In Memory of Jeb Baldi

by Steve Hall

He stood at a bank of paned windows, steamy from the radiator below. Engrossed by something in the dark December day beyond, he did not turn to greet me when a cheery secretary announced my presence. Instead, he motioned me forward, a slow wave, a warning not to disturb what lay beyond. I cautiously skirted his desk. He was tall, mid-thirties, and fair but a little ruddy faced too. He pointed. Outside, on mostly bare bushes below the sill and across the walkway were dozens of birds. But for their frenetic feeding on berry clusters, they would have been camouflaged against the ashy snow, slaty concrete, and frozen footfall of students. They were fist sized, mostly gray with handsome crests and black eye masks. On those directly below, yellow tipped tails were surprising and elegant. Despite their hungry fluttering, individual feathers were not discernable. They looked satiny, like hand-painted china. I too was enthralled. He was smiling. His first words to me: “waxwings”.

He was Jeb Baldi, Principal of Central Washington State College’s Hebler Elementary and on that day, he hired me to be a teacher’s assistant and playground supervisor. That job interview, a half-century ago, is still clear because Jeb would prove a wonderful boss, profound mentor, and life-long friend. Jeb passed in July, but his legacy lives on in the environment he so diligently fought to preserve.

For the two years I worked for Jeb, I learned many lessons that would shape my career—the most important being to look for and reinforce the good in students. He wanted me to be influenced by progressive educators like Fran Bovos, Ron Males, and Roger Grey. Jeb often spoke of children’s literature. I delighted in watching Principal Baldi routinely reading to students gathered in the library. He was quick to laugh with the pupils. He listened intently to their observations and treated inquiries very seriously. Jeb was an animated reader and exceptionally skilled with character dialects. Not surprisingly, he read Rawlings’, *The Yearling*; Rawls’ *Where the Red Fern Grows*; Robert Murphy’s, *The Pond*, and anything by Walt Morey. What a wonderful mentor!

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Board Notes

by Gloria Baldi • August Minutes

Following are the highlights from the virtual ZOOM meeting of the Board on August 6th.

Bird sightings and reports always open the Board meetings, which produces a picture of bird activity involving various areas of the valley from town to sage lands and mountain elevations. One notable species mentioned and discussed was the Clark’s Nutcracker, which is found at higher elevations, i.e., Cle Elum Ridge or in the higher Taneum or Naneum areas.

Agenda items:

• The annual state Audubon Conference of WA (ACOW) meeting will be held on October 2nd, and will occur entirely by virtual ZOOM. Special awards are presented at this meeting to people who have dedicated time and talent for the benefit of birds. Projects and concerns are shared among chapters to help solve problems that benefit birds.

• Judy Hallisey conveyed the happy news that Kris Ernest has agreed to become Kittitas Audubon’s Education Chair. Kris is a community ecologist/mammologist, and comes highly recommended. (Note: Kris emailed that she is not a bird expert, but a budding bird enthusiast! She also stated that with our covid challenges she is discovering wonderful online options for bird resources to help share our appreciation of nature with a broad diversity of our community.) THANK YOU, KRIS!

• Steve Moore reported that the monthly BirdWalk is still the only field trip option at this time, but he is also hoping KAS can continue participating in the large area Raptor Count this winter. Alas, circumstances make it necessary to cancel the Saturday Sep BirdWalk.

• Although we do not have a Publicity Chair presently, Meghan Anderson has been writing a “Bird of the Month” feature for the Daily Record. The Board hopes all have been able to enjoy the feature.

• Barry Brunson reported Covid has caused National Audubon to diminish staff affecting the Climate Action Teams in Washington State for 2020. It is hopeful the efforts can be resumed in 2021. In the meantime, Barry, Judy and Megan have joined two online discussion sessions held on July 23rd with Action Teams in Washington State for 2020. It is hopeful the efforts can be resumed in 2021. In the meantime, Barry, Judy and Megan have joined two online discussion sessions held on July 23rd with the Washington State Energy Strategy Advisory Committee Group.

• Vice-president Jan Demorest is completing KAS’s annual report for National Audubon and has asked for all member volunteer hours. This includes all hours from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Perhaps you helped with a program, a bird count, erecting bird boxes, etc. It does not matter how few hours, Jan just needs to know how many. Please email her at bobcat@kvalley.com.

• Reports for the memorial for late members Jeb Baldi and Hal Lindstrom were discussed.

• A discussion ensued on possibilities of virtual meetings and activities that could occur to involve KAS members. (This covid may be around for longer that we would prefer!)

Join us for the next virtual meeting on September 3rd at 4:30!! All are welcome. Write Jan Demorest at bocat@kvalley.com for a link to join.

