other water supplies freeze. It was the day after Christmas that I looked outside to see a pair of bluebirds at the birdbath getting a drink. Once I realized that the bluebirds were around, I put a nestbox up in my yard the following spring (I live in a townhome) and have had bluebirds in my yard ever since.

Don't forget that MBS will be hosting its **Bluebirds Forever Festival** on Sunday, May 20th from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Agriculture History Farm Park in Derwood, MD. This is a new venue for the event and the festival will be held in the Agricultural Extension Building. The park address is: 18410 Muncaster Road, Derwood, MD 20855. This event is open to the public and is a free event.

The festival will feature bluebird presentations and demonstrations, trail walks, children's crafts and activities and lots of hands-on advice from experienced bluebirders. Come to the Bluebirds Forever Festival and, afterwards, visit the historic Bussard Farmstead with its farmhouse and animals and then hike the miles of hiking trails.



MBS 2017 Annual Membership Meeting and Picnic

The Maryland Bluebird Society's Annual Membership meeting and picnic was a little different in 2017 than in previous years. Because we had not held our traditional Bluebirds Forever Festival in May, the board decided to combine the festival and picnic events. While there were a few attendees who came and went, about 35 people arrived for the festival, stayed for the membership meeting and then relaxed and talked bluebirds with us for the picnic portion of the day.

Kathy Kremnitzer gave a round-table version of her Beautiful Bluebirds presentation and was impressed with the bluebird questions asked by the audience. Board members Stan Fisher, Ed Escalante, Anne Sturm, Beth Fisher, Jodi Hewitt, Matt Storms, Diane Seward and Jenny Hendershot were all available to demonstrate equipment, offer advice,

and to share their bluebird experiences. The group shared a meal of hamburgers and hotdogs, grilled by Matt Storms, along with various salads, sides and desserts. The Silent Auction offered many interesting bluebird and bird items and Kathy's mom, Rita Kimble, donated a hand-made quilt in bluebird colors which was raffled. Congratulations to winner, Anne Sturm!

The 2018 Events calendar will see us return to our more traditional schedule. MBS will be hosting our Bluebird Forever Festival on Sunday, May 20th this year, from 1 to 4 pm. However, our venue has changed. The festival will be held at the Agriculture History Farm Park in Derwood. We are still working to finalize details for our fall membership meeting and picnic.



Kathy Kremnitzer gives her Beautiful Bluebirds presentation festival attendees. Photo by Ed Escalante



MBS board member and master griller Matt Storms cooks the hamburgers and hotdogs while VP Jodi Hewitt offers support.

Dear MBS Members:

Please check with MBS Membership Chair, Diane Seward, at trina65@verizon.net to be certain you are current with your membership. You can renew using the form at the end of this newsletter or online at www.mdbluebirdsociety.org

If you know of someone who is interested in bluebirds, please feel free to pass this newsletter on to them.

Thank you for your continued support!

Maryland Bluebird Society Officers and Board Members

Officers:

President	Stan Fisher
V. President	Jodi Hewitt
Secretary	Beth Fisher
Treasurer	Bonnie Bell

Board Members:

Fawzi Emad	Ed Escalante
Bill Roberts	Ann Sturm
Matt Storms	Jenny Hendershot
Diane Seward	
Kathy Kremnitzer - Immediate Past President	

So What if the Bird's Not Blue!

by Kathy Kremnitzer

I've been a bluebird lover for most of my adult life and have spent a good bit of that time monitoring nestboxes both at my home and on bluebird trails. Over the years, I've noticed many people have the idea that bluebird houses are meant for bluebirds. Period. While I understand this feeling, I can't help but think that maybe folks with this point of view are missing out on a golden opportunity. Let me explain.

Most people put up a nestbox either because they've seen bluebirds in their area or have had nestboxes in other places where they've lived and want to attract them again. It's pretty much common knowledge that bluebirds need our help but maybe not so much common knowledge as to why. Since the mid-1900's, bluebirds have suffered losses from pesticides and herbicides, loss of habitat due to removal and paving over of their native nesting sites and also due to competition from non-native house sparrows and European starlings. So, when we put up a bluebird box, our goal is to help bluebirds.

