

Points East

By: Ike Adams

We had a heavy dusting of snow here a couple weeks ago. Not enough to pull out the cross country skis and spend a lot of time falling down and waving our legs in the air and cursing bitterly that the Good Lord didn't give us better coordination, but enough to get out with the critters that have to put up with this cold weather and endure it without the benefit of modern heating devices that most of us have in our homes.

So we, (Ole Blue and me) went hiking around the back 78 to see if the geese were still on the ponds and whether or not the Great Blue Heron who inhabits the shallow edges of those ponds was frozen into a block of ice and grounded because he'd let the ice freeze round his legs.

This heron, we have decided, is surely male because a female would have had enough sense to fly much farther south where it's not so cold. The geese are ready available for our meals, but we are not herons. And who knows what herons are thinking when they decide to winter in central Kentucky. Perhaps this spindly legged bird just wants to brag to his fraternity brothers next spring, that he toughed it out in Kentucky over the winter. It wouldn't be the first time that a bird or a fraternity pledge has done something remarkable.

Anyway, Ole Blue (My favorite and only outside dog) and I went tripping through the snow and we noticed an abundance of tiny tracks made by birds and rabbits and creatures that seemed to be dragging their tails behind them. Tracks with toes and ankles made by creatures with four feet instead of two unless there is such a thing as a four-legged bird.

Finally, in a huge clump of broom-sage I found both the beginning and end of a long and treacherous trail. I tied my pocket knife to loosen up the roots and pulled back the mound of oots. Underneath them lay a huge pile of feathers and straw groomed into what was obviously a thoughtfully developed and constructed nest. And obviously inhabited. The nest wiggled and squirmed when I touched it.

Ole Blue turned his head over sideways and perked up his ears and at about that moment, a tiny, fawn-colored mouse came tearing out a minuscule entrance hole at the bottom of the nest. I was on my hands and knees and Blue was on his haunches but the mouse came out in such a hurry and reared up on its hind legs in such a fit of fury that both of us fell backwards.

Blue tucked his tail between his legs and backed off several steps,

While the mouse took advantage and closed in on Blue. I regarded the nest. It was still wiggling. I got down to eye-level and satisfied myself that it's inhabitants were hairless babies.

While Mama mouse held Blue at bay, I quickly replaced the clump of broom-sage and used my finger to clean out the earthen entrance hole that I had not previously noticed and then I backed away myself.

Mama mouse gave me a long stare and then rushed back toward her den. There was a flurry of activity as she scratched out some dirt that had fallen into the entrance and then she poked her head back out as if to say, "How dare you disturb my home!"

I kicked away the clump of snow until I could find a few flat rocks to lay atop the disturbance I'd made around the broom-sage clump partially to insulate it—but more helpfully to ward off the foxes and pos-

sums and raccoons and skunks and any other predators that Mrs. Field Mouse might encounter as a result of the attention I had drawn to her privacy.

I'll go back to the nest, next time it's snowed, and look for tracks around the entrance. If I see some, I'll not feel so guilty.

I realize that folks like to photograph and discover nature from time to time, but it is so easy to destroy lives or contribute to imbalances and we sometimes don't realize what we are doing. Little light brown field mice do not the slightest bit of harm. They are stunningly brave and beautiful little creatures and they have enough trouble surviving their predators without our interference. I, for one, will be content to take photos of their tracks from now on.

Ole Blue says he never intended to bother them in the first place.

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,
I would like to commend our newly-elected Sheriff Darrell Doan and his deputies, especially William Harris, on a job well done.

On Saturday, I had a truck stuck from our parking lot and, when I reported it, Deputy Harris was there to fill out a report within five minutes of the call.

When it was recovered on Sunday and I lost with him at the scene, Deputy Harris and Constable Payne were very courteous and very helpful throughout the entire situation.

We really appreciate everyone involved.

Jeff Smithern
J&J Auction

How Are Gall Stones Treated?

Presented by Dr. James Stiers

The time-honored cure for gall stones has been surgery—remove the gall bladder and it will not cause further problems. For most people that is still the best choice.

For some, however, there are alternative methods when a person needs treatment for gall stones. Gall stones are very common and most people with stones do not need treatment if they have no symptoms.

A new method of treatment is shock wave lithotripsy. This method uses ultrasonic waves focused on the stones to break them up. The smaller stone fragments will pass down the ducts more easily. It is most useful when there is only a single stone and it is not too large. People using this treatment have up to 80% resolution at one year.

