Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina

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WINTER 2017

Message from the President *by Cathy Burns*

We did it ! The Wildlife Commission has listened. Our voices have been heard. Whether you called WRC or the Governors office, emailed people, sent in petitions, made posts on social media, sent in comments on the Commission web site, participated in local meetings, were part of a face book group meeting or showed up in person at the meetings.

Your combined efforts convinced the Wildlife Commission to listen to our concerns and made for positive changes to the proposed rule changes. So a super big Thank You to everyone !

A year has already gone by as your President. It has been an interesting experience and a learning curve for me. Attempting to coordinate the efforts and activities of 13 different persons while moving towards a common set of goals was a tad bit more of a challenge than I realized. I apologize for any missteps that happened.

We have made several important and significant changes this year.

- We purchased a Square, so we can now take credit cards and debit cards at the symposium.
- We are working with NC State Business School on a new and improved web site. Coming soon!
- We now have a " WRNC Hall of Fame" to honor those rehabbers that have made an impact on rehabbing here in NC.
- The Symposium Committee has worked long and hard to find new subjects and instructors for the symposium.

There have been other improvements for the symposium as well. Keeping in line with our financial responsibilities, we will be providing tickets for lunches and the banquet dinner.

Board Members:

Cathy Burns - President

Kelley Odell - Vice President

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Jean Chamberlain - Treasurer

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Taylor Gregory

Jennifer Heyward

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NCSU Symposium Advisor :

Greg Lewbart, DVM

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Message from the President (cont.)

This will help to keep us from paying for more food than we need.

The banquet dinner will be held at the NC State University Club right by the Vet School . You can check them out on face book at https://www.facebook.com/NCSUCLUB/
Since the Raffle is always a good time, we made more time for it. Arrangements have been made for a microphone so it will be easier for everyone to hear.
We have also acquired a banner to place out onto the road to assist new attendees in locating where the Symposium is being held.

If you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance to you, please either email me at patcatb@aol.com or call me at 910-324-9967.
As always please take care of yourself.

Cathy Burns
WRNC President

"Otters Just Wanna Have Fun!"

by Linda Bergman-Althouse, as written for "Carolina Salt Magazine"

Stock Photo

Full of fun, grace and beauty one might describe North American River Otters who have, over the years, been restored throughout North Carolina to their former population glory. It's a sheer pity that these gorgeous creatures nearly became extinct in the early 1900's due to exploitation and greed surrounding the fur trade. Otters in swampy marshes found in our coastal regions had a better chance at survival though, because food was plenty and the wetlands areas were inaccessible to hunters and trappers. Although secretive animals, sightings are reported by outdoor enthusiasts who say given the opportunity to observe otters in the wild they became awestruck and captivated by their behaviors. Most enjoyable to watch is the spirited otters' expression of fun as they revel in sliding down mud hills into the river or skidding across snow like they are riding a skimmer board. And boy do they like to play and frolic! Reported as some of the most playful wild animals, young otters love to wrestle and chase each other, and both activities are good training for survival skills; agility, endurance and the raw power they need as an adult otter. At the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter in Newport, we have only experienced one admit of a river otter in many years. He was a youngster found alone and unable to fend for himself. It was important to maintain his

"Otters Just Wanna Have Fun!" (cont.)

wild side while being raised at the shelter, so important that a staff member posted a sign for everyone to see: "Do Not Speak to the Otter." He was adorable but also wild and meant to stay wild; therefore, we were very careful in preventing our little otter from habituating with humans. He had many vocalizations, and we came to know when he was hungry and when he needed attention.

