

# The Tennessee Bluebird

## *Welcome To the Tennessee Bluebird Society Quarterly Newsletter*



Photo Donna Ferguson Dudley

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- Presidents Message
- Montgomery Bell State Park - Rosemary Chamberlain
- TBS Annual Meeting, Warner Park, Nashville, TN
- New Board Members

### Editors Notes

In this issue we are going to feature two good stories.

The first is how Rosemary Chamberlain and her husband made a difference at Montgomery Bell State Park.

The second story is on our 2nd Tennessee Bluebird Society meeting in Nashville, TN. We had 31 people attend and heard two very good speakers. Also, you will have an opportunity to read about our new TBS Board Members.

There has been much talk about the past two winters and how many bluebirds have been lost due to the cold weather. A special edition of our newsletter will be published during the first of December addressing this issue.

Happy Birding!!!!

### BLUEBIRD QUOTES

*As a first-time bluebird monitor, I am alternately mesmerized, mystified, and petrified. Until now, I never gave much thought about how the day-to-day*



*existence of wildlife is so perilous and fragile. What an education!*

*- Donna Spray, Bluebird\_L, 2006*

**PRESIDENTS MESSAGE BY FARRELL ROE**

**T**he second annual meeting of the Tennessee Bluebird Society was a great success! We came together in the conference room of Nashville's Warner Park Nature Center, a place

with noted influence in the research of birds. Thanks to our board member hosts **Rosalind Kurita** and **Gary Buchanan** all was well planned. We had morning coffee and refreshments, gifts for our speakers and certificates of recognition for them as well as the Nature Park itself. It was smooth sailing.

The **Morning Session** included introductions and welcoming to a very good crowd of Tennessee Bluebird members and guests. We were especially pleased and well informed by our two speakers **Danny Shelton** and **Diana McLusky**. Mr Shelton spoke of **Amelia Laskey's** forty years of meticulous recording of Bluebird nest box activities at Warner Park. Mrs Laskey started her research in 1936 and is a recognized Legendary Tennessee Ornithologist. Diana McLusky informed us of "The Bluebirds of Warner Park". This included photographs of activities and information of the many years and many different ways the nature parks' **Volunteers** have contributed to the support of nature as well as Bluebirds.

The **Afternoon Session Membership and Board Meeting** was well attended and

committee reports were given. Membership has steadily increased to 105 members with two charter clubs, one in Loudon and the other in Jackson. A new format was approved for research, Education is supported by programs available for small groups of youth. Publicity was confirmed by the presence of 31 guests. The awards program is still in progress and you are encouraged to let us know what you think should be recognized by our Board. Our web site and newsletter is brilliant and has been very well received. You may submit articles for inclusion in the letter..

The election of officers for the 2016 year included for **President, Charles James**, for **Treasurer, Stan Colburn**, for **Secretary, Stacey Roe**. We welcome our two new board members from the Eastern Region, **Chuck Cruickshank** and **Jerry Rysticken** and we thank **Kelly Atkinson** for his service to TBS as he resigned from the Board as Treasurer

I will remain on the board and become Membership Development Chair. I was presented a nice presidential parting gift , a great pair of binoculars. This has been a challenging and very satisfying venture for me and I am impressed by the members who have joined over the past two years. I am certain we will be successful at our mission of supporting the recovery and perpetuation of the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity nesting birds native to Tennessee.

*Farrell Roe, President*



BLUEBIRD NEST BOX TRAIL AT MONTGOMERY BELL STATE PARK, DICKSON, TN  
BY ROSEMARY CHAMBERLAIN



Chuck James  
President Elect

*You meet the nicest and most dedicated people in the Tennessee Bluebird Society. At our annual meeting I finally had an opportunity to meet Rosemary Chamberlain from Dickson, TN. Rosemary and her husband are making a difference for our bluebirds and other cavity nesters. I've asked her to share her story with us, I'm sure you will enjoy this story and be inspired.*

**D**uring the first week of March of this year, two of MBSP's park rangers and the park manager, Mr. Pat Wright, had come to speak to our local Master Gardeners monthly meeting about volunteer opportunities, particularly helping with the park's native plant flower beds. I immediately thought, "bluebird trail!" After the meeting, I asked Pat if there was an existing bluebird trail at the park. He said that at one time there had been several nest boxes placed throughout the park, but they had not been touched in three years. I told him I would love to revive the bluebird box trail in the park. He immediately jumped on the opportunity to have

this done, stating that this was a project that he felt had been needing some attention for a long time.