There are a couple medicines which are used as well. They are only useful for cholesterol stones, and these comprise 75% of all stones. Unfortunately, the results are relatively poor. After taking the medicine for two years, only about 14% have complete resolution of the stone. The expense of the medicine is also a factor, costing over \$10,000 per year.

The medicine has side effects including dizziness, possible liver damage, and an elevation in the cholesterol. For these reasons they are used mainly in people who are unable to tolerate the surgery.

Today, most surgeons do laparoscopic surgery to remove the gall bladder, which requires only a few very small incisions. The recovery period is much shorter with this than when a large incision is needed and a person can return to work and her usual activities much sooner. It is an excellent choice for people who meet the criteria for this procedure.



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TOPS

(Take off Pounds Sensibly) TOPS meets Thursday at 6 p.m. at Broadhead Christian Church, basement on Main St. in Broadhead. For more info, call 1-800-932-TOPS or locally 256-0789.

Narcotics Anonymous

Tired of drugs and/or alcohol controlling your life? Come join us at Narcotics Anonymous every Thursday at 8 p.m. behind Our Lady of Mt. Vernon Church, located on Williams St. in Mt. Vernon. For more info, call 256-9263.

Alcohol Anonymous

Alcohol Anonymous meets Tuesday nights at 8 p.m. behind Our Lady of Mt. Vernon Church on Williams St. in Mt. Vernon. For more info, call 256-2129.

Republican Party Meets

The Republican Party meets the second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at Kastle Inn.

Center Hours

Rockcastle County Senior Citizens and Day Health Care Center hours are 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Mon-Fri.

Bookmobile Schedule

Mon., Jan. 20: Broadhead and Cooper Creek.

Tues., Jan. 21: Gretna Hill, Conway, Boone, Fairview, Lamber Rd., Respiratory Care, Mt. Vernon Manor.

Fire Season

Due to increase in fire activity in Kentucky the Kentucky Division Forestry is now taking applications for spring fire season. Call Ranger 256-5031, Crew Leader 256-9884 or Crew Boss 256-0725.

Gardener Class

Registration for a 13 week Master Gardener Program is being taken at the Extension office through January 24, 2003. Call 256-2403 for more info.

Scrapbooking Class

Free Scrapbooking class will be taught at the Extension office from 10:00 a.m. on Jan. 17. For more details call 256-2403.

Quilted Patch Class

Jan. 17, 11:00 a.m., learn to make a Quilted Backpack Patch at the Extension Office. For a list of materials and to register call 256-2403.

Sew Turbans

Jan. 21 & 22 you are invited to Sew

Turbans for Cancer Patients at the Extension Office. All turbans will be donated to cancer centers. All supplies are provided. Call 256-2403 for more info.

Kiwanis Club
Rockcastle Kiwanis Club meets every Thursday at Noon at Kastle Inn. All visitors welcome.

Watercolor Heart Quilt
"Watercolor Heart Quilt" will be taught by Cheryl J. Wint at the Extension Office on January 24. Class is free. Please stop by the office, or call 256-2403 to register and for a list of supplies.

Office Closed

The Circuit Clerk's office will be closed Monday, January 20, 2003.

Meeting

The Broadhead City Council will hold a special meeting Tuesday, January 21, 2003 at 7 p.m. at City Hall for the purpose of a second reading of Ordinance #1-03.

Fish Fry

Broadhead Rural Fire Department will hold a fish fry Saturday, January 18th at the Quail Substation on Hwy. 70. Carports start at 3:00 p.m. \$5 per person. Dinner starts at 5:30 p.m. \$5 for adults, \$2.50 for children under 12.

Scrapbooking Class

A beginning scrapbooking class will be taught at the Extension office on January 27 at 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$5 for supplies. Call 256-2403 to register.

Preserving Heirlooms

At the Extension office on January 30, 10 a.m., learn about Preserving Heirlooms Textiles for your children and grandchildren. Class is free.

Super Salads

At 12 noon, January 30, learn to make "Super Salads" at the Extension office. This free class offers recipes and samples. Call 256-2403 for more information.

Tobacco Expo

Johnson Expo, 2003, will be held Wednesday, January 22 at Heritage Hall in Lexington from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Elmwood Meeting

The Elmwood Perennial Care Association will hold its annual meeting Thursday, January 16th at noon at the Rockcastle Steak House. Interested persons are invited to attend.

Jump a Thon

The Jump a Thon at Roundstone Elementary School has been changed to Friday, January 24th from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. during the Parent Teacher Conference.