

# THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 24, No. 5

January 1996

## The Pheasant

Growing up on a farm gave me a daily opportunity to see how mankind and nature are interrelated. Both of my parents had a supreme sense of respect for Mother Nature and everything in her realm. This was demonstrated time and time again in childhood, and was personified by the events of one particularly memorable early spring day.

The bright sun filtered through the clouds, warming the fields of alfalfa that my father was mowing. Within a day or two it would be put into bales of hay, gathered from the field, stored in the hay loft and used to feed our livestock. I stood at the fence-line with the lunch my mother had prepared for my father, watching as he cautiously guided the tractor up and down the field, head down, eyes closely observing the movements of the mower. As he neared the end of the field, Dad saw me holding out the lunch for him. He stopped and motioned that it was safe for me to bring it to him.

"Please, Daddy, take me for a ride," I begged as he ate his lunch. I loved riding on the tractor with my father. It was quite a treat because children were forbidden from riding it alone; it was for grown-ups only. Extremely safety conscious, Dad rarely allowed us children to even come near it, let alone climb up on this big "dangerous" machine. He was so protective of his family that he seldom asked my mother to drive the tractor even short distances—such as to fuel it—around the farmstead.

I also liked riding on the tractor because I loved the

feel of the wind blowing and the warm sun on my face, arms and legs. Most of all, I loved being close to my father; sitting near him on the tractor seat inside his protective arms. I adored my daddy and everything about him. I found his energy and passion for the outdoors contagious, his charisma exciting, and his running commentary about everything around him interesting—nothing escaped his attention—birds, bees, flowers, clouds, passing cars and trucks. All became fodder for a comment, story or lesson.

"Please Daddy, can't I ride with you?" I asked again.

"No, no. It's not safe for you to be on the open tractor; I never know when the mower sickle will come dangerously close to a nesting pheasant or a rabbit or a fox. When that happens I have to stop suddenly and that could cause you to fall. No, I'll give you a ride another time."

(Continued on page 3)

### Inside

HOLLY FAIRE REPORT .....	2
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANTS .....	4
LOBBYING EFFORT '95 .....	5



# Calendar

**Thursday, January 11.** BAS General Meeting, 7:30 P.M. Representatives from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, USDA's Animal Damage Control program, and Utah State University will discuss the development of a new predator control program for Cache County that is designed to benefit upland wildlife. Tentative cosponsors of this meeting include Pheasants Forever and Cache Wildlife Federation. Refreshments will be provided. The meeting will begin at 7:30 P.M. in the Logan City Building, 225 North Main.

**Wednesday, January 17.** BAS Planning Meeting, 7 P.M. Chair and board members join to discuss projects and funding. As a member, your input is always welcome. Brigit Burt will host this month's meeting at 1000 North 320 West #4 in Logan.

**Tuesday, February 27.** Annual Banquet. This year's banquet will be held on February 27 at the Bullen Center on South Main in Logan. Gathering begins at 6:30 for social hour, followed by dinner, catered by Bill Oblock, Chef and owner of the Grapevine Restaurant. The Allen Stokes Conservation Award and the Education Award will be announced and we've got a great speaker lined up (Steve Hoffman from Hawk-Watch International). More details in the February *Stilt*.

## Field Trips

**Saturday, January 13.** Winter Birding Field Trip. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the southwest corner of Fred Meyers for a morning spent looking for winter birds. We know they're out there, but who are they? What sparrows are there? Are there different hawks in winter than summer? Every year we've seen something unusual, what will it be this year? Bring warm clothes and binoculars. Carpooling will be available. We'll plan to be back by lunch. For more information call Keith Archibald, 752-8258, or Bryan Dixon, 752-6830.

## COMMON GROUND Outdoor Adventures

The snow is here! Yippee! That means its time once again for **Winter Fun** with COMMON GROUND. Activities this winter will include downhill skiing at Beaver Mountain Ski Area, cross-country skiing in Cache Valley, and even a dogsledding trip for those who like both snow and big furry animals.