My husband and I began the long process of locating and removing all of the old bluebird boxes that we could find within the park. Unfortunately, we found most of the boxes to be in poor shape, and every single box had been placed either on a tree or a wooden post. We immediately began to notice heartbreaking signs of predation; remains of bluebirds were found inside, on top of, and around the bases of several of the boxes. Many of the boxes that had been attached to trees also contained dozens of ants. Some of these boxes





BLUEBIRD NEST BOX TRAIL AT MONTGOMERY BELL STATE PARK, DICKSON, TN  
BY ROSEMARY CHAMBERLAIN (Cont)

extending all the way up to the entrance holes. Several of the entrance holes had been made much larger by woodpeckers and squirrels, thus making the entire nest box virtually uninhabitable and unsafe to use by bluebirds. By placing nest boxes on tree trunks or a wood post, nest boxes can easily become death traps for cavity nesting birds and their young; they become an easy meal for predators such as cats, raccoons,



snakes, and squirrels.

We took home all of the boxes that we found, discarded a couple that were beyond

help, thoroughly cleaned out the remaining boxes, made the necessary repairs, and also replaced parts to many of them. My husband made hole guards out of sheet metal for all of the boxes, as well as 2 new boxes. We now had 31 nest boxes that any bluebird would be proud to call home.

We made the decision to invest some time and effort in obtaining the necessary supplies to do this project right and make these nest boxes safe. The park manager agreed to the decision,

and with the financial help of Friends of MBSP, we obtained 7' T-posts (to use as the posts for our nest boxes), 2" wide PVC pipes (to use as sleeves around the T-posts) and U-bolts (to secure the backs of the boxes to the T-posts).

It was now the last part of March, and after a couple of days of arduous labor, my husband and I had installed all 31 nest boxes and poles throughout the park. (I must stop right here and give the credit of most of this labor to my husband. He cut all of the PVC pipes, installed all the U-bolts, and took a T-post driver and drove all of these posts into the ground himself. As anyone that has driven a 7' T-post into the ground knows, that is extremely hard work.) Beginning eight days later, I began



going out to the park to monitor the boxes once a week. On the average, each visit took me about 2 hours to monitor and record my findings.

## BLUEBIRD NEST BOX TRAIL AT MONTGOMERY BELL STATE PARK, DICKSON, TN

Because we did get started rather late this season, we did not have any more than 2 clutches of bluebirds in any one box. During this first year, 128 bluebird babies



were fledged. Other cavity nesters also used the boxes. There was one European starling nest, but the nest was immediately discarded. Also fledged were: 5 tufted titmice, 10 Carolina chickadees, and 5 Carolina wrens. I was quite surprised to find 2 little brown bats, which for a period of 4 weeks, used a single nest box as a roosting box during the day. By the end of the first week of August, all bluebird babies had fledged. During the first week of September, we cleaned out all the boxes, and made notes of which boxes needed to be repaired and/or moved later this year. During this last visit, I found 3 active flying squirrel

nests, which I did not disturb. We will remove these nests and clean out the boxes during our next trip out



there. I was extremely pleased that there were no signs of predation noted in any of the boxes during this first year.

We ran into one difficulty with finding good locations for all of the boxes. In order to make it easier to mow, the maintenance crew wanted us to remove some of the boxes that we had placed in open areas and set them back under the trees. The problem with this is that



bluebirds normally like open spaces. As we thought, these particular boxes received absolutely no bluebird activity, but a few other cavity nesting birds took advantage of them. We will probably try to relocate a couple of these boxes at a later date this year.

The only real problem that was noted, were paper wasps making nests in a few

BLUEBIRD NEST BOX TRAIL AT MONTGOMERY BELL STATE PARK, DICKSON, TN  
BY ROSEMARY CHAMBERLAIN (Cont)

of the boxes, especially at the beginning of the season. All of the wasps were immediately eradicated. To prevent further wasp nests, a bar of Ivory soap was rubbed



on the ceilings of all the boxes. Bluebirds will not inhabit a nest which contains wasps. Can you blame them?

This past summer, I presented educational programs about cavity nesting birds, and

specifically our bluebirds, to the children and some of their parents in the Junior Ranger and Special Needs Junior Ranger programs at MBSP.

During the coming winter, we are hoping to get on the golf course at MBSP, and salvage and remove any additional bluebird boxes that may be out there.

### **Rosemary Chamberlain**

*Rosemary is a member of TBS and NABS. Her husband and her installed, and maintain and monitor 15 bluebird boxes on their property, which appropriately enough is named Bluebird Hill. They're certified Tennessee Naturalists, and in order to maintain their certifications, they must contribute 40 hours of volunteer service work each year. Rosemary states, "Taking on this rewarding project at our local state park just seemed like a perfect fit for us."*



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TENNESSEE BLUEBIRD SOCIETY 2ND ANNUAL MEETING  
SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2015  
WARNER PARK, NASHVILLE, TN  
BY: CHUCK JAMES

When we had our first annual meeting in the fall of 2014 we invited our TBS members to attend. We had only TBS board members attending. Now this year with over 100 members we decided

to make it a better event with speakers. Board Members Rosalind Kurita and Gary Buchanan stepped up and took on the challenge of putting on a TBS 1/2 Day Annual Meeting. What a great job!!!! We had 31 people attend this years annual meeting. Those attending were: **Barbara & John Kell, Carole Rose & Al Ashcraft, Chuck & Terry James, Danny Shelton (Speaker), Diana McLusky (Speaker), Duane Rice, Gary Buchanan, John Beasley, Joyce & Larry Ladd, Libby Mundy, Marcia & Terry Simo, Mike & Dianne Calahan, Nancy Johnson, Nancy Jones, Rosalind & George Kurita, Rosemary Chamberlain, Sam Jones, Stan & Linda Colburn, Sue Shallow, Susan Bradfield, Tammy & Mike Freehling.**

We found the perfect venue for our meeting. The Warner Park, Nature Center in Nashville, TN. Amelia Laskey a well respected birder in Tennessee established one of the first nest box trails in North America in 1936 at Warner Park. Today that trail is still be monitored by

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dedicated volunteers. What a wonder legacy she left behind.



We had two speakers: Danny Shelton and Diana McLusky both presentations were outstanding.

Danny Shelton shared with us a portion of his DVD "A Century of Birds" The Tennessee Ornithological Society. This is a must

have DVD if you are a bird enthusiast in Tennessee. Twelve months in the making, and filmed during all four seasons, A Year With Birds is an intriguing glimpse into the lives of birds of the southeastern United States. You can preview a portion of the DVD at

[www.ayearwithbirds.com](http://www.ayearwithbirds.com) you can also purchase a copy of this DVD.

Danny's DVD touched on the life of Amelia Laskey and her contribution to bluebirds and other native Tennessee birds.

We would also like to thank Danny for his contribution and support of our Annual Meeting.



Left TBS President Farrell Roe presenting Daniel Shelton with a speakers appreciation award

Diana McLusky gave us a good look at Warner Park and the volunteer activity in monitoring and recording nest box data.

Ms. McLusky's talk gave us insight into the many programs offered at the Warner Park Nature Center for adults and children.

Right Diana McLusky is presented with a speakers appreciation award by Farrell Roe President of the Tennessee Bluebird Society.



In appreciation for hosting the Tennessee Bluebird Society Annual meeting Chuck James presents three new nest boxes and poles for the Warner Park Nature Center. Certainly the Tennessee Bluebird Society wants to work closely with the park to develop programs for adults and children that can be implemented statewide pertaining to our native cavity nesting birds.



## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Annual Board Meeting started at 12:45PM. Board Members Present were: Farrell Roe, Duane Rice, Stan Colburn, Rosalind Kurita and Chuck James. Excused were Stacey Roe, Joanne Watson, Gary Buchanan and Kelley Atkinson.

The minutes from the July 23, 2015 conference call meeting were approved. At the time of the meeting before meeting expenses our checking account had a balance of \$2,253.10. Our current membership is at 105 members, with 30 from the

Western part of Tennessee, 9 from the Central Region and 66 from the Eastern Region including 4 from out-of-state.

Farrell Roe thank everyone for their hard work during his two year Presidency. Rosalind Kurita presented Farrell with a thank you gift from the TBS a pair of binoculars.

The Nominating Committee recommended the following slate of Officers: President Chuck James, Treasurer Stan Colburn, Secretary Stacey Roe. At this time they had no Vice President candidate. Kelley Atkinson is leaving the TBS Board. This slate was presented to the board and members in attendance and was approved.

Two new TBS Board Members were presented; Chuck Cruickshank and Jerry Rysticken. Both of these candidates are from the Eastern Region. The Board approved the appointment of these new Board Members (See Bio's on the following page).

A new data collection form was submitted and approved by the TBS Board. This will allow trail landlords the ability to report on their nest box trails yearly. The hope is this data may be used for the future research.

As new President Chuck James thank Farrell Roe for his leadership over the past two years. He wants TBS to continue to follow its mission:

*"The Tennessee Bluebird Society is dedicated to: Promoting Bluebird and other native nesting bird conservation. Develop public awareness, educational programs and workshops. Encourage and aid in the development of nest box trails and collecting data for research. Also, to provide social opportunities for members to share information and experiences relating to bluebirds, birding, conservation and related topics."*



## WELCOME OUR NEWEST TBS BOARD MEMBERS



Chuck Cruickshank

**C**huck Cruickshank is a consultant to the dairy industry. He is a seasoned agribusiness professional with over 40 years of experience working with dairy farmers, and has first-hand, on-farm knowledge of milk production, milk marketing and

processing, and the issues that dairy farmers face. Most recently, as Director of Customer-Facing Trends at Land O' Lakes, he was responsible for consumer confidence issues at the farm level, including animal care and sustainability. Prior to that activity, Chuck worked as the Senior Vice-President of Industry Relations at the Midwest Dairy Association, and as Executive V.P. of Industry Relations at Dairy Management, Inc., both farmer-funded promotional companies who have expertise in issues surrounding consumer confidence.

Chuck and his wife, Cecelia "retired" to Tellico Village in 2015. Both have been involved with gardening and nature clubs in former communities in New York, Pennsylvania and Minnesota. Their children and grandchildren live in the Minneapolis, MN area.

Chuck and his wife have been involved with the Tellico Village Bluebird nesting box project on Toqua golf course, and with the Tellico Village Bird Club since their arrival in Tennessee.



Jerry Rysticken

**J**erry Rysticken was born and raised in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in zoology, then

received an MBA in Hospital Administration from the University of Florida. He worked in several Florida and Tennessee hospitals before becoming CEO of Medic Regional Blood Center. He retired after more than twenty years and lives with his wife, Dianna, in Farragut.

They have children in Raleigh, Indianapolis, and in East Tennessee.

Both Jerry and Dianna have been avid skiers, mountain hikers, and, in earlier days, backpackers. Jerry also volunteered on acid rain studies in the GSMNP for over ten years. Both do volunteer work cross country skiing with autistic children as part of the NSCD.

He has monitored bluebird trails since 1999, including a trail at NHC Farragut since 2000.

This past September, Dianna and Jerry attended their first NABS convention in rural Quebec Province. There they met Chuck and Terry James and other committed blue birders.

## **We need help in the following areas**

*\* **County coordinators** - Give presentations to local civic groups and organize one community project per year.*

*\* **Data Collection** - Must have strong spreadsheet skills. Collect trail data and collate for research.*

*\* **Woodworkers** - Willing to build nest boxes.*

*\* **TBS Board Members** - We need people interested in taking a leadership role in TBS.*

*\* **Newsletter Publisher** - Must have past experience putting together newsletters.*

*Email us if your interested in the above opportunities to:*

[tnsialia@gmail.com](mailto:tnsialia@gmail.com)

### **Tennessee Bluebird Society Board of Directors**

#### **Eastern Region:**

Stan Colburn - Loudon  
Chuck Cruickshank - Loudon  
Chuck James - Loudon  
Jerry Rysticken - Knoxville

#### **Central Region:**

Gary Buchanan - Thompson Station  
Duane Rice - Chapmansboro  
Rosalind Kurita - Clarksville

#### **Western Region:**

Farrell Roe - Jackson  
Stacey Roe - Jackson  
Joanne Watson - Collierville

Email: [tnsialia@gmail.com](mailto:tnsialia@gmail.com)

Website: [www.tnbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.tnbluebirdsociety.org)

Facebook: Tennessee Bluebird Society

## TENNESSEE BLUEBIRD SOCIETY APPLICATION

<u>Category</u>	1 Year	3 year	Lifetime
Household	\$15	\$35	\$150
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Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ NABS

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I have interest in helping the following areas: Newsletter\_\_\_\_, Membership\_\_\_\_, Education\_\_\_\_, Website Management\_\_\_\_, Data Collection\_\_\_\_, Becoming a Board Member of Tennessee Bluebird Society\_\_\_\_

Send your application and check to: Tennessee  
Bluebird Society

10350 Altona Cove  
Collierville, TN 38017

Website: [www.TNBluebirdsociety.org](http://www.TNBluebirdsociety.org) / Email: [TNSialia@Gmail.com](mailto:TNSialia@Gmail.com)

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