

Winter 2008

Volume 28, #2

TreeHouse Droppings



"Captain Rhodes" Takes to the Skies

In this issue: From the President; Rehab Ramblings; Bobcats, Barn Owls, Pelicans; Updates; Open House; Capt. Kim Rhodes Remembered; "Capt. Rhodes" Eagle Release; Short Tails

Photo by Wade Dowdy

Over 25 years of giving back to the wild

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Melvin McCann, Maintenance Super.
Deana Browne, Fundraising
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Pam Lippert, Clinic Supervisor
Andrea Crabtree, Executive Director
Lynn Schreiber, President

*TreeHouse Wildlife Center has
one full-time & two part-time staff
members paid through a grant.
All other staff are volunteers.

Volunteers

Judy & Jack Neiman, Deana Browne,
Lois & Christy DuMey,
Melvin McCann, Kathy Conley,
Bud Grzeskowiak, Penny Moon,
Marti & Don Stone, Phil Challandes,
Stephanie Bland, Brian Willis,
Sandie Konopelski, Penny Sarandis,
Susan & Melanie Hiller, Hannah Burnett,
Petra Squires, Dorothy Fabry,
Brad Blumenstock, Dillon Dean,
Shawna & Brittany Thomas,
Drs. Craig & Kim Staehle,
Rick & Carly Bohn

If you have a few hours a week to spare,
and you would like to
become a volunteer,
please contact TreeHouse
for more information.
(The only requirement is that you are
at least 16 years of age,
unless accompanied by an adult)

**Inquire about volunteering at our two
biggest fundraisers: Italian Fest,
prepping or selling salads; or Open
House, staffing our raffle/sales tables.**

For more information:
(618) 372-8092

**TreeHouse Wildlife Center, Inc.
1825 Fosterburg Road
Brighton, Illinois 62012**

www.treehousewildlifecenter.com



FROM THE PRESIDENT by Lynn Schreiber

As the holidays are upon us and the close of another year is about to pass, we reflect on 2008 with mixed emotions. Anxiety consumes us all while we wait for the funding needed to relocate our center. The time spent waiting has allowed us to make further improvements to our building design as it continues to evolve and transform. Don Dieckmann, green building designer and consultant, has suggested innovative “green building” solutions with high tech, energy-efficient options. We have altered our building design to include many of his suggestions. Ultimately, these changes mean a greater cost savings to our project and reflect a more attainable goal in the eyes of prospective funders. Our members continue to be our greatest supporters, two members have committed to sponsoring cages, and we are awaiting a decision on the status of two grants that are pending. With the new “green building” focus, we have several vendors offering materials, services, and labor at a substantial discount!

Despite the wonderful people who continue to support us, our greatest problem is that we still have not received major funding necessary for our relocation plans. Though we try to remain optimistic, funding opportunities are diminishing, leading to an uncertain future for TreeHouse. *If we do not receive substantial start-up funds by the rapidly approaching deadline set by our Board of Directors, we will be forced to close our doors, and face the dire consequences of that decision.* The most dramatic of these consequences is that orphaned and injured wildlife will have no place to go for the treatment, care, and services that we have provided for nearly three decades.

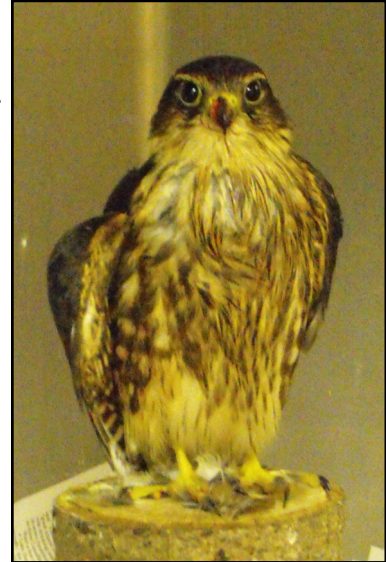
There are a couple of reasons why obtaining funding is slow. First, the economy affects us the same as it does everyone. People are cutting back on their spending and cannot afford to support non-profits like ours. Secondly, as the times change, so does the interest of many foundations. The trend seems to be shifting more toward funding broader types of environmental interests as opposed to supporting smaller “sub categories” such as wildlife rehabilitation. Those that once funded wildlife interest areas have shifted their focus to other environmental issues such as land preservation, river restoration, habitat conservation, and pollution control. While it should be noted that wildlife benefit from conservation programs, habitat preservation, and other similar initiatives, there is still an immediate need for wildlife rehabilitation centers like ours that serve as a valuable and necessary resource for orphaned and injured wildlife.