COMMON GROUND Outdoor Adventures is a program that provides outdoor opportunities for people with and without disabilities. The purpose of the program is to integrate people of all abilities and

promote an understanding and appreciation of our natural environment. The program is targeted toward young adults with physical disabilities; however, all are welcome on designated trips.

If you are interested in participating and/or volunteering, call Shauna at 750-9877 or 753-5353.

## Calendar Dates

COMMON GROUND Downhill Ski Sessions:  
Tuesdays, January 16 & 30; February 13 & 27; and March 5.

Cross-Country Ski Trip: February 9-11.

Other cross-country ski trips will be announced.

Dogsled Trip: March 1-3.

## Report On Audubon Children's Activity At Holly Faire

This activity was very popular with the children and their parents. We sometimes had as many as five children building birdhouses and/or bird feeders at one time. What a rapping, tapping, and talking time that was! Thirty-four feeder kits and twenty-nine house kits were sold. Two hundred Plaster of Paris ornaments made by Jan Young were eagerly painted by many. The total grossed from both activities was \$439.85.

We wish to thank Al and Alice Stokes who gave us the information we needed as well as providing bags of sunflower seed and the "Birds of Cache Valley Checklist" to sell. Thanks, also, to those who served two-hour shifts on December 1 and 2. They were Val Grant, Karen Flint, Paula Pepsworth, Bill and Marjorie Lewis, Dorie Stolley, Jason Ontjes, Katia Engelhardt, Chris Hult, Tom and Pat Bahler, Norb DeByle, Chris Himmel, Chris and Wendy Gaddis, Eli and Sara Rodemaker, Gordon and Dallas Toomes, Terry Perry, Kathy Van Slick, Jen Levy, Maureen Wagner, Jim Gessaman, Margaret and Russell Holdredge, and several of Jack Greene's students.

— Betty & Bob Taylor, Co-Chairs





(Continued from page 1)

## The Pheasant

"Oh please Daddy. I'll be so careful. I'll stay out of your way. Take me with you for a little ways, and then I'll get off and I won't complain even if it's a long way home."

It never took too much begging with my father. When his children wanted to be with him, he was a softy.

I sat on the edge of the tractor seat between my father's legs, holding on to his knees, trying as hard as I could not to get in his way as he shifted from side to side. With the skill of a surgeon, Dad began by first looking ahead as he aligned the tractor with the meticulously straight line of still-standing alfalfa—a sharp contrast to the stems, cut off from their life source by the mower, now laying flat against the ground. After he did this he shifted to look behind, always watching the long row of razor-sharp sickle blades as they deftly sliced thousands of hearty alfalfa stalks the instant they came into contact. One powerful arm steered the tractor while the other arm wrapped around his 10-year-old daughter, protecting her in its grip.

Suddenly a pheasant squawked and jerked skyward, and in the same instant my father instinctively stepped on the clutch. As the tractor lurched to a halt, my father flung both his arms around me, stopping me from being thrown into the steering wheel or off the tractor.

Protecting me had made it impossible to save the female pheasant minding her nest. As quickly and sharply as she rose into the sky, she fell from it, hitting the ground with a deadening thump, then violently and aimlessly thrashing around. Both her legs had been severed near her body.

"Oh, no," my father said softly, getting down from the tractor and lifting me off with him. He hurried over to the wounded bird, picked her up and, with tears in his eyes, stroked her beautiful sleek feathers, apologizing to her for pain he had caused.

He shook his head and aid in a voice that housed as much disgust as it did passion, "She can never live this way." He was talking as much to the universe as he was to me. "She'll be easy prey to any predator." And in his next breath, he took hers. With one quick flick of my father's wrist, she no longer had to contemplate her fate in the wild.

He flung the head of the now-decapitated bird far away from us. Then gently pulling the bird's wings together, he held her upside down so that her blood would drain from her body and not be absorbed into the meat, which would have made it inedible.

Over the years I had often experienced the killing of foul: chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks all made their way to our table in a similar fashion. So I was saddened as much by my father's sense of devastation as from having witnessed the bird's death.

Dad gathered up the three orphaned eggs from the

pheasant's nest, which now lay in disarray, and placed them in the empty lunch box which sat alongside the pheasant, and home we went.

