

TEXAS Blues



Texas Bluebird Society Newsletter • March 2019 • Volume 18. Issue 1

President's State Of The Organization Report

By Pauline Tom

How are we doing with our mission, To spread Bluebirds (and other native cavity-nesting birds) Across Texas...one nestbox at a time" – through education; and, the installation of "NestWatch'd" nestboxes in appropriate habitat; and, sustaining and increasing their natural food supply (insects and berries of native plants) – while enjoying the process and the bluebirds.

Membership Records reached **#6639** at year-end. Through the years, since 2001, many members installed their first nestbox under the influence of Texas Bluebird Society. **Each edition of "Texas Blues" goes to over 1,000 current memberships.** Most members accept an email notification when the newsletter is posted online, so entire (tax deductible) dues payments go into the work of the organization.

Each year, our IRS 990 is posted in the About Us section of our website. Inadvertently, some were missing. Our new web editor, Kathi Camp, added missing pieces.

Kathi, her husband Clyde (web editor), and Susan Crowson (bookkeeper) hold our only paid positions. They give to TBS much more than what we pay.

2018 hit us hard financially as 12-foot cedar boards more than doubled in price in two years. We continue to give away nestboxes to new members joining face-to-face and sell nestboxes at a wholesale price; and, we give away dozens of nestboxes to members who pledged to NestWatch at least two nestboxes at the NestWatch signup station at Season Kickoff.

A whoppin' 51% of our 2018 income (\$19,696 of \$38,837) went to expenses related to "nestboxes." **We ended 2018 with a (\$6,541) deficit in the budget.**

Because of the drastic price increase our bank account and investments took a deep dive! In 2019 Budget Planning, the **Board raised household membership dues to \$20 and raised the price of our "Texas Nestbox" to \$25.** With this added income, we have a balanced 2019 budget.

Our certified nestbox builders have **constructed over 16,000 "official" nestboxes** since inception. With about 1,000 nestboxes ready for distribution, we've **distributed approximately 15,000 nestboxes.** *Conservatively, over one-quarter million cavity-nesting birds have fledged from our official "Texas Nestbox."* Countless more nestboxes have been built under our influence, by members and those who download our free nestbox plans from our website.

Standards say that nonprofits should spend no more than 25 – 50% of contributions on fundraising. **Texas Bluebird Society spends 0.00% on fundraising.** 100% from our FUNdraiser (and every donated dollar over and above annual dues) purchases cedar for volunteer-built nestboxes.

Volunteers do TBS' work. **Every member who installs a nestbox and/or plants natives is a volunteer,** as we work together to spread "Bluebirds Across Texas...one nestbox at a time". Many of us have "NestWatch'd" nestboxes. If you report nesting observations to NestWatch, you make a difference for science, beyond Texas' borders.

You can help TBS simply by planting natives and "enjoying the process and the bluebirds". Thanks! Love to you, PTom

Our greatest need is volunteers involved in "running" the organization.

An organization of our size and mission requires many volunteers with a variety of skills. Administrative tasks can be as simple as stuffing envelopes or as complex as managing the entire operation, with a 100 tasks requiring different skill levels in-between.

*Pauline has been president of TBS since its inception, and what a **SUPERB** job she has done to create the strong and effective organization we are today. However, Pauline is ready to pass on the baton. The next issue will explore the many opportunities available for volunteers to become involved in how we, as an organization, continue to grow and execute our mission of conservation and education.*

2019: A New Hope For Irwin Ranch



After a disappointing bluebird season in 2018 on my ranch in Mills County, I am looking forward to this upcoming season. The New Year brings a new hope for bluebird nesting. I have 15 nest boxes deployed on my 195 acre ranch. I became a member of the Bluebird society in 2015. I have enjoyed being a member and learning about how to attract and have Bluebirds nest on my place. I have seen several different species that nest on the ranch, namely Tufted Titmouse, Bewick's wren and Eastern Bluebirds.