While bluebirds are wonderfully beautiful, awe-inspiring birds and it is impossible not to be entranced by their presence, keep in mind that other cavity-nesting birds such as tree swallows, chickadees, tufted titmice, nuthatches and wrens are also greatly in need of our assistance. Their need for cavities to nest in is no less dire than that of the bluebird, so if you've put up a nestbox and have attracted a native bird that is not a bluebird, consider this: First, it is a violation of federal law to interfere with the nesting of any native bird. That's the black and white of the situation and, now, here's the gray: tree swallows, chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, wrens, etc., are also very interesting birds and, while they might not be blue, they can be as equally entertaining tenants in your nestbox.

Tree swallows eat tons and tons of gnats and other insects during a nesting season. They are aerial feeders which means they catch their meals "on the fly" as opposed to bluebirds, who are mainly ground feeders. Watching tree swallows turn direction mid-flight in pursuit of an insect will have you smiling from ear to ear without even realizing it. They are gregariously playful birds that nest only once per season, unlike our beloved blues that can nest 2, 3 or even 4 times within the same breeding period. Tree swallows and other aerial feeders such as purple martins have been greatly impacted not only by the loss of nesting sites, but also by communities that spray for "black fly" (gnats) and mosquitoes as those areas are where their primary food sources exist. Tree swallows are desirable, if messy, tenants and will defend the nestboxes of other birds as well as their own.

Another native bird that can be found using a nestbox is the black-capped or Carolina Chickadee. Both species build nests of moss, plant fibers and animal hair. They are feisty little birds who show little fear when the nestbox is opened for monitoring. If they do leave the box, they will sit in a nearby tree and "fuss" at the interloper, calling "chick-a-dee-dee-dee, until the nestbox is closed and their privacy is restored. Chickadees lay tiny brown-speckled white eggs that are about the size of a jelly bean and nothing is more charming than observing a nest full of tiny little

tuxedoed chickadee babies. I think if I had the opportunity to be a baby bird, I would probably choose chickadee because the nest is so downy soft and also because the chickadees weave a blanket of animal hair and plant fiber which is pulled over the nest when the adult birds leave!

The tufted titmouse is a cavity-nesting bird that is a bit less tolerant of monitoring than tree swallows or chickadees, but they certainly have their own charm. If you have a pooch that likes to sleep on the porch or a horse that dozes at the water trough, they could both have been the victim of a titmouse raid during nestbuilding. You see, titmice are notorious for landing on animals and plucking out hair to be used in their nests. The hair provides the grass, bark and leaves of their nests with a soft nest cup for eggs. If you are lucky enough to get a titmouse to nest in your nestbox, be prepared because if it is in the box when you monitor it will hiss at you and the first thing that will come to your mind is "snake"! Titmice have been known to abandon nests, so be careful not to over-monitor.

Okay, I'll admit it, house wrens are not my favorite cavity-nesting birds and I do cringe when I begin to hear their song in mid to late April because it means they have migrated back for the breeding season. House wrens are native birds, but they are so fiercely competitive for nesting sites that they can cause huge losses to the nestings of other birds. House wrens are stealthy and small and can be in and out of a nestbox with the pierced eggs of their competitors without those birds even knowing it. Though they are small, a house wren can even remove the newly hatched chicks of other cavity nesters. The male house wren is known for filling any and every cavity within "his" territory with sticks to prevent other birds from using the site—these are called dummy nests and may be removed as long as there is no egg cup or eggs. There is a male house wren that fills one of my plexi-glass bird feeders with sticks every spring and since I don't feed the birds over the summer, I usually just let him. Occasionally I will empty the feeder so I can watch him fill it up again—it keeps him busy, me entertained and hopefully provides some of the other birds with a respite from having to guard their eggs from him. House wrens like to nest at the edge of woody, brushy areas so placing nestboxes in as open an area as possible will deter them from choosing your box. If you have an active bluebird nest that you want to protect from predation by house wrens, read about to make and install a wren guard on www.sialis.org. That's my explanation on why playing landlord to birds that aren't blue really isn't so bad. We've all heard the saying that when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Having a bluebird nestbox that hosts a species besides bluebirds is kind of the same situation. You can't really do much about it, so enjoy the show, learn what you can about the species you've got and take comfort in knowing that all these other species only nest once per nesting season, and, if they successfully fledge young that first go-round, it will leave your nestbox open for the bluebirds you were hoping for in the first place!