My mother prepared the pheasant for dinner that evening. At the supper table, my father talked about Mother Nature, and our role in protecting and comforting all of her creatures. His sadness had been replaced by his appreciation for such an excellent dinner, and the safety of family at his side.

We children were taken by surprise. We had come to the table fully prepared to mourn alongside our father. I had shared with all my brothers and sisters the sequence of events and Dad's reaction; we felt sad for him as well as the pheasant. But our father wasn't sad at all; in fact, he seemed jubilant. We children didn't understand his changed mood, after all we were all still a bit sad—and not at all sure if we were going to take a helping of the roasted pheasant now nestling in the glass baking dish.

"Daddy, why didn't we let the pheasant live?" my sister Judy inquired. "She could still sit on her eggs and hatch them, even without legs."

"Without legs," Dad answered, "the mother pheasant would no longer be able to teach her chicks to hunt after they hatched. And worse, without legs, she couldn't protect herself against predators, like the fox. No, I'm afraid she wouldn't make it out there without legs."

Always the humanitarian, my brother Mark chided, "Daddy, no one, not even a hungry old fox, would hurt a poor pheasant who didn't have legs."

"Legs or no legs," responded my father, "a fox will eat a pheasant any day, any time of day."

"That's not very nice," cried my littlest brother.

"Why?" I questioned. "Why would a fox want a wounded bird?"

"Because," replied my father, "It's in his nature."

With different degrees of understanding—and deep in thought—we children quietly began eating. And so it was that the taste of the pheasant was made delicious to me—and became symbolic of the nature of Mother Nature and of my father's understanding and respect for it.

The pheasant's three eggs were given to a plump old goose who dutifully sat on the eggs around the clock, getting up from the nest only briefly to turn the eggs and to eat. Within weeks, three pheasant chicks emerged. After several weeks of caretaking, we released them into the wild, making the cycle complete; my father had taken from Mother Nature and given back to her as well. In making the exchange, he taught us a bit more about the nature of Mother Nature and our role in protecting and comforting those in it. And to hold her in the highest regard—as much as we did our father.



## New Members

Todd A Black  
B Brown  
June S Budge  
Barbara Carney  
Robert a Diehl  
John Ellsworth  
Carol J Friesen  
Lorraine Heiliger  
Robert Heiste  
Kerkman Family  
Sharon Swaner  
Dee J Taylor  
Robert R Trowbridge  
Janice Tucker  
Gilberto E Urroz

## Renewing Members

Jan Anderson  
Keith Archibald  
Robert Atwood  
Marlene Beecher  
Mindy Bell  
Beth Booton  
Terra Bowles  
Max Elliot Brunson, Jr.  
Kevin Connors  
M Cooley  
Mervin P Coover  
Norbert V Debyle  
Robert Diehl  
Mark T Donnelly  
David & Susan Drown  
Edward & Deborah Evans  
Al Forsyth  
Mr & Mrs T J Gordon  
Jack Greene  
Scott Griffiths  
Don Hickman  
R M & M R Holdredge  
Daisy & Trevor Hughes  
Bill Jensen  
Reinhard A Jockel  
Douglas A Johnson  
Marilyn Jones  
John A Kadlec  
Sue Majors  
Rosalie Mueggler  
Louise Murch  
June V Neville  
Stephanie Norton  
John N Ream, Jr  
Ron Ryel  
S Schimmelpfennig  
Alison Thorne  
David & Beth Walden  
Elaine H Watkins

## Environmental Education Grants

In the fall of 1995, the Bridgerland Audubon Society was given an anonymous donation of \$1,000 to be used to further environmental education in the local public schools. In order to take advantage of this gift, Audubon needed to find money to match this donation which brought the total grant to \$2,000.

Early in November a five-member committee (John Bedingfield, Mary Bedingfieldsmith, LeeAnn Christensen, Jack Greene, and Ron Hellstern) met to set up guidelines for applicants. By the December 1 deadline, seven projects had been submitted for funding. Later two applications were withdrawn. Therefore, five projects remained for consideration.