The weather seems to be more moderate than 2018. We saw some very cold weather in early February in 2018. With my weather station, I can see trending of the temperatures right on my ranch. The temperatures appear to be trending to more moderate spring time temperatures as of late. As I have mentioned before, I have a weather station on my ranch so I can keep up with current weather remotely. If you would like, you may visit my weather station as it is part on the weather underground family. You can [visit](#) it anytime.

When I started out in 2015, I purchased 4 nest boxes from the Bluebird society. I decided that I wanted to build the rest of the boxes myself. I invested in tools, western cedar and supplies and built 11 more nest boxes. I could have saved money by just purchasing the boxes but by making the boxes myself caused me to be more invested and committed to the Bluebirds.



My focus in 2019 will be to make sure my nest boxes are in good condition and are clean until the bluebirds begin nesting. I will be making a greater effort in keeping the grass trimmed around the nest boxes. I have noticed that keeping the grass trimmed encourages more bluebirds to nest. Otherwise wrens tend to nest.

I am also adjusting the nest boxes again this season. I am moving the boxes closer to landing sites. Hopefully, this change will also encourage bluebird nesting.

TBS recommends Nestbox placement 100 feet from nearby trees or shrubs. Fledglings can fly up to 50 yards.

I have seen some bluebird activity in 2019, but as of this writing, I have not seen any actual nesting.

I look forward to this season with great excitement and hope to give a positive report of successful bluebird nesting later this year.

Ready to fledge

Articles and photos by **Thomas Irwin**.

Tom joined TBS in 2015 to learn more about bluebirds and incorporate the appropriate methods to deliver water, food, and shelter in his land management programs on his 195 acre ranch in Mills County. Tom will be sharing his nesting successes as well as tips and techniques he is using to enhance his environment to attract birds and other wildlife to his ranch.

(Right) First fight ended short, but Mom and Dad came to the rescue and this little one made it successfully to a branch.



A Bird's Delight—Red Mulberry—*Morus rubra*

By **Linda Crum**

Master Gardener and Master Naturalist

Red mulberry, *Morus rubra*, is a very attractive, native, deciduous, understory tree that produces berries that birds and fruit-eating mammals love. Many folks think the mulberry is a messy tree but my neighbors have one overhanging their driveway and I have not seen any messy fruits on the driveway. I do see many birds in that tree when the fruits are present. No self-respecting bird would let one fruit hit the ground.

The range of red mulberry is eastern United States, including Texas, and eastern Canada. It grows to a height of 35-50 feet with a spread of 35-40 feet in full sun to part shade. Leaf shape can be quite variable ranging



from unlobed to deeply lobed and from rough-textured to glabrous on the surface. The flowers are green and insignificant. The trees are either monoecious (having both male and female reproductive flowers on the same tree) or usually dioecious (having male and female reproductive flowers on separate trees). Obviously, if the tree is dioecious and has only male reproductive flowers there is no fruit. Sweet blackberry-like fruits that are reddish to dark purple in color follow fertilized female flowers. Apparently, *Morus spp.* are gender fluid, first being male then female and changing back again. Sometimes the flowers start out as one sex and transform half-way through the season. Oh dear!



Native Americans have used the fruits in beverages, pies, and bread. It has been used in Appalachia for raw fruit, pies and wine for many years. The Native Americans also used mulberry fruits medicinally as a deworming agent and as a laxative. The sap was used to treat ringworm. The unripe fruits and milky sap from all parts of the plant are slightly toxic causing upset stomach and hallucinations. The toxin is unknown.

The wood of the mulberry tree has been used for fence posts, furniture and agricultural tools. Choctaw Indians and other Native Americans used the inner bark of young mulberry shoots to weave cloaks.



Red mulberry not only attracts fruit-eating birds and mammals but also serves as the larval host for the Mourning Cloak butterfly.

Photos from Lady Bird Johnson's wildflower.org

Meet Nestbox Builder Dee Myers



Dee's interest in woodworking began about 17 years ago when she enrolled in a woodworking class at the local community college in Uvalde. Today she proudly admits "the smell of cut lumber is an enticing perfume" for her. She has built many items over the years and is now focusing her woodworking skills on providing hundreds of nestboxes for TBS. In addition to her huge commitment to build 250 nestboxes every year, Dee has also accepted the task of overseeing the Nestbox Certification Program initiated by TBS member Don Lawrence in 2014.