Save the Date for ACOW 2020

A lot has been cancelled this year, but not ACOW! The Audubon Council of Washington is coming to your screens over Zoom this October 2nd and 3rd. As in previous years, we will have the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) meeting on Friday afternoon and ACOW on Saturday morning. Registration and details coming soon!
Jeb invited me to help plant pine trees at his Naneum home. I was met by daughter Gia, who was holding a garter snake. Sons Josh and Ty, delighted in a pocket gopher they had captured. I was warmly welcomed by Gloria, who was simultaneously busy with correspondence and baking a pie. This was a close and loving family.

After planting the pine seedlings, we were treated to the best rhubarb pie I have ever tasted. With the kitchen table cleared, Jeb and Gloria laid out a Snoqualmie National Forest map and eagerly shared their dream of a wilderness area surrounding a series of lakes called “The Enchantments.” What a memorable day.

On many occasions over the next five years, I witnessed Jeb and Gloria and their equally enthusiastic friends, Hal and Gloria Lindstom, lead Alpine Lakes Protection Society chapter meetings, give slide shows, and guide field trips. They attended countless meetings with forest service officials, logging representatives, county commissioners, Chamber of Commerce members, and congressional aides. Many of those gatherings were contentious. Jeb was always a calm and reasoning voice for the need of protecting natural habitat on publicly owned land. The contributions of the Baldis and Lindstroms to the 1976 formation of the Alpine Lake Wilderness were significant.

Jeb did not stop with public land. He joined others in seeking protection for the only remaining free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River—the Hanford Reach. On a float trip down the Reach, participants, including my wife, Linda, were educated about the importance of river flow and temperature on fish and wildlife. They were impressed with the myriad waterfowl identified by Jeb and Gloria. Thanks to Jeb and fellow advocates, Congress designated the Hanford Reach as a national monument in June of 2000.

Jeb’s commitment to nature education was truly remarkable. When he and Gloria were not traveling the world communing with thousands of species of birds and animals, they were active in several Audubon chapters. Jeb often served as field trip leader or program director. For 13 years, he and Gloria led a day afield at Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. Their creation of the “First Saturday Bird Walk” continues to be a valued community activity. Having immersed himself in the literature of ecology and related government proceedings, Jeb was a valuable resource at Audubon board meetings. Kittitas Audubon Society environmental stances were often based on his recommendations.

For all his environmental achievements on the conservation front, Jeb’s humanity and inherent goodness uplifted all who knew him. He always credited Gloria for her love, guidance, and support. His children’s academics, interests, and championing of conservation were sources of pride. What I loved about Jeb was his interest in the lives of others as well. He never forgot to inquire about our children and genuinely hoped that they were finding fulfillment—particularly in the out-of-doors. He often attended lectures of environmental relevance, but programs and community gatherings dealing with societal problems and issues were of equal interest.

This September, I plan on an ascent to Ingall’s Lake. I will see the orange-red vine maple, their leaf veins and mid-ribs visible, illuminating the trail. The movement of warblers and thrushes through deciduous recesses will be sensed. Buteos on thermals above glacial valleys will be eyed. The ascent from Doug fir to stunted, weathered larches will be a marvel. At the lake, I might make a few casts in hopes of brook trout, but my attention will be on the peaks to the west and towering Mt. Stuart to the northeast. It will be a time closer to the universe. I will remember the man whose dedication helped preserve such grandeur. At the end of the trek I will be renewed. I will be aching and sore and anxious for a beer, but I will take the time to scan the cottonwoods along Ingall’s Creek. I will be looking for the birds with the yellow-tipped tails.

Jeb Baldi: loving husband and father; educator; environmental activist; birder; mentor; humanist; life-long learner. Jeb Baldi, a man of the earth and a true American citizen.
Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park

by Laura Busby

This park not only has amazing geological stories to tell, it is also habitat for diverse species of birds. The park protects 7,124 acres of shrub-steppe, an ecosystem that is disappearing across our state. Several sageland obligate species (those that require this ecosystem to survive) find a home in the park. The eastern boundary is along the Columbia River/Wanapum Reservoir, which adds to the species that can be seen. Ebird lists over 200 species for the park.

In August, juvenile canyon wrens have been busy catching insects on the back porch of the Interpretive Center (call 509-856-2290 to confirm building open hours). For mammal-watchers, warm afternoons provide a chance to see a herd of bighorn sheep – the ewes and their lambs frequent the grassy shade at the Interpretive Center. (open 6:30 a.m. – dusk)

CALLING ALL BIRDERS!