Every day we are reminded of our mission as we look into the eyes of the animals that we care for at TreeHouse. They motivate us to remain patient and to work toward the goal to which we are all committed. We constantly research and pursue new prospects, always pressing on with steadfast determination. With the New Year approaching we cannot believe that our past efforts have been in vain, and so we hope above everything else, that winter's end reveals the news of promise, that our future will see generations of wildlife coming through the doors of a new home.

REHAB RAMBLINGS by Pam Lippert

Postscript from the spring newsletter; the Trumpeter Swan admitted last March that had to have part of a wing amputated, finally found his ride to Wisconsin. Sandie Konopelski of Shiloh arranged to meet a Wisconsin conservation officer in Madison (WI) who transferred the swan to rehabilitator Marge Gibson in Antigo, Wisconsin, for their captive breeding project.

One of the more unusual birds admitted was a **Merlin**, on September 25. Merlins are members of the falcon family, larger than a Kestrel, but smaller than a Peregrine. They are usually spotted in the area during migration. This particular Merlin had a wing fracture, was rehabilitated, and released in early November.



MERLIN

Summer was not all that busy this year. The number of young raptors admitted was down; however, we did take in a lot of young ducks. We had the usual number of fawns, and released a dozen.

Fall has been slow. We are not seeing many migrating raptors yet. This may be partly because the amount of late crops still in the fields draws rodents, which in turn draws raptors.



BARN OWL

On July 21, we received a fledgling Barn Owl from Marissa. The nest was located in a tree cavity close to the street, and the neighbors had been anxiously watching the nest with a spotting scope for weeks. There were four, possibly five young in the nest. Approximately a week earlier, the neighbors had watched as the oldest left the nest. After that they did not see the adults. The second oldest ended up out on a branch, fell to the ground and died, and from what they were able to observe, it appeared to have physical abnormalities.

continued on page 3

Photos by Adele Moore

Barn owl continued

The third youngster also landed on the ground that evening but died during the night. Both dead birds appeared to be suffering from starvation. There was one fledgling left, and the neighbors and I were worried about its welfare. The rescue must have looked like the children's game "Chutes and Ladders", but the neighbors were able to capture the youngster, which was found to be starving as well. The bird was brought to TreeHouse, fattened up, tested for its capability to capture live prey, and exercised in the flight cage before being released on the outskirts of Marissa in late September.



Featured throughout this newsletter are the winners of
Smokey Bear's Art Contest from Open House.
Owl drawn by Taylor Cox, age 6.

A **Pelican** was admitted May 20 with fishing line protruding from his bill. The pelican had literally swallowed the hook, line *and* sinker. Several x-rays were taken during his three-month captivity to watch the painstakingly slow but forward "progress" of the ingested fishing gear. The bird was cleared for release on August 29 and is now back home with his companion on Teal Pond, Riverlands, West Alton.