It is critical to the mission of TBS to be able to provide nestboxes to members and other interested parties so we can continue our mission "Bluebirds Across Texas ... one nestbox at a time. It is not enough that we have a nestbox; they must meet specific plan criteria designed to withstand the Texas environment, and every nestbox must meet consistent quality building standards. This is where Dee's work with new nestbox volunteers ensures that every nestbox we distribute is grade A quality.

Making one nestbox is easy, hundreds, well, that requires commitment, the right tools, and a fair amount of space. Dee is happy to report that in 2018 her 25' x 30' woodworking shop is finished. Although there is always a little tweaking like adding a dust filtration system or a new tool now and then.

Trained by Don in 2016, Dee has now completed training her first volunteer, Archie Manning. Dee provides step-by-step instructions along with the "why" for each feature. Over the years TBS has researched and tweaked every feature of the nestbox to be the best fit for Texas weather.

Woodworking and quilting, Dee's two favorite hobbies, both require attention to detail, specific skills



and a creative process. In addition to all of the nestboxes for TBS, Dee makes quilts for the Children Without Borders program. Dee also participates in church activities, Ladies Bible Study, a variety of sewing and craft projects, and gardening, Dee is also expanding her bluebird related activities. She is teaching how to assemble a nestbox class to her Ladies Bible Study group, hosting the TBS booth at the Blueberry Festival in Nacogdoches on June 8th, and teaching a Nestbox Clinic at the symposium.

Dee began her career as a Medical Assistant, then a phlebotomist, moving onto a Unit Clerk, which Dee likens to an air traffic controller in a hospital for patients and doctors. Dee transferred her medical skills to a different arena becoming a Veterinarian Assistant. Although she claims retirement she still works 2 hrs a week at CVS.

Dee and her husband, Stan, now reside in Montgomery. They have 3 children and 4 grandchildren. With all of her varied activities we are very fortunate that Dee finds the time for TBS and her commitment to build Nestboxes and manage the Nestbox Certification Program. THANK YOU DEE!



Meet Nestbox Builder ArchieManning



Dee Myers, our new Nestbox Certification Program Mgr. gives Archie an A and his new workshop an A+++



Archie Manning signed up as a volunteer Nestbox Builder when he joined TBS in March 2018. He has completed the Nestbox Certification Program with Dee Myer and has already delivered 230 nestboxes to Kyle storage. Not bad for a volunteer who hasn't even retired yet! Archie's full time job as a wholesaler for precast concrete products keeps him pretty busy. How does he have so much spare time? Archie is fortunate to be able to work from home, eliminating the long commute time so many of us endured before we retired.

Concrete to woodworking, how did this happen? Archie's older brother, Jeff, became fascinated with the art of woodworking. Jeff invested many hours researching the tips and techniques used in woodworking, and the best tools (of which there are many) to use for each of unique processes. He even spent a great deal of time investigating and planning the ideal set-up for a woodworking shop. Unfortunately Jeff passed away before he was able to realize his dream. As a tribute to his brother, Archie decided to create his brother's woodworking shop concept. Of course, watching his brother's endeavors, Archie became hooked on woodworking too.

Archie was the first volunteer to complete the Nestbox Certification Program under Dee's tutelage. For those of us who admire the finished product but really have no clue how it happens, let me assure you, beyond the skill, talent, and dedication required, you need a lot of space and a lot of tools!

According to Dee, "Archie has a woodworker's dream workshop!" His shop is 30' x 60' with a 17' ceiling. Complete with air conditioning and a state-of-the-art dust filtration system, and 10' x 10' office. Archie has a set of tools that would make Norm Abrams of *The New Yankee Workshop* weep with joy. Needless to say, Archie really enjoys constructing hundreds of nestboxes and feels like he is honoring his brother's vision. Archie appreciated his wife, Kristen, who always lends a helping hand when he reaches the assembly stage. (photo bottom left)

Archie now has a new awareness of his neighborhood birds. "Building nestboxes has really opened my eyes to birds. It is exciting, exhilarating, and fun! I want to keep on helping - let's make bluebirds the state bird of Texas! I am learning the names of birds coming to my feeders, and have a new app to learn their calls. Archie and Kristen, are enjoy the birds!