Maryland DAR Recognizes Local Conservation Volunteer

NEWS RELEASE. March 26, 2018. For immediate release. Contact Pat Arata at 410-632-3417 daytime or evenings for information.

POCOMOKE CITY, MD. The Maryland State Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presented the National DAR Conservation Medal to Janice Freeman Ward during its recent 113th State Conference in Ellicott City. State chair for Conservation Pat Arata read the citation recognizing Ward for her many years of volunteer service devoted to preserving the *Eastern Bluebird population*. Ward was sponsored by the General Levin Winder Chapter.

The DAR is a women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education. For more information, visit www.dar.org.



(L-R) Maryland State Regent Carol Dorsey Larkin, Janice Freeman Ward, and State Conservation chair Pat Arata.

NOTICE TO OUR MEMBERSHIP: Due to the length of this issue of *Bluebird Chatter*, we will hold any nesting data submitted for nesting season 2017 until a future issue. If you have not yet sent in your data for last year, please do so and it will be featured soon.

Once Upon a Time, on the Bluebird Trail

by Kathy Kremnitzer

As many of you who have been following this column know, we have been sharing stories from our MBS Board on how they became interested in and involved with bluebirds. This is my story and it is that last to be shared about our BOD. We'd love to share the stories of our readers, however, so please consider sending us yours!

I have been fortunate in my life to have a mother and grandmother who were avid gardeners and I learned a lot from them both. The most important lesson learned, though, was that I need to be outside and in nature for my own well-being. My father put up bluebird houses for my mother many years ago and the two of them loved to watch the birds. They really didn't mind who nested, but just enjoyed the activity. For my 30th birthday, Dad gifted me with two boxes that he had built. The gardener in me was repulsed at the idea of nailing them to trees, as I had seen in pictures, so I did a little research and found the web site, www.sialis.org. It showed a method that was safer for the tree and the bluebird as well, and I erected both houses on metal poles, equipped with stovepipe predator baffles. The bluebirds found one box right away and used it successfully for several nesting seasons before the house sparrows found it and made life miserable. So next, I read up on what to do about the troublesome house sparrows. I began trapping, especially the males since they bond to a nestbox and not to a female house sparrow (thus they would NEVER leave). My reading also informed me of the sparrow spooker device, which does work and of which I now have several.

When it came time for my youngest daughter to begin working on an award project for Girl Scouts, I suggested that she renovate and monitor an existing bluebird trail at a local park where my husband and I often walked our dogs. While that idea didn't appeal to her (she doesn't like bugs), I couldn't get it out of my head. I approached the Parks Department and petitioned to be allowed to rehab and relocate the existing nestboxes and to be allowed to monitor them on a regular basis. Permission was granted and, after much work, the trail was safe and productive. The Parks Superintendent then informed me that there was another local park with a trail that needed attention. That was the beginning of my trail monitoring career. I currently monitor over 80 nestboxes weekly, in 6 different locations.

Working in an elementary school, it was only natural for me to want to share my love of the outdoors and of bluebirds with my students. I began a bluebird club and the response was overwhelming! Unfortunately, in order to keep the number of participants manageable, it was limited to 4th and 5th graders. After researching ideal habitat, we sited and erected 6 nestboxes at our school. Club activities began in the fall and students attended weekly meetings to learn about bluebirds, their nesting habits, monitoring procedures, etc. Just before nesting season, students were divided into teams and were



YSES Bluebird Club student checking a nestbox

assigned to a nestbox. At this point, our meetings became monitoring sessions and students would visit their nestboxes. They journaled their observations in the notebooks they had created and prepared a report which team members would read on the next day's morning announcements. The entire school got to hear about the nesting activity in our nestboxes and we worked hard to keep updated photos on our Bluebird Club bulletin board. Though I am retired now, I continue to monitor the school trail and I hear from former bluebird club students now and again. It is wonderful how fondly they look back at the experience of seeing nature so up close and personal.

I joined the Maryland Bluebird Society in March of 2005 and was elected to the board at that time. I've served as secretary, president, newsletter editor and county coordinators for Washington and Frederick Counties. I was also elected to the NABS board of directors around 2008 and have served as Secretary for the last several years.

Bluebirding is a joy, though Mother Nature does teach us some tough lessons about life sometimes. Occasionally I get in a hurry on monitoring days, to get the boxes checked and the data recorded. However, I have discovered that inside each and every nestbox is a gift to be savored and enjoyed. There is nothing so inspiring as the hopefulness and determination of the bluebird.



