



Points East

By:
Ike Adams

Besides holding down and excelling at a senior management position in a \$20 million dollar company, my friend, colleague and technically my boss is a single mother, master horticulturist, homeowner who is enrolled in a Masters Degree program in wildlife management at Eastern Kentucky University where she carries a 3.7 grade point average.

I get tired just thinking about everything Jeni Hoesfeld has on her plate and sometimes I become envious because I have neither the energy nor ambition to get half as much done. When I look at her flower garden I get downright jealous. At least I have the satisfaction of knowing that what I've written so far will cause her to blush as I hope that it doesn't get me fired.

Actually I intended to use Jeni's wildlife studies as a lead into this piece because it's about birds. Jeni is doing her Master's thesis on Eastern Bluebirds and I have been privileged to tag along on her field studies a few times with my camera in tow. Long time readers on this column know that I have a deep and abiding affection for song birds but I can only recognize a couple dozen or so out of the hundreds that fly about.

I don't do much bird photography because I'm not a very patient person but I can afford the \$3,000 price tag that a proper 120mm telephoto birders lens carries.

Jeni promised that she could get me close enough to the birds that I might not need such a long lens. She is doing her research at Eastern Army Depot between Richmond and Berea. Fortunately the guards and inspectors and the guy who issues badges that allows visitors on the premises do not read my mind. Jeni managed to talk them into letting me follow her around with some pretty sophisticated camera equipment.

The professors and students of EKU's Wildlife Management program have put up dozens at least and maybe even hundreds of simple bird houses on the depot grounds among

huge bunkers where I presume nerve gas and all manner of other deadly ammunition rest. But that doesn't seem to bother the birds nor the students and both utterly flock among them as though they were a natural part of the landscape.

On my first visit, Jeni, her eight-year-old daughter, Briana and I spent several hours using an electric screwdriver to unfasten the tops of so many blue bird boxes that I lost count. Jeni was to get a pair of baby blue birds that eight-year-old Briana could use to wow her own non-believing class mates at Kingston Elementary

School and like Mom, keep that grade point average up among the stars. Briana had been talking up blue birds at school to the point that she needed a little proof that she knew of which she spoke.

The very first box we checked was inhabited but not by a bluebird. Suffice to say that I know what a tree swallow looks like and a mug shot of this one's back and eyeballs in case I forget. For the next two hours we looked at several empty nests and numerous others that had eggs but no babies. In fact, if all the eggs we saw hatch, you won't have to worry about eastern bluebirds becoming extinct over the next several years. Finally, just as we were about to give up, the last nest of the day had babies.

Babies that only a mother could call beautiful. A newly hatched bluebird is not a lovely sight in my humble opinion. Their heads are large, they are featherless and they show no evidence that will grow up to be one of the most stunning of Mother Nature's creations. Their skin is so transparent that you can see and identify their internal organs. I have pictures to prove it. Briana has also quipped a few naysayers with photos taken while she lovingly cupped the naked little creatures in the palms of her hands.

I have ten bucks that say 90% of her classmates would not have had the nerve. Back at Jeni's house, later in the day, we photographed some more bluebirds nesting in front and in a box conveniently located right beside the driveway where Jeni can check their daily progress without having to get out of the car. You, dear reader, and I could put up blue bird boxes until we had blisters on our hands in our front yards and most likely never collect anything except moss. I point this out in reference to the jealousy I mentioned earlier.

Last week I went back to the depot with Jeni and one of her classmates to look at baby red-tailed hawks. Unless you are majoring in wildlife management, a baby bird is pretty much a baby bird unless it's a baby hawk in which case it's larger than a lot of full grown chickens. We visited three different nests, all of which had babies, but the students wanted to band one with tail feathers mature enough that they could attach a radio transmitter.

I don't know who made the arrangements, but a guy who works at the depot showed up with one of those trucks with a boom that can put a human on top of a power pole or, in this case, into the top of any tree that a hawk might want tumbled into a

homedead. I had never even seen a baby hawk, but now I have a photograph of one who actually acted like he got lifted from his nest, lowered to the ground to have hands put on his ankle and radio devices attached to his rear end two of three times a day every day. In fact, I have 75 pictures of baby hawks and the only reason I don't have more is because I ran out of film.

I was describing my bird photography expeditions over the weekend with such enthusiasm that one of my

friends suggested that perhaps going back to school and getting a wildlife degree is something I ought to also consider. And to be honest I did muse on the idea for a few seconds. Then I remembered how much work Jeni Hoesfeld is putting into it and exhaustion got the best of me again.

However, as soon as I get a chance to make enough copies of the pictures, I'll share them with your newspaper because a fledgling red-tailed hawk is simply too beautiful to describe with mere words.

Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves

Remember When?

Conversations beginning with, "Do you remember when?" is usually associated with the older generation. The thing that does matter is an important part of one's life is brought into focus that can allow the two acquaintances, or perhaps strangers, dwell with common interest in "the good old days" versus the outrageous growth by the youth of today. Ah-ha I wonder if they, we, also remember the hardships of those days we look back on with nostalgia instead of reality.

I am guilty of both. That was some "good old days" worth remembering, there were plenty of the bad ones we would rather forget. Some of the good ones are of family gatherings, some lasting several days, and making room for everyone to sleep. Remember Little Jimmy Dickson, and his "Sleeping at the foot of the bed." Well that has happened at our house many times. Often with two at the head and two at the foot. The kids like it for slaps in the face. It was simply a way of life for those with scanty room space and kids back then, we also remember, did as they were told, and not as they wished. They learned obedience early and were not the worst lot for slaps in the face. And then pailles made on the floor for the older ones. Over the years, mealtime at our house has been talked about by nieces and nephews, from both sides of the family, as one of the happiest memories in their life.

Vegetables, either fresh or home canned, filled pots on the stove, with the biggest of them holding a big fat hen with dumplings bubbling over the top, and a big pan of fresh peach, blackberry or apple cobbler sending mouth watering odors from the oven, along with that of hot combated that tempted kids, and grownups, to get their hands washed quickly for dinner was always ready. Memories of those days have been engraved in not only my heart but in the minds of those little kids who are now grown with their own families being told about. "The days we spent with Aunt Zai and Uncle Mat on the farm."

Memories are made up of more than family, it is of neighbors being more than the people next door. They are real people sharing work when there is a need for it and fun and games when there is leisure time. Sometimes doing both at the same time, such as attending a bean-straining, and playing games while eating watermelon afterward. One night at our house several neighbors gathered in and at least six bushels of beans, picked that day for the occasion, was strong and broken and readied for the jars before a big watermelon was cut and the fun of eating juicy slices of it began. Guessing games and memories of other "olden days" had been going on all the time so good night was time to say, thank you, all, good night.

These were the days when Docors still made house calls night or day and even driving the twenty-five miles to area to see a patient to old to make the trip to town. Or deliver a baby whose mother preferred home delivery. It was also a time in history when lawyers weren't needed to settle a family squabble. And child development centers were unheard of. You know, maybe that was the reason women had bigger families back then, so the older ones could, and did, take care of the little ones.

Each area of the country has its own peculiar past to reminisce about, the industrial world, the slums have nothing in common with the Appalachian Mountain folks to talk about. One town schools, pie suppers, carrying water from a spring flowing from a cliff in a rock beneath a cliff, cutting firewood for a pot-bellied stove, and rising early to milk the cow before leaving to walk the mile or so to school, would seem like a fairy story to any of them.

are still people, like the new pharmacists, owners of the drugstore on the corner of Newcomb and Richmond St., that believe in local ownership of a thriving business. Hurrah for them. I recently dropped in to welcome them to our neighborhood and liked what I saw. Give them time to get established and you will be pleased

with their services and dedication to help relieve the image of Mt. Vernon. When that happens you may hear the next generation talk about the "good old days" when Mt. Vernon took a turn for the better.

Now, for a bit of my, "Do you remember?"

Do you remember when Mr. McBee's clothing store on Main St. handled first class clothing, the identical clothes sold elsewhere, at brand named stores, brought twice the amount he charged. And he carried the best brand of shoes found anywhere. Along with these superior clothes he carried other necessities for house-keeping such as old fashioned oil-cloth. Underwear for both men and women, all good quality, plus odds and ends of ties, hats, etc. It was a pleasure to go there for one was always greeted with courtesy and respect. There were two dime stores. One is still there and carries a wonderful selection of what-nots along with the usual things in a dime store. Service is also good here. Do you remember Jim's Dollar Store? Then the one across the street that handled women's fine lingerie? The bank when it was on the other side of the street, and the movie house close by? What about the old court house with the women's rest room in the basement? (Whew!) That was one I would like to forget. But the dignity of the old building, looking at it from the outside, is a pleasant one.

And what about the old, beautiful hotel on the corner, where the Signal office is now, and the taxi cab stand close to where the Mt. Vernon Bank now is. Does anyone miss the post office being in the center of town where it was convenient for shoppers and people on foot to pick up or deposit mail. In other words, do you remember Mt. Vernon as it was, once upon a time?

I couldn't finish this without bringing back the memory of Dr. John D. Henderson, the dentist and benefactor to any and all that was in need of dental work. People came from far and near to receive care from him. His office was not fancy, just a little room upstairs that was reached by climbing rickety stairs and waiting your turn on an old wooden bench. You may come in an hour or more might have to wait several hours. But one thing for sure, the dental work would be done, and done well when your time came. He was a humanitarian as well as a dentist. When I first met him he charged fifty (50¢) cents to pull or fill a tooth, and ten dollars for a set of false teeth. His reputation went beyond Rockcastle County and often people arriving from Ohio, Tennessee or Indiana would be sitting on the steps leading to his office at five o'clock in the morning. They had driven all night so they might be first to see him. He was not only a first class dentist, he was a first class citizen. He treated all people equally, the poor and needy got the same treatment as those with a bank account. His friendliness and understanding of people needs is a memory I treasure.

I am sure all my readers could add enough memories of their past experiences to fill a book. Maybe we should get together and put that. I have a few more I could also add.

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