Archie and Kristen do other projects together - like consuming a variety of beer for the caps used to create this beautiful table top!

Photo Gallery



By Becky Boyd



By Sam Toscano



By David Kinneer



By Sam Toscano



By Becky Boyd

Board of Directors

Pauline Tom

President
Executive Committee
EventPlans Team
(Mountain City)

Lonnie Castleman

Vice-President
Executive Committee
EventPlans Team
Nestbox Const. Coord.
(Trinity)

Linda Crum

Treasurer
(The Woodlands)

Benni Konvicka

Executive Committee
Fundraising Auction
EventPlans Team
(Stephenville)

Pat Nail

Executive Committee
EventPlans Team
(Clayton)

Beverly Davis

Fundraising Auction
EventPlans Team
(Conroe)

Brian Sinclair

New Member Welcome
(Conroe)

Jane Jenkins

(Conroe)

Advisory Board

Harold Latham

Event Speaker Support
(Ivanhoe)

Rex Reves

Auction Data Processing
(Waxahachie)

David Smith

Nestbox Inventory
(Bexar)

Contact Us:

tbs@txblues.org,
PO Box 40868
Austin, TX 78704
512-268-5678 (Pauline Tom)

Volunteers Are Appreciated!

Caryn Brewer
Ashton Carrigon
Letitia Castleman
Lonnie Castleman
Susan Crowson
Linda Crum
Kay Dansby
Carol Hagemeyer

Archie Manning
Patti Marshall
Sharon Miggans
Don Mitchell
Jerald Mowery
Helen Munro
Dee Myers
Paul Nelson

Volunteers Are Always Needed!
Call 512-268-5678

Debbie Park
John Park
Shannon Ramsey
Pauline Tom
Ron Tom
Debbie Tugwell
Gary Tugwell
Vanessa Vosinet

Thanks For Your Financial Support!

Pedro Arrechea
John Barrow
Bill Bartush
Petur G. Bauer
James Bishop
Janis Boulware
Judy Bradley
Catherine Brown
Norma Bruns
Clyde Camp
Charles Canton
Anne Cassidy
CEMEX Balcones,
Lacy Cloud
Michael & Sylvia
Cooper
Terry R Corbell
Sondra Creighton
Barbara Crystal
Valeska Danielak
Terry Dinerman
Lore Drott
Diana Foss

Kirk Franz
Anna Goodman
Henry & Annie Hamman
Henry & Annie Hamman
Julia Heskett
Patti Hickman
Jody Hilberg
Susan Hughes
Thomas Irwin
Linda James
Weston Jennings
Janet Kirklen
Sheryl Kuperman
R.L. Langley
Judy Lano
Wendy Jo Ledbetter
Charlene & Curtis Lusk
Stuart & Kathy Marcus
CR & Pat McFarland
Kay Moore
Katherine Peake
Donna Piercy
Jeri Porter

Ellen Reeder
Stephen Rhyne
Elizabeth Romero
Linda Ross
Theresa Sandberg
Grace Scalzo
Richard Schaffhausen
Jim Seale
Norman Shoemaker
Jody Smith
Sue Sport
Sandy Strack
Nelda & Michael Tandy
Judith Telford
Scott & n Tyler
Melinda Walker
Jim Weatherly
Don Wheeler
Wild Birds Unlimited
The Woodlands Store
Trish Wilson
James L. Wittliff
Peggy York

Welcome New Members!

- Beth Anderson
- Robert Anderson
- Donna Arego
- Pedro Arrechea
- Carolyn Bayless
- Melissa Bennett
- Loreen Bennett
- Nancy Bettisworth
- Robbie Billing
- Jen Blackburn
- Joe Boucher
- Barbara Boucher
- Gary Bowers
- John/Ruth Bowling
- Saundra Boyls
- Judy Bradley
- Chuck Buzbee
- Margaret Jo Byron
- Charles C Canton
- Len Carlton
- Chris Cochran
- Marilyn Conger
- Patricia Coyle
- Gerald Crotwell
- Claudia Cunningham
- Linda Curington
- Mary Danylak
- Jim Davis
- Hannah Dietz
- Julie Dobiyski
- Gary/Linda Dolecki
- Karen Douglas
- Lore Drott
- Frank Drury
- Tim Durrett
- Barbara Eckel
- Linda H Evans
- Susan Evans
- Jetti Fahle
- Carol Farrell
- Deb Fletcher
- Paulette Ford
- Ann Fox
- Tracy Geyer
- Stephanie Gibson
- Laura Gibson
- Mary Good
- Laurie/Ken Graham
- Lynn Grantham
- David Gunther
- William Harris
- Dory Hersey
- Ginger Hicks
- Ellen Horton
- Mack Humphreys
- Cindy Hunchusky
- Shirley James
- Linda L James
- Weston Jennings
- Pat Jessie
- Judy Jones
- Barbara Jordan
- Janet Kirklen
- Lawson L Kloesel
- Julia Lamberth
- Ginger Lawless
- Jim Leas
- Walter/Jerry Lethin
- Evelyn Lewis
- Judy Linville
- Cynthia Lockwood
- Bonnie Manley
- Claudia Mann
- Christine Mason
- Jo Matthew
- Rusty Mauldin
- Danielle McAteer
- Dennis McBrayer
- Joel McBride
- Louis R Michka
- Debbie Moore
- Pam Musketness
- Randy Nance
- Nicole Parker
- Lacey Patterson
- Addie Penix
- Charla Petry
- Crystal Pettijohn
- Zechorah Poindexter
- Julie Quimby
- Candace Quinn
- Rhonda Reuter
- Treva Roberts
- Bryan Rockwell
- Christine Sanders
- Kimberlie Sasan
- Jeremy Saxon
- Melanie Schuchart
- Carol Shields
- Cynthia E Smith
- Elmina Smith
- Jody Smith
- Ella Spann
- Aggie St. Clair
- Angela Street
- Betsy Thornton
- Jennifer Tristani
- Lisa Trom
- Scott & Ann Tyner
- Barbara VanArsdale
- Gerald Wade
- Brenda Wagner
- Patricia Wall
- Sherry Whisenant
- Angie Williams
- David A Williams
- Lyndon Wright
- Elisa Zelnick

First Eastern Bluebird Reported In Oregon

On November 25, 2018, Eric Carlson was enjoying his bird walk around the Dharma Rain Zen Center, located in Multnomah County, Oregon, when he happened upon a very unexpected sight—a pair of male Eastern Bluebirds! The first sighting of an Eastern Bluebird in Oregon.

Eric photographed and reported his find on eBird, which has now been sanctioned by the ABA.

Both the Western and Mountain Bluebird are found year round in Oregon. Did the Eastern Bluebirds decide to visit their cousins for Thanksgiving? Eric and his friends have named them Lewis and Clark. It will be interesting to see if anymore Eastern Bluebirds decide to head out west now that Lewis and Clark have blazed the trail.

Thank you Eric for sharing your discovery and beautiful photographs with us!



Click button below to add event to your calendar

[Add to your calendar](#)



2019 Bluebird Symposium
August 2-3
in Midlothian

All the usual good stuff:

Great Speakers and Clinics - Silent Auction FUNraiser - Friday Night (8/2) Social and Program Information Stations - NestWatch sign-up - Cool Stuff To Buy Like Nestboxes and Heat Shields,

Visit [TBS](#) for event news and registration details

Federal law protects all native nesting birds!

- **Do not disturb birds or collect nests/eggs.**
- **Monitor and report activity to NestWatch.**

TEXAS BLUEBIRD SOCIETY
PO BOX 40868
AUSTIN, TX 78704



Return Service Requested

The Texas Bluebird Society newsletter, *TX Blues*, is published four times a year: March ■ May ■ July ■ October

Debbie Bradshaw Park, Editor

Send stories/photos to editor@txblues.org

Moved?

Send email/address changes to records@txblues.org