Hello everyone. Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Debbie Reece I was born & raised in Alexandria, VA. I currently live in Waldorf, MD (for the past 37 years), I'm married and am the mother of three children and two grandsons.

My love of bluebirds started over 15 years ago when I noticed a beautiful bluebird in a friend's yard and asked what it was. I was told it was an Eastern Bluebird and from that day I wanted them in my yard and since we didn't live too far apart I thought why not.

I started researching and found a bluebird house at our local Wild Bird Center store (which has since closed), I purchased a pole, baffle and other materials and "planted" my house. The following summer I noticed a bluebird scouting out the house and have had them ever since. I only learned this year about monitoring the nesting boxes and now check, document and report how my bluebirds are doing.

I currently shop at Wild Birds Unlimited in Lexington Park, MD and became a follower of theirs on Facebook. Then I saw references to the MBS and immediately liked and began following your page, where I saw the message from Kathy about needing help with the MBS newsletter, *Bluebird Chatter*. I contacted her to ask what I could do and how I could help and so here I am. I am a current member of the Southern Maryland Decorative Painters and was their newsletter editor for seven years. I thought that experience might be helpful to MBS. I look forward to learning more about bluebirds and to getting to know MBS and its members.

NABS Update

2017 was a busy year for the North American Bluebird Society. Their website, www.nabluebirdsociety.org underwent a redesign and now hosts many new features including a calendar of events, a seasonal slideshow of bluebird photos, and a peek into the NABS Facebook page's newsfeed. The website is pleasing to the eye and is very easy to navigate. Their informational bluebird Fact Sheets can be downloaded and printed and the Bring Back the Bluebirds brochure has been redesigned and is available. Updated nestbox plans are in the works and will be posted on the website soon. Please take a few minutes to visit the new website and let NABS know what you think.

In 2017, the NABS board of directors voted to adopt a 3-year plan. In the first year of the cycle, which was 2017, the NABS Developmental Committee met to make a plan of action to move the organization forward. In year 2, this year, NABS board members and representatives are striving to attend as many affiliate meetings and conferences as possible in order to become better acquainted with the groups and to determine how NABS can best assist with conservation efforts. In 2019, the 3rd year of the cycle, NABS hopes to join with one of the affiliate organizations in order to hold a conference.

For the last several years, MBS has been a Nestbox Neighbor sponsor of NABS. However, since MBS is so well represented on the NABS board (Stan Fisher and Kathy Kremnitzer both serve as directors) and receives a regular supply of Fact Sheets and NABS Journals for bluebird presentations, MBS recently upgraded our sponsorship level to True Blue.

MBS highly recommends that its members consider joining NABS to support their efforts in assisting affiliate organizations in the conservation of bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds. While MBS provides Maryland bluebirders with local, hands-on assistance, NABS provides online information and a quarterly magazine, *Bluebird*, which is well worth the cost of a membership.

Virginia Spencer: A Tribute

On morning in early March, I was sitting at my computer working on MBS business when my phone rang. Mark Connolly, of Linwood, NY, was calling to tell me that his mother-in-law, Virginia Spencer, had passed away and that the family wanted to know how they and their friends could make contributions to the Maryland Bluebird Society in her memory. As the weeks passed, MBS received many generous donations in memory of Mrs. Spencer, along with notes that told of her love of nature, of birds, and of bluebirds in particular. As I read these missives and wrote thank you notes to her family and friends, I began to feel sad for the missed opportunity of knowing Virginia Spencer. I approached the family about sharing Virginia's life with our membership and they thought it was a wonderful idea. Virginia's daughter, Debbie Connolly, sent me the following message:

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for your condolences and kind thoughts for the loss of our Mom. My family thinks it would be wonderful if you wrote an article about her in your newsletter.

Mom was born and raised in Carroll County. She's loved birds for as long as we can remember. She and our Dad raised us in Sandymount and they enjoyed living in the country. Dad loved gardening and had many flower beds and fruit trees on their 3 acres of land. He also had a huge vegetable garden which provided all the vegetables on our dinner table. Mom would can and freeze all sorts of food for her family meals. She was known for her homemade pies, crab soup and iced tea. No one ever left their house hungry. At the outer edge of Dad's garden were the bluebird boxes. Mom could watch those boxes from the bathroom window to see if the bluebirds had arrived. (This is the same window where Dad was known to shoot at the occasional groundhog that was raiding his garden.) Mom appreciated my husband cleaning out the boxes every year so the bluebirds would nest there. It would really upset her if the wrens would take residence.