Do you have great photos of birds?

Kittitas Audubon is beginning a new series called ‘Bird of the Month’ in the local paper. This month, we’re calling for Bluebirds and Buntings, specifically Mountain or Western Bluebird and/or Lazuli Bunting photos for publication in September.

So if you have good photos, then send them to: kasbom@gmail.com for consideration for KAS Bird of the Month.

Photo requirements:
- .jpeg (or .jpg) file format
- 3-5 megapixels (MP) in size (we need this size in order for the image to be suitable for printing)
- Your original photo
- Attach the .jpeg to the email, don’t embed it into the body of the text
- Let us know approximately where/when it was taken and your name

The Puget Sound Bird Fest at Edmonds is going virtual for 2020. The event is free, but you must register to have online access. Check out the Bird Fest website http://www.pugetsoundbirdfest.com/ for the program and further details.

Photo by Kris Kaylor
Due to the pandemic, the monthly programs that Kittitas Audubon holds at Hal Holmes in Ellensburg have been on hold (canceled) since March. At present, there isn’t any plan to open Hal Holmes for future meetings. The Board has tossed around some ideas to hold “virtual presentations,” starting with one or two of the presenters slated to talk last spring (now this fall), but we have not finalized anything as yet.

The lockdown has inspired many of us to pay more attention to what is happening in our backyard bird feeders, or what we may see on walks. Some of you may be itching to learn more about what you are seeing or to see backyards and sanctuaries that display birds around the world. While we are waiting to enjoy real live programs again, here are some ideas for some browsing that may pique your interest and get us excited to connect to the real world again!

**Like to read birding blogs?** Washington State Audubon has a nice one: [wa.audubon.org/landing/blog](https://wa.audubon.org/landing/blog)

**Have a hankering to travel, but be back in your bed at night?** Washington State has a wonderful series of birding trails that can be visited [wa.audubon.org/birds/great-washington-state-birding-trail](https://wa.audubon.org/birds/great-washington-state-birding-trail)

**Have a specific question to research about a bird you saw in Washington?** Try [www.birdweb.org/birdweb](https://www.birdweb.org/birdweb) for info about birds in Washington, birding sites, species of concern, and more.

**Want to learn to identify birds by merely hearing their songs?** LarkWire.com has an excellent game-based learning system for mastering bird sounds, beginners welcome! This one costs money, but it is well worth it if you have been continually frustrated at hearing a bird and searching fruitlessly through the trees or underbrush and not finding it!

**For those who yearn to travel,** there are many nice videos of bird sanctuaries to be viewed. A couple of nearby ones include a fantastic series on Birding the Malheur NWR in southeast Oregon that can be accessed here: [https://www.deschuteslibrary.org/about/news/news?newsid=8281](https://www.deschuteslibrary.org/about/news/news?newsid=8281)

**A bit farther afield are two that I have seen on YouTube:**
- Padre Island, Texas, a 15 minute one from Texas-Travelers
- Inglewood Bird Sanctuary in Calgary, Alberta
- Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, just across the border in BC, Canada, on the Fraser River estuary: [www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com](https://www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com)

Going back to YouTube, there are hundreds of short-to-longer videos from various exotic bird sanctuaries around the world:
- “Birding at Keoladeo Ghana” Bharatpur India, 17 min
- Currumbin Bird Sanctuary on Australia’s Gold Coast, 11 min
- Baras Bird Sanctuary in the Philippines, 21 min
- “Okhla Bird Sanctuary, A Quick Trip” New Dehli, India 17.5min

To replace cute kitten videos, you might try the YouTube site on Rockland Bird Sanctuary in Jamaica, which features feeding hummingbirds from your hand! Whatever you do, have fun out there, and we hope to see you soon in real-time!

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**New Sparrow Song Speedily Spreads**

Two-notes versus three? The White-throated Sparrow’s traditional song ends with a triplet of notes. But among a few such birds in Canada, a variant that ends with a repeated doublet of notes was heard 20 years ago. In what is considered a remarkably short period of time, that new song has spread widely across North America. This is akin to a Kentuckian moving to Washington and, soon after, many Washingtonians sporting a Kentucky accent!

(Online, its title is “A sparrow song remix took over North America with astonishing speed”, and is dated 2 Jul.)
The Hooter • June/July 2020 • Kittitas Audubon’s Newsletter

from the lens of Meghan Anderson
This juvenile lets me sit near it’s tree. It flies away for a bit and then comes back. Sharing the magic...