The committee met several times to discuss these projects and found them all to be of merit. Since these projects were already under way and since all the applicants indicated they would accept partial funding, the committee recommended each project be funded at 65% of their requested dollar amounts.

These projects involve a wide range of activities. Spring Creek Middle School in Providence, under the direction of Carol White, will adopt Spring Creek which is part of the Little Bear Project in Cache Valley. Students will map the stream, create a plan for its rehabilitation, rid the stream of trash and debris, provide feeding stations for pheasants and other birds, and plant willows and native grasses along the banks of the stream.

Greenville Elementary School in North Logan, under the direction of Wendy Hellstern, will initiate a "Backpack Science" program. This program will involve over 500 students in grades 3-5 and their families in environmental science projects, experiments and experiences they can work on together at home. Activities will include starting a recycling program in the home, starting a compost pile, energy conservation experiments and more.

Ron Hellstern at the South Cache Freshman Center in Hyrum has designed a project which links every school in Cache County in a bird feeder monitoring program. In partnership with Bridgerland Audubon, Cornell University, and Roger Tory Peterson Institute, each school will receive binoculars, field guides, feeders and seed mix. Students will record dates, time of day, length of observation, bird species, unusual behavior, etc. Records will be collected, compiled and shared with the partnership organizations.

Students at Edith Bowen Lab School on the USU campus along with teacher Linda L'Ai will create a "Children's Guide to Stewart Nature Park." The student-created guide will include written descriptions of selected species, their importance to the ecosystem, and sketches for each. Field guides will be used as primary sources of identification and local community



and university "experts" in these areas have agreed to help with accuracy.

Bryce Passey and students at Mount Logan Middle School in Logan are developing an area behind their school as a nature center. Their goals include improving the natural habitat so wildlife will be attracted to it and creating an area where students can observe nature first hand and "do" science not just read about it. The students will also create a small controlled wetland with cattails and bulrushes in the natural seepage from the canal on the campus.

Once the projects are underway or completed, students and teachers will make presentations at Bridgerland Audubon's monthly meetings. They will also write an article for *The Stilt* and submit an accounting of the project's expenses.

Thanks to Joel Greene, Keith Archibald, Jean Lown and Bullen's Inc. for providing the matching funds for the Environmental Education Awards.

This is the first year of a five year program. Requests for proposals will be sent out to all the schools in August 1996.

## Lobbying Effort '95

The legislative session is soon upon us and in spite of my faithful attendance at interim meetings I do not feel any smarter than last year. However, I can alert you to some upcoming legislation but not necessarily that which I would have predicted a month, or even two days ago.

## Open Space Preservation

It seems that something happened between the last two Land Use Task Force meetings. The proposal for a state clearing house for land conservation has been degraded to a bill to broaden the duties of the Soil Conservation District Commission. (I am not sure I have the agency title right.) Representative Mary Carlson, Democrat of Salt Lake County, manfully pointed out that this was too limited a vision for confronting the open space crisis and the committee was allowing opportunity to slip away. She noted that with the huge budget surplus, now was the time to act boldly to save open lands, and that for urban Utahans (most of us) this did not mean a narrow focus on farmlands. Much of the testimony at the Governor's Growth Conference supported her argument that open space is not just an agricultural issue. To be fair, the Task Force bill will include language about wildlife and green space, but it is a serious disappointment. I think the Democrats are planning to propose something more like the original concept, but I am sorry that this matter will become a partisan issue. There seemed to be more of a non-political, non-regional consensus growing a month ago. The weaker Task Force proposal will only add to the

city dwellers' suspicions that their wishes are always overridden by the rural legislators. This is too bad since I believe we urbanites truly desire to include farmland in our broader definition of open space.

## Dams

The large budget surplus means that those of you who are concerned about bad dams (and bad roads for that matter) have a lot to worry about. There will be money for everyone's pork barrel. I need more advice from chapters about how you stand on individual projects.

## Wildlife

Tom Hatch, Republican representative from Southern Utah will introduce a predator control bill. The halls of the legislature are buzzing with stories of cougar attacks. This will be awkward and we need to have facts at hand. Anti-poaching and outfitters and guides licensing bills have already been approved by the Energy, Natural Resources, and Agriculture Committee.

We were most effective in the last session when we were able to make calls to key legislators as constituents talking about specific issues. I need more of you to volunteer for this effort. You may never be called upon this session, or you may be the crucial voice to move a bill out of committee or to defeat one on the floor of the house or senate. Please sign up below or call me. If you do not know who your state representative and senator are, I can find out for you. I am in the process of contacting those who have been active lobbyists in the past so if you know you are already on my list you do not need to re-up. If you are in doubt call me.

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Yes, I want to be an Audubon Lobbying Network Participant for the Utah Legislature.

Issues I am interested in: \_\_\_\_\_ Environmental Health  
\_\_\_\_\_ Wildlife \_\_\_\_\_ Other Natural Resource Issues  
Others \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to call other chapter members to tell them about pending actions. Yes No

I am willing to contact a legislator. Call Write Fax  
I would like to come to the Capitol during the session.  
Yes No

I can help in other ways (such as research, writing, mailing, etc.) Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

State Representative \_\_\_\_\_

State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

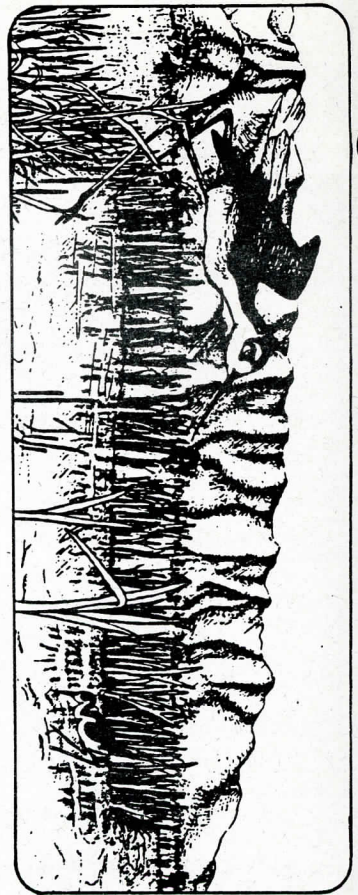
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# THE STILT

BRIDGERLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY  
 P.O. Box 3501  
 Logan, Utah 84323



The Bridgerland Audubon Society meets the second Thursday of each month, October through May, in the Meeting Room of the new Logan City Building, 255 N. Main. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. The BAS Planning Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, September through May. Locations may change monthly. Check calendar page. Everyone is welcome to attend.

President	Brigit Burt, 753-2794
Vice President	Robert Schmidt, 755-9262
Secretary	Joanna Garrard, 753-2429
Treasurer	Susan Drown, 752-3797
Conservation	Nick Strickland, 750-5035
Education	Jack Greene, 563-6816
Membership	Al Stokes, 752-2702
Field Trips	Al Stokes, 752-2702
Newsletter	Lois Olson, 752-9085
Circulation	Susan Durham, 752-5637
Publicity	Beth Walden, 753-0080
Hospitality	Tim & Jackie Henney, 755-6888
Hotline	Nancy Williams, 753-6268
Legislative Chairperson	

Trustees

1992-95	Dawn Holzer, 258-5205; Val Grant, 752-7572
1993-96	Rebecca Echols, 752-2367 Richard Mueller, 752-5637
1994-97	Bryan Dixon, 752-6830; Glen Gantz, 258-2748; Ted Evans, 753-2258; Jan Anderson, 752-2946

Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as the *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions of any kind, due on the 15th of each month. Send to 280 N. 300 E., Logan, UT 84321.

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## National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the national Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.



Send this application and your check to:  
 National Audubon Society  
 Chapter Membership Data Center  
 P.O. Box 51001 • Boulder, CO 80322-1001

LOCAL CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

Bridgerland Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 3501  
 Logan, UT 84323-3501

**W-52**  
 Local Chapter Code  
 7XCHA

Subscriptions to *The Stilt* are available to non-members for \$5.00 per year. Call Susan Durham, 752-5637. Also, call Susan for new subscriptions or address changes.