She had an old Frisbee they converted to a birdbath that Dad attached to a tall stand, so they could watch the birds bathing from the back deck. Mom always kept that birdbath clean and filled. She also loved hummingbirds and had a feeder by the back porch. She would fret if she didn't see many hummingbirds and was particular about using the proper type of food, often discussing this with her best friend who claimed to have tons more hummers than Mom did.



My husband and I gave Mom a squirrel- buster- plus bird-feeder one year for Christmas, which she loved. She kept it filled with sunflower seeds and was adamant about picking out the little sticks that came in the bag before she would fill it. She didn't want her birds to choke on the sticks or get them caught in their beaks. When Mom was in the hospital or not feeling well, she gave these duties to my sister and brother-in-law to make sure the birds were properly fed. After my husband told Mom that bluebirds like mealworms, she bought a supply and kept a little plastic dish filled with them that he nailed to the raspberry patch near the bluebird boxes. When our Dad passed away several years ago and we went with Mom to pick out a gravestone, she said she wished there was one with a bluebird on it for her stone when she passed.

Your sweet note about Mom demonstrating the same strength and determination as her beloved bluebirds was incredibly true. Mom was diagnosed with esophageal cancer over a year ago. She was a fighter who was determined to overcome this illness and was willing to try whatever medical treatment that was offered. As I previously told you, when the doctor told Mom she required a tattoo for the radiation, she said she would have wanted a bluebird tattoo. She endured radiation and several rounds of chemo with many distressing side-effects. When this treatment hadn't worked, she agreed to try immunotherapy. Her oncologist told her she would be his first patient to try this treatment for her type of cancer. She was hopeful this would work and continued to fight her illness with strength and grace. She prayed every day that God would heal her and her doctor would produce a 'white rabbit'. She dearly loved her family and wanted to live. (Continued on Page 8)

(Virginia Spencer, continued from Page 8)

All this time Mom continued living on her own. She was a tough and determined lady. As her cancer advanced and her lungs became damaged. Mom finally agreed to go to the Dove House, a hospice home in Westminster. She was determined this was a temporary stay, to get her breathing stabilized and hopefully to go back home. Sadly, this was not God's plan and Mom passed away on March 11th. I think she was the spunkiest patient they ever had in the Dove House. Her nurses were amazed at how determined she was. She was probably the only patient who asked them about their lives and families and would tell us when we visited her how many children her nurses had and what their ages were, where they went to school, etc. Mom was

one of a kind. She was 86 years old when she went to Heaven, and we were grateful to have had such a loving mother. I hope this is not too much information, but I wanted you to get a feeling for how wonderful our Mom was. We all loved her dearly. Again, thank you for your sweet note and email. Our family is sure our mother would love the work that you do to care for bluebirds and to educate others about them.

God bless,
Debbie and Mark Connolly
Rick and Shirley Spencer
Bonnie and Lee Cummings

Birds of a Feather Cooperate Together!

Dr. William Hadyn Roberts, Jr.

Maryland Bluebird Society (MBS) Members can participate in the birding initiatives listed below and by doing so will support the three core mission areas of the MBS as stated on our website, and to the IRS as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization:

- 1) *assist in monitoring and increasing the population of the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity nesting birds by educating and informing our members and the public about bluebirds;*
- 2) *support research on the bluebird and its habitat, and*
- 3) *cooperate with other organizations with similar conservation purposes.*

2018 Year of the Bird – This campaign to mark the centennial of the Migratory Bird Act can be found at <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/year-of-the-bird/>. By going to this webpage and hitting the “Yes, Count Me In” button; entering your name and e-mail; monthly National Geographic and their Partners will “send you one simple action to make a difference for birds and the planet”.

World Migration Bird Day – General information is contained at <http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/about>. Any migratory bird events, during any day of the year, can be registered with the organization at <http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/en>. You can also put your event on the Global Event Map. Just follow the three easy steps! There is a great deal of information and materials that can be downloaded for free.

Safe Skies Maryland – General information is contained at <https://safeskiesmaryland.org/>. Legislation in 2018 is HB 0986 and SB 1009 is supported by industry. The Safe Skies Initiative is an awareness campaign about the increasing dangers of large pane glass and bird collisions. There are several simple solutions including strips of dot decals, shading improvements, lighting changes, as well as changes to the glass itself, that scientific studies say helps birds avoid collisions.

3rd Annual DC/MD “I Bird I Vote” Summit – I attended this annual gathering that was held on February 24, 2018 at Patuxent (National) Wildlife Refuge. The location is not only a birding hot spot but is unique as the only Research Wildlife Refuge in a system of more than 400 National Wildlife Refuges. Over one hundred attendees listed to several briefings on issues of local birding interest. Birding groups presenting included: Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership, Maryland Ornithological Society, Safe Skies Maryland, Audubon Maryland-DC, 1000 Friends of Maryland, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the National Audubon Society. Make sure to sign up for this next year!

Information requested:

For 2017, the 27 boxes that I monitor around Needwood Golf Course in Montgomery County fledged 79 young bluebirds. This number compared to 86 in 2016. I started monitoring in 2004 with 26 Duncan models and 26 Peterson Models. The Duncan models are the traditional rectangular models and the Petersons are somewhat triangular in design. The bluebirds prefer the Peterson models to the Duncans by about two to one. Apparently, this is because the Peterson models more closely resemble tree stumps. So, I have slowly been replacing the Duncans with Petersons. This winter I replaced four boxes. I will only have three Duncans left.

My biggest challenge is keeping the predators out. I frequently find eggs or hatchlings in a box one week and then go back the next week to find an empty nest. I find it disheartening to open a box expecting to see hatched eggs or at least eggs and find an empty nest. It's most disheartening and alarming to find a black snake in the box, which happens once a summer.

I use PCP pipe baffles but every summer I find a black snake in one of my boxes.

I am interested in learning what other folks are using for baffles and what are the most effective. I have read up and searched on the internet and it doesn't seem like there are any fool proof baffles. Some of them seem like they could prevent the birds from occupying the nest.

Tony Laing



A devoted mother bluebird incubating her eggs



Peterson Model



Duncan Model

Maryland Bluebird Society's County Coordinators

MBS's County Coordinator Program is an important aspect of what our society is all about, helping bluebirders throughout the state when troubles arise. These volunteers accept phone calls and e-mails and are ready to assist with information and resources on the spur of the moment. Do you need help figuring out how to set up your nestbox? Maybe you have an abandoned nesting and don't know why. Perhaps house sparrows are plaguing your neighborhood and you don't know what to do. Well, an MBS County Coordinator is always willing to listen and share whatever knowledge and experience they can with you.

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C 301 676-9371
griffin459@myactv.net

Harford County

Pam Ford
H 410 569-2205
C 443 617-5556
jpford@comcast.net

Kent County

Karen Unruh
410 404-0155
karenunruh007@gmail.com

Montgomery County

Ed Escalante
301 972-3241
escalante@his.com

Washington County

Jenny Hendershot
C 301 491-8823
djbmhendershot@aol.com

Worcester, Somerset and Wicomico Counties

Janice Ward
H 410 632-0671
C 443 614-8318
Jward43.jw@gmail.com

If you do not see your county in the above listing, it is because we do not have a volunteer from your county. Please contact us if you would like to serve as County Coordinator from your area of our beautiful state.

**THE MARYLAND BLUEBIRD SOCIETY, INC.
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Mail to: Maryland Bluebird Society
20809 Bell Bluff Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Instructions: Print and complete this application and mail to the above address. Please remember to enclose your check payable to the Maryland Bluebird Society.

Memberships and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Note: Membership is effective for the calendar year (s) in which the dues are paid, except that new member dues paid in the fourth calendar quarter cover the following year.

Date _____

Please check the appropriate boxes below:

New Application Renewal Application

Individual One year - \$10.00 Three years - \$25.00

Household One year - \$15.00 Three years - \$40.00

Lifetime: Individual - \$250.00 Household - \$300.00

Student – age 23 or under One year - \$7.00 Three years - \$20.00

Corporate/non-profit One year - \$30.00 Three years - \$85.00

Corporate sponsor (non-voting) One year - \$100.00

Make a tax deductible donation, amount \$ _____

Please print:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Telephone No.: home cell work _____

Comments: _____

How did you hear about MBS? _____