What have you seen while out and about? Send us your photos and stories!
kaylormade@me.com

from the lens of Doug Kuehn
Some shots from Chinook Pass

from the lens of Kris Kaylor
We had over 50 of these guys in our backyard. I had never seen a juvenile before!
Nurdles Galore: Pathologically Persistent Plastic Pollution

I don’t usually cite articles in Audubon magazine, because many KAS members have access to it anyway. However, the Summer 2020 edition has one that deserves a lot of attention and special emphasis. It’s “A New Plastic Wave Is Coming to Our Shores,” by Zoë Schlanger. If micro-plastics are the final form of plastic waste (which show up in our own guts as well as in animals, waterways, and on beaches all over the world), then nurdles are how many plastic products begin. Formally known as pre-production pellets or just as resins, “nurdle” is the colloquial name for the tiny sphere about the size of a lentil. They are so tiny, and so cheap individually, that there is little incentive for companies that make or transport them to clean up spillage. Among striking statements that invite further study and verification: “More than half of all plastic was produced in the last 15 years.” “Only about 9 percent made has ever been recycled.” “… in the U.S. one fossil fuel has become phenomenally abundant and absurdly cheap; plastic, it turns out, is a great way to profit from the nation’s glut of natural gas.” According to the president of the Center for International Environmental Law, “The fracking boom triggered the renaissance of the plastics industry in the U.S.”

The article also includes many maps and diagrams, as well as a short guide for a community science project for either adults or younger folk: Nurdle Patrols. (The article includes maps of production and storage locations. So far, few are in the Pacific Northwest.) See https://tinyurl.com/y25hj3gz.

Shrinking Breeding Window

This item illustrates another aspect of the harmful effects of global warming, as well as an illustration of the scientific value of records kept by the community of birders. A change of 1.7 days may not sound very dramatic, but it’s the trend that’s worrisome. Based on data on 73 bird species in Finland, collected from 1975 to 2017, researchers concluded that both the beginning and end of breeding seasons were moving earlier in the calendar year, but the end was retreating farther. That is, the average 2017 breeding season was about 1.7 days shorter than in 1975.

See the article “Global warming shrinks bird breeding windows, potentially threatening species” by Charlotte Hartley in the 20 Jul 2020 issue of Science, the journal of the AAAS. Go to https://tinyurl.com/y3at772r.

A Fantastic Avian Voyage

The 1966 science fiction film Fantastic Voyage featured a submarine full of scientists shrunken to microscopic size, and then injected into a person’s bloodstream in order to remove a brain blood clot. Time was of the essence, of course, and the scientists hoped to exit safely. Somewhat similarly, Hungarian scientists have confirmed that fish eggs made their own fantastic voyage through the digestive systems of eight Mallard ducks—and at least some of those eggs hatched!

Aside from novelty, this might explain one unexpected way that invasive fish species can spread.

See the article “Fish eggs survive a trip through a duck” by Carolyn Wilke in the 1 Aug 2020 issue of Science News. (Online, it is dated 29 Jun, and has a slightly different title.) Go to https://tinyurl.com/y3h7sxp.
MEMBERSHIP FORM

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City
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Membership Options:
☐ KAS Individual $20  ☐ Family $30

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Make a Charitable Donation: (Please enter dollar amount)
Scholarship Fund $_______  Nest Boxes $_______
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Your generous donation to a specific project is symbolic. Kittitas Audubon is a chapter of the National Audubon Society serving the communities of Kittitas County, Washington. Go to kittitasaudubon.org for more information. KAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

Please indicate membership preferences below:
☐ YES I want to “Go Green” by receiving the Hooter newsletter online only
☐ YES I wish to receive occasional emails related to Audubon activities

May we print your name in the Hooter to acknowledge your membership/donation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ GIVE THE GIFT OF KITTITAS AUDUBON!
Please send gift recipient’s name, address, email, and phone to address below.

GET “THE HOOTER” ONLINE
Save paper, printing, postage. If you would prefer to receive the electronic version, send your name, mailing address, and email address to: kittitasaudubon@hotmail.com
Each month, we’ll send you an email with a link to the new Hooter.

INTERESTED IN BIRD BOXES?
Hand-crafted Bluebird, Kestrel, and Barn Owl Boxes by Tom Gauron
Please contact
Tom at 509.968.3175 for more information.
Mark Your Calendars!

Board Meeting:
4:30 pm • September 3rd:
*Due to reasons of public health and safety, meeting will be conducted via Zoom.*

THANK YOU!
KITTITAS COUNTY BUSINESS SUPPORTING KAS!

- **Inland Internet** • Roslyn
  Donates Internet service for our website: www.kittitasaudubon.org

- **Old Mill Country Store** Ellensburg
  Provides a discount on bird seed to KAS members.