Otters are very social animals, so the goals were to pack on some weight, ensure expert swimming accomplishments, teach him to hunt and ready him to colonize with other otters. The North American River Otter is a carnivore mammal that belongs to the Mustelidae family, along with weasels and minks. They look very similar to a weasel, only much, much larger, weighing up to 30 lbs and measuring nearly 4 feet in length. Otters have characteristic elongated and streamlined bodies with stout and sturdy legs. Their waterproof fur is a sleek, dense dark brown with a light tan underbelly, and their face is adorned with a cute oval and blunt snout. River Otters have a thick neck, a long furry and thick tail, extensive whiskers used for detecting vibrations indicating the proximity of prey, and their eyes and ears are found high on their head to aid in surface swimming. They can go deep in the water as well. A depth of 60 feet has been recorded, and they can stay under for up to eight minutes. Otters have that nictitating membrane that covers and protects their eyes while swimming under-water. Their feet have five toes with nonretractable claws and webbing between each toe which helps them maneuver in a variety of marine and freshwater habitats ranging from slow moving coastal streams to rapidly running mountain streams. On land, frisky otters can leap and run almost as effectively as they swim and have been clocked as fast as 18 mph. Generally nocturnal, otters are semi-aquatic predators who feed on fish, crayfish, crabs, rodents, birds, eggs and amphibians such as frogs. Although they need to be near water, which provides most of their food source, they spend two-thirds of their time on land. They live in dens with many tunnel openings along the river bank or they may take up residence in a convenient log jam, thick cover vegetation or any natural cavity they find. Although the fun-loving otter is not known as a fighter, it will charge or scratch those who invade their feces marked territory. They communicate with each other by whistling, growling, chuckling or screaming. Their scent glands near the base of their tail also produce a form of communication by allowing them to mark scent a musky odor, fencing off their home range.

Stock photo

Otters live in bands of 5 to 10 adults with spring breeding season pups. Otters become sexually mature within two years, although many males do not mate until they are 5 to 7 years of age, but when they do, they are promis-

"Otters Just Wanna Have Fun!" (cont.)

Stock Photo

cuous and will breed with a number of females during breeding season. Pups are born in the spring after "delayed implantation" which means the female may have been impregnated almost a year before. Three to six, fully furred pups are born weighing 4 to 6 ounces and will nurse from Mom for only three months but usually remain with her for almost a year. The male is not considered part of the family and does not help with pup rearing. It might be that "cheating" thing! All Otters must be wary of predators such as bobcats, coyotes or fox, domestic dogs, black bear, large raptors such as eagles, alligators and man (intentional or unintentional). Although, they mainly escape predation through their agility in the water, they aren't quite as quick and maneuverable on land. North American River Otters are, themselves, important predators who help maintain a healthy, aquatic ecosystem by eating "trash" fish that compete with more economically desirable game fish, and the presence of otters generally does not affect humans in any adverse way.

An otter's life expectancy in the wild is 8 to 9 years, although in captivity, a record high of 21 years is reported. When our young otter of years ago was ready for the move from our rehabilitative intensive care in the shelter facility to the great outdoors, we moved him into the reinforced pelican enclosure (in the absence of pelicans at the time), which accommodated him with a grand pool and ground cover. His otter skills developed rapidly, and although his weight was up, he fished on his own and displayed Olympic swimmer moves. He seemed lonely and sad, so we urgently made arrangements to transport him to a rehabilitator's home in Merrimon, NC along the river. We set up his makeshift den close to the house where our volunteer could keep an eye on his comings and goings. He would go to the river to eat and play, then return to his otter apartment daily, but within a few weeks, she started to see him less and less. Our theory is; he eventually found others of his own kind down the water way, and because he was so darned cute, we're almost certain our otter has had a positive impact in helping repopulate the North American River Otters in our coastal region.

You go boy, and hope you're still having fun!

Stock Photo

Nominations for the WRNC board

by Kelley Odell

Below are the candidates to consider for WRNC board membership. Members will vote during the banquet at the symposium on Saturday, Jan 21st, 2018.

Elizabeth Chandler (nominee)

Elizabeth Chandler *has been working as the staff accountant at Duke Divinity School for almost ten years. Her financial work includes budgeting, accounts receivables/payables, reconciliation, writing/reviewing contracts, financial analysis, auditing and grant reporting. Elizabeth holds several financial certifications through Duke and is currently working on the research grant administration certification. She has extensive financial and leadership experience having worked as a junior accountant for a CPA firm, church bookkeeper, district manager, and as the buyer/manager for photography and science stores including the NC Museum of Life and Science. She has volunteered over the past 25 years serving on several non-profit boards as a member and as an officer, Treasurer, Vice-President and President, ranging from PTA boards at the local, county and state level, church, non-profit organizations and HOA boards. Elizabeth enjoys spending time with her family helping her partner KT Childress, a dedicated licensed wildlife rehabilitator and teenaged daughter, who is an intern rehabber, to feed and care for the numerous squirrels, opossums and rabbits that have and continue to come into their lives. Elizabeth loves being a part of the process of nurturing and releasing these animals back to the wild and describes the experience as both heartwarming and wondrous.*

Amy Akins (nominee)

Life is good! I am a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for small mammals and an active member and mentor with Wildlife Welfare, Inc. I also volunteer at the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores and serve as a mentor for the Aquarium Teen Ambassador program. Safe to say, I am a happy lady when busy learning, teaching, and caring for animals. I work fulltime in Raleigh as Project Manager for a local custom builder. Home is located in Apex, NC where I enjoy time with my loving, supportive husband and family. My family sometimes jokes about needing to grow fur, a tail or feathers in order to get my attention.

Nominations for the WRNC board *(cont.)*

Calley Gerber (nominee)

Calley Gerber *is the founding attorney of Gerber Animal Law Center, a firm dedicated solely to animal law issues. While she has been an animal attorney for the past decade, she spent the first several years of her legal career as a prosecutor. In her work as a prosecutor, animal cruelty cases were a regular part of her docket. She is an Adjunct Professor of Law teaching Animal Law at the University of Chapel Hill School of Law and regularly speaks on animal law and other topics throughout North Carolina and nationally. Calley has been quoted and/or featured in USA Today, The Chicago Tribune, Lawyers Weekly, The News & Observer, Dog Living Magazine and other publications. She serves on the Board of Directors for various animal nonprofit organizations, volunteers regularly with animal groups, and lives with her rescue animals in Raleigh, NC.*

Linda Bergman-Althouse (incumbent)

Linda *began volunteering at the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter (OWLS) in Morehead City, pursuing her passion in wildlife conservation and rehabilitation twenty four years ago. She achieved her certification as a state wildlife rehabilitator and continues to actively volunteer at OWLS, working clinic in rehabilitation, coordinating and accomplishing field rescues and mentoring new volunteers. Linda has been presenting wildlife classes on issues and topics relative to the field of wildlife rehabilitation such as "Squirrel Ailments," "Anything & Everything Squirrel," "Alternate Habitat for Chimney Swifts," "Professionalism," "Hazards of Wildlife Rehabilitation" and "Treating the Human Animal" for many years as requested by coordinators for wildlife symposiums and conferences held in our eastern region. Linda is proactively concerned with the loss of wildlife habitat due to progressive development in Onslow and its surrounding counties and regularly attends community and civic meetings to voice those concerns through education, as well as, rally support. Linda holds a Masters of Science degree in educational psychology and is currently contracted by the Department of Labor to facilitate transition workshops for exiting military members aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Stations New River & Cherry Point and Army Posts Fort Bragg, NC & Fort Hood, TX.*

Linda grew up in rural Macon County, Illinois with many chickens, cats and dogs, but after 26 years of residency calls North Carolina home. She is Eastern Illinois University Alumna, an author, a retired U.S. Marine, College Psychology Instructor, Industry Training Developer & Line Build Designer, Wildlife Rescuer and Rehabilitator, current board member and Past President of Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. and staunch advocate for animal rights and conservation of our natural resources. Linda resides in Onslow County, North Carolina with her retired Marine & Professional Photographer husband, John and three (indoor only) cats; Seven, Shadow and Frizbee.

Nominations for the WRNC board *(cont.)*

Ann Rogers (incumbent)

Ann *has been a licensed home rehabilitator of small mammals since 1988. She has been federally permitted for songbirds since 1991. She is a board member of Wildlife Welfare, Inc, and WRNC. She retired from her job a software developer in 2000. She is the mother of two adult sons, two Boston terriers, two house sparrows, and a mouse named Penney, who all travel in a motorhome with her and her husband when they go on vacation!*

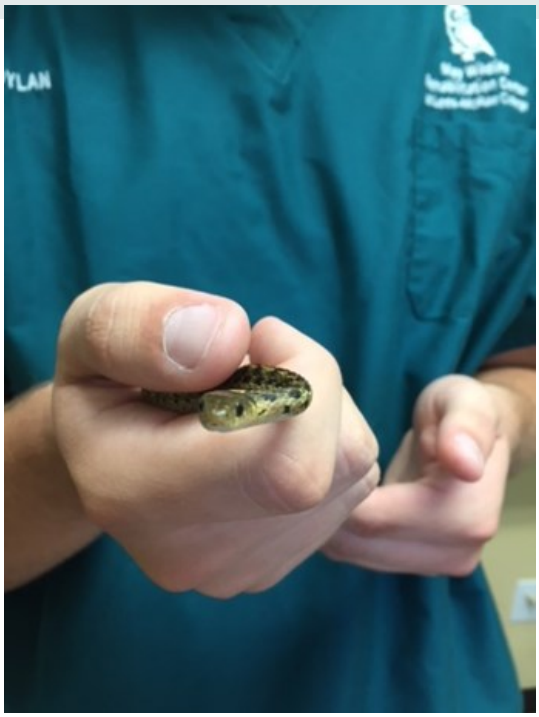
Carla Johnson (incumbent)

Carla *has been rehabbing for over 25 years, is on the board of WRNC and Wildlife Rehab, Inc., her local rehab group. She has coordinated wildlife rehabilitation classes through the local community college in Winston-Salem, NC and presented countless environmental education programs to the surrounding community. In her spare time, she rescues dogs from puppy mills and natural disaster situations, is the south east coordinator for Chihuahua Rescue & Transport, Inc., a national 501(c)3 organization and enjoys working to place unwanted Chinese Crested dogs.*

Raffle Help Needed *- please read the note on the last page*

Tiny Snake's Miniature Success Story

by Amber McNamara



Photograph by Amber McNamara

16 grams. Half of an ounce. The weight of 3 nickels. Any way you phrase it, the May Wildlife Rehabilitation Center's patient number 2017-1001 was *tiny*. An LMC student found the injured Garter snake in Banner Elk with a large (relatively!), firm swelling of his abdomen and brought him to the MWRC for care. Radiographs revealed an increased opacity (whiteness) in the swollen area, but it was difficult to discern exactly what was enlarged. Since the mass was not moveable, exploratory surgery would be the next step; with such a petite patient, every component of his care – medications, anesthesia, suture - would have to be modified to fit.

Radiograph courtesy of Appalachian New River Veterinary Associates

Anesthesia for the tiny snake began by placing his entire body inside a cat-sized anesthesia mask. Once groggy, an improvised endotracheal tube, made by combining parts of an IV catheter and feeding tube, was inserted into his trachea, allowing staff to deliver mini-breaths every 10-15 seconds. An incision was made between the scales on the left side of the abdomen and then into the GI tract, where roughly 1.5 g of impacted material was removed. After gently flushing the area, staff closed the GI tract with miniscule 6-0 suture; skin sutures placed between scales held the skin together. Injectable pain medications required dilution to a suitable strength prior to administration.

The anesthesia, surgery, and recovery took approximately 35 minutes and the snake recovered well from the procedure. Staff would wait for 48 hours to offer him food, giving the surgical site time to rest and begin healing. Two days after surgery, he ate a pinkie mouse!

Photograph by Keri Lu Halverson

Over the next several days, staff would evaluate the surgical site closely and be on the lookout for feces. The incision healed well and feces was noted on day 4. With subsequent feedings,

Tiny Snake's Miniature Success Story (cont.)

he had a great appetite and no problems digesting and eliminating food. Staff removed the sutures approximately 2 weeks after the surgery. Throughout his rehabilitation, the snake garnered observations such as "spunky", "quick", "super wiggly", and "fabulous". Pint-sized with an attitude, he was ready for release just 3 weeks after his arrival. A miniature success story!

Photograph by Amber McNamara

Photograph by Keri Lu Halverson

"Gobo" A Cautionary Tale

by Halley Buckanoff

SPOILER ALERT! Have you read "Bambi"? No, not the Disney® version. But, the original novel written by the Austrian author Felix Salten in 1923 titled, "Bambi, A Life in the Woods". If you have read it you may know where this is going. The Disney® movie never introduced you to one of Bambi's cousins, "Gobo". Maybe because what happened to "Gobo" is a cautionary tale of when good intentions go bad. "Gobo" is rescued by "He" as humans are referred to in the story and the following spring released back into the woods where Bambi and the rest of the deer live. But, because of how "Gobo" was raised and cared for by the human rescuer/ rehabilitator "Gobo" has no fear of humans, and with no fear he approaches a hunter.

I probably don't need to tell you what happened after that, I'll spare you the graphic details that have remained with me since I read the novel some time ago. But, because of "Gobo" there is an ever present fear of doing a disservice to the wildlife within our care; we need to strive to do what's in the animal's best interest, not ours.

Do wildlife appreciate what we do for them? Should they? Should we be able to tell them apart from their wild reared counterparts? Is petting comforting to a cottontail? Does a kestrel want to be kissed? If they are not fit to be released and returned to the wild do they want to remain in our care for their entirety of their lives without the ability to care for themselves or be with their own kind?

Wildlife rehabilitators have a moral obligation, and a legal obligation, to the animals within their care.

"Gobo" A Cautionary Tale (cont.)

The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association's Code of Ethics states:

"A wildlife rehabilitator should strive to provide professional and humane care in all phases of wildlife rehabilitation, respecting the wildness and maintaining the dignity of each animal in life and in death. Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition and released as soon as appropriate. Non-releasable animals which are inappropriate for education, foster-parenting, or captive breeding have a right to euthanasia."

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Guidelines for Wildlife Rehabilitators States:

"Wildlife Rehabilitation Permits are not issued for the purpose of establishing "homes" for permanently injured or crippled animals that cannot survive in the wild. One of the most difficult decisions rehabilitators face is the fact that many animals received will not be suitable for release to the wild and must be euthanized. With very limited exceptions, animals that can only survive by amputation of an appendage, or that are so badly injured that they will never be releasable, should be immediately euthanized. Prolonging the animal's stress and suffering, and condemning them to a diminished quality of life in captivity is not an act of mercy"

So, the next time we are evaluating for release, remember "Gobo" and we must ask ourselves this…"Does it have the skills to survive?"

What is wrong with this picture? Reason to learn how to perform gross necropsy! by Toni O'Neil

Discolored Heart Lining in an emaciated Great Blue Heron; photograph by Toni O'Neil

New T-shirt Colors On Sale At 2018 WRNC Symposium in Raleigh!! *by Linda Bergman-Althouse*

Symposium 2017 unveiled a new, crew neck WRNC T-Shirt in earthy, CHESTNUT BROWN and it was a hit! AND such a hit that we opted to get two fresh "out of the box" colors for Symposium 2018. So . . along with our remaining Chestnut Brown, we will offer sassy KIWI and bold HEATHER CARDINAL!! The new shirts (green & red) range in multiple sizes from small to XXL and will be $12.00 each. The remaining inventory of brown will be $10.00 each. Our comfy and warm, INDIGO BLUE sweatshirt will also be available for $20.00. Check out the new bright and happy colors for your next WRNC T-Shirt(s)!! They are brand spankin' new and are available now if you're thinking Christmas present for yourself or someone else. If not, I'll meet you at the sales table during the Symposium for this addition to your T-shirt collection!! If you choose early purchase, contact the WRNC T-Shirt Guru, Linda Bergman-Althouse, at lbergmanx@gmail.com.

Photographs by Linda Bergman-Althouse

See you at the Symposium!

Training Opportunities

The **IWRC (**International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council) offers many classes throughout North America on a variety of wildlife-related topics. The two-day "Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation" Course, for instance, will be offered at the following locations:

Houston, TX - Hosted by the Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Coalition January 13-14, 2018

Georgetown, TX - Hosted by All Things Wild Rehabilitation February 3-4, 2018

Green Bay, WI - Hosted by the Wisconsin Wildlife Rehabilitators Association February 15-16, 2018

Anaheim, CA - Hosted by the NWRA and IWRC February 26-27, 2018

Saskatoon, SK - Hosted by Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of SK March 17-18, 2018

Check out their website at https://theiwrc.org/courses for a listing of physical courses as well as online courses

NWRA Symposium 2018

The NWRA (National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association) will hold its annual meeting in Anaheim, CA on Feb 28th – March 3rd, 2018. For details and to register, go to:

http://www.nwrawildlife.org/page/NWRA_Symposium_2018

CRC Rehabilitation Seminars

Carolina Raptor Center will offer two one-day rehabilitation seminars on Oct 6 & 7, 2018. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please email Mathias Engelmann at Mengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org.

Tentative list of topics includes:

Saturday — Imping, Bandaging, Necropsy, Case studies, Tour of hospital

Sunday — Re-nesting raptors, Release Evaluation, Feathers & Aging, Q&A with Dr. David Scott

New Regulations by NCWRC are coming

As you may already be aware of, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) has produced the first draft of proposed new regulations governing, among other things, wildlife rehabilitators and educators with permits for non-releasable wildlife. Many of you have probably (hopefully) attended one of the three recent public hearings or submitted your comments online. To see the original proposed rules and FAQ's go to: http://www.ncwildlife.org/Proposed-Regulations

It is our understanding that once the next draft of the proposed rules is completed, it will also be made available for public comments. Keep an eye out for these new rules because they will affect all of us starting in January 2019.

To receive email notifications from the NCWRC about this and other issues, go to the following page to sign up: http://www.ncwildlife.org/News/Wildlife-Email-Update

WRNC Cage Grant At Work

One cage grant was awarded in 2017 to Jeff Standen and Appalachian Wildlife Refuge. Below is a photograph of the finished product, courtesy of Kimberly Brewster. Jeff is a mammal rehabilitator specializing in cottontails and is working closely with the newly-established Appalachian Wildlife Refuge and other local rehabilitators.

Photograph by Kimberly Brewster

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We are sad to report that our fellow board member Toni O'Neil, founder and director of Possumwood Acres, recently lost her husband of many years. Our thoughts and prayers are with Toni and her family.

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Important dates in 2018

Next WRNC Symposium: Saturday & Sunday, Jan 20th & 21st, 2018 with an Icebreaker on Friday, Jan 19th

Deadline to submit a $500 Chimney Swift Tower Grant Application: Nov 1st, 2018 (NEW DEADLINE)

Deadline to submit a $500 Cage Grant Application: Nov 1st, 2018 (NEW DEADLINE)

WRNC Newsletter Schedule

Do you have a wildlife-related idea you'd like to share with the WRNC membership? You should think about submitting it to the editors for consideration. How about a relevant article you found somewhere? Send us a link so we can ask for permission to reprint it. Email articles, ideas, comments and questions to: Mengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org

The WRNC newsletter is published four times a year. The deadlines for submissions are:

March 1st **June 1st** **September 1st** **December 1st.**

A Novel Solution for an Injured Turtle *by the NCSU-CVM Turtle team et al (printed with permission by Dr. Greg Lewbart)*

To see a cool story about an innovative approach to turtle rehabilitation, pioneered right here at NCSU-CVM by a team of collaborators including Dr. Greg Lewbart, click on the following link:

https://cvm.ncsu.edu/a-novel-solution-for-injured-turtle/?utm_source=IWRC+Newsletter+and+Notices&utm_campaign=698e4e091a-September_2017_Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c92c6e669c-698e4e091a-100656497

Rabid Deer in Western NC - NCWRC News Release

reprinted with permission from NCWRC

http://www.ncwildlife.org/News/commission-confirms-case-of-a-rabid-deer-in-cherokee-county

Newsletter Editors

Linda Bergman–Althouse

Mathias Engelmann

Ann Rogers

Jean Chamberlain

Carla Johnson

Raffle Help Needed

If you have attended a WRNC symposium in recent years then you know how much fun the raffle is. But more importantly, it raises money for scholarships, cage grants and chimney swift tower grants.

Toni O'Neil and Kathy Lillard, long-time WRNC board members and outgoing raffle coordinators have done a fabulous job for years and really deserve a break. They have officially stepped down from the co-coordinator positions. We need a few good women (or men) to step up to the position of raffle coordinator. You do not need to be a board member. We need to fill these positions soon, otherwise there may not be a raffle beyond 2018.

In the meantime, we need help now. If you are attending the symposium and have an hour or two sometime on Saturday before 4 pm, please come by the raffle area and introduce yourself. We will need help organizing items into baskets and bags. If you have new or gently used wicker baskets or interesting wildlife-related tote bags and are willing to donate them, let us know.

If you have new or very gently used items to donate that would be appropriate, please contact one of us ahead of the symposium: Mathias Engelmann (mengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org), Savannah Trantham (savannah@appalachianwild.org) or any WRNC board member in your area.

Looking beyond the symposium, we will need help year-round on a limited basis even if you don't have the time to become a coordinator. November through January are the busiest times so if you think you will have time for emails, phone calls, faxes, etc. during that time in particular, let us know. For the rest of the year the responsibilities include scouting out new potential donors, making initial inquiries, writing "Thank You" letters, and collecting items as we draw close to the following symposium.

WRNC needs your help. Please join the team and become a raffle coordinator. Consider this a personal challenge - just how many donations can you organize for the raffle in 2019?

If you have not been to a WRNC symposium, you're missing out on great lectures and labs AND a raffle that should not be missed—for a few dollars' worth of tickets you have the chance to win some very nice prizes, thanks to our generous private and corporate donors!