Photos by Adele Moore
X-ray by Hawthorne

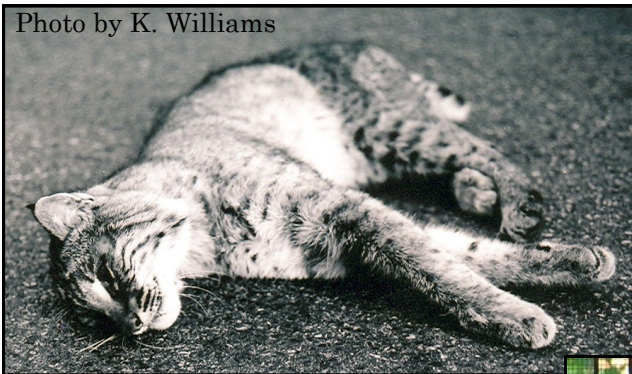
BOBCATS

It may interest our readers to know that two road-killed bobcats have been picked up in a month's time in the area. In early October, our very own Lynn Schreiber spotted one along Route 15 south of Belleville. In early November, another was found along Route 67, north of Godfrey. In comparison, TreeHouse has only admitted two bobcats from the wild in 30 years. I have yet to see one in the wild, but I do know they are out there. An article in *National Wildlife Magazine* a few months ago discussed how closely bobcats can live to humans without being detected.

Last year on the local news there was a story about O'Fallon, Illinois high school students who spotted one outside the window of their classroom. Their teacher did not believe them until he saw it for himself. The cat was also captured on the school surveillance cameras.

Area hunters have spotted bobcats from deer stands. My nephew watched one chase a rabbit right under his stand. The cat even paused to look at Josh while he clumsily tried to take its picture on his camera phone. Many people have captured photos with still cameras mounted in trees. People are usually surprised to learn that bobcats aren't that large, weighing 20-25 pounds — all muscle. They eat mainly rabbits and small rodents.

Photo by K. Williams



"Grafton" laying on Route 100 after being hit by a car on December 27, 2006. He was the first Bobcat TreeHouse admitted from the wild. The concussion he sustained when hit by the car adversely affected his eyesight.

"Grafton" today on display, and living the life from his hammock at Willowbrook Wildlife Haven in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Willowbrook staff reports he's such a big hit that the gift shop now carries bobcat t-shirts and stuffed animals.

Photo provided by Willowbrook



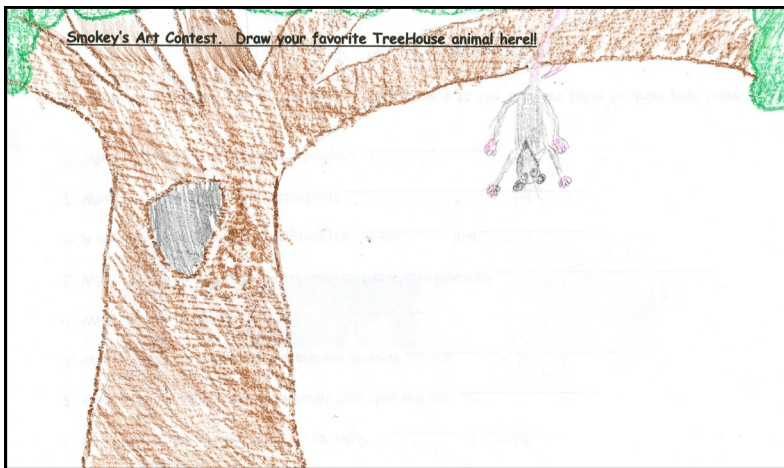
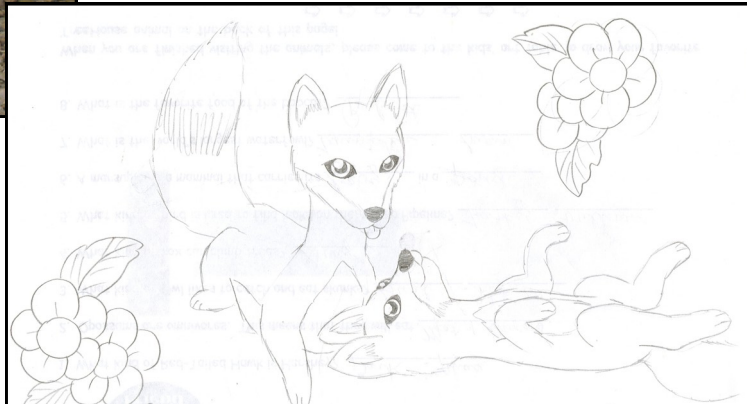
UPDATES

The female **Red-eared slider** with the cracked shell reported in the previous newsletter, as well as a second big female slider with a hole in her shell (at right) were both released.

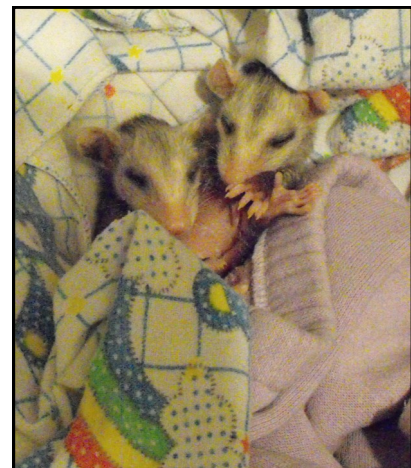


Two orphaned **Red Foxes** were released near New Athens.

Red Fox drawing by
Nichole Poppek, age 14.



Opossum drawing by **Julie Baker**, age 9



Two orphaned 'Possums

Photos by Adele Moore

RAFFLE WINNERS & DONORS

Ken Nettleton, Swansea, Owl Quilt donated by Deana Browne
 Karen Montgomery, Troy, Eagle Photo donated by Eric Bloemker
 Phil Challandes, Bethalto, Great horned Owl Photo donated by Sandra Samojeden
 Kelly Carey, Collinsville, Waterford Crystal Owl donated by Mary Ann Magac & Donna Gersman
 Jon Jonas, Belleville, Loon Print donated by Sally Joosten
 Al Skaer, Dog Gift Basket donated by Hawthorne Animal Hospital, Glen Carbon
 Leo Kreke, Aviston, Cat Gift Basket donated by Hawthorne Animal Hospital, Glen Carbon

OPEN HOUSE



ELVIS VOTED RESIDENT PRESIDENT!
 Permanent resident Bobcat, formally of Millstadt

Photo by Adele Moore



Volunteer, Dorothy Photo by Wade Dowdy

SILENT AUCTION DONORS

Mary Rotz
 Brian Willis
 Sally Joosten
 Tom Friedrich
 Eric Bloemker
 Kathy Duncan
 Melvin McCann
 Mickey Rudolph
 Sally Richardson
 Sandra Samojeden
 Flowers by Jeanne
 Linda Whittingham
 RiverBend Wild Bird Supply, Alton

THANKS TO
 Julie Izzo, DVM
 Amy Edgar, DVM
 from Hawthorne Animal Hospital



Osprey mount by Steve Bollini
Photo by Adele Moore



Photo by Wade Dowdy



Bobcat drawing by **Addison Johnson**, age 11

THANKS TO...

ALL the TreeHouse Volunteers, plus
Bits n Spurs 4-H Club
Charles Browne
Jack Neiman
Jim Moore
Julie Keffer
Tracy Willis
Alex Conley
Nancy Sabaj
Blake Schaaake
Kim Challandes
Kelsey Lox & Friends

Wild Birds Unlimited, Swansea
Brighton Farm Hands 4-H Club
Susan, Melanie & Melissa Hiller



Wade Dowdy Photo



Shannon the Harris Hawk

Photo by Wade Dowdy

THANK YOU

Lowes
Target
Mary Laird
Sam's Club
Nancy Hilton
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Alton Foundation
Jennay Haarmann
Alton Leathernecks
Jerry and Mary Kane
William "Ed" Groshart
On Shore Foundation
Happy Tails Thrift Shop
Mr and Mrs Irving Boime
Tim Kniest & Kathy Cramer
Liberty School, Edwardsville
SimmonsCooper Employee Trust
Conoco Phillips Wood River Refinery
Alton Tropical Sno patrons and management
Civic Memorial High School National Honor Society
Brad Winn and the Lewis & Clark Historical Museum
Wood River and Bethalto Region 3 Special Education

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IN MEMORY OF

Herbert Knobeloch
Joe Doyle
Dunnie Willmirth
Ronald D. Clark
Sara Twombly

IN HONOR OF

Intuitive Therapy and Massage
Stillpointe Wellness Center's new center

Dr. Paul and Donna Myer's birthdays

CAPTAIN KIM RHODES REMEMBERED by Pam Lippert

On August 30, 2008, TreeHouse and the conservation and law enforcement communities lost a very dear friend. Captain Kim Rhodes of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Region IV Alton Office, lost his long battle with cancer. Captain Rhodes worked for IDNR for almost 30 years, first in the Jacksonville area and then the Alton area. He also taught for many years at the conservation police academy in Springfield; in fact, many officers now on active duty were trained by Kim.

To say that Kim was loved and respected by all who knew him would be an understatement, for even conservation violators to whom he'd written tickets attended his funeral. Although he was short in stature, he had a huge heart that was only dwarfed by his sense of humor. One of his favorite pranks was to call TreeHouse and pretend to be an irate citizen with some kind of outrageous animal story, or a reporter wanting to publish an outlandish story about TreeHouse. I always knew it was him and would say, "Is this the greatest conservation officer in the world?" He couldn't resist and would say, "That would be me," or "I'm your guy."

Very early one morning in 1994, I received a call from Kim requesting my help. He was at the Olin Corporation in East Alton, where a yearling deer had run up the steps to their office building, crashed through a glass door and was running loose past all the surprised employees in their cubicles. (For the readers who do not reside in the Alton area, the irony here is that Olin manufactures ammunition -- including deer shot!) An alert security guard managed to contain the deer in an unoccupied office. Kim was called and upon arrival he noted that the deer did not have any life-threatening injuries. He called TreeHouse and said he saw no reason to destroy the animal, but needed help removing it and asked for my help. I grabbed some supplies and headed down there. When I entered the building, one of the employees of the company told me, "*He* can take care of this," as he pointed to the gun on Kim's belt.

The deer was in a small office with a lot of computer equipment and a second story window along one wall, where if things didn't go right, it could be disastrous. Kim and the East Alton Chief of Police let me coordinate the rescue. We were able to corral the deer against the wall opposite the window, cover it with a blanket and tranquilize it. The only injury it had was a laceration on its throat. It was taken to Hawthorne Animal Hospital, stitched up by Dr. Myer, brought back to TreeHouse and allowed to wake up and leave on its own.

It meant a lot that Kim had asked for our help, that we were able to work together, and it had a happy ending. It was always that way with Kim. He was never afraid to ask for help or to offer assistance. I believe he's the only Conservation Police Officer that has given us his home number in case of an emergency. When I returned to the DNR office after the deer incident, there was an old evidence seizure tag attached to my car, which Kim had fashioned into a ticket for "illegal parking on state property." Always the prankster!



Photo provided by the Rhodes Family

Bald Eagle "Captain Rhodes" Release
November 30, 2008
Lewis & Clark Historical Site
in memory of Captain Kim Rhodes



Photo by Adele Moore



Photos by Wade Dowdy





After “Capt. Rhodes” decided to take a path straight through the crowd, rather than the flight path cleared for him, it was smooth sailing.



Photos by Cheryl Pride



Photo by Wade Dowdy



Photo by Jason Meuret

“Capt. Rhodes’s” release wasn’t textbook, but neither was Captain Kim Rhodes. We weren’t surprised!

SHORT TAILS by Judy Neiman

GROWING UP ALONE

Early in the spring I received one lonely orphan duckling. Ducks are gregarious and I really felt bad for him being alone, but my wish for another one to keep him company never materialized.

I put a mirror and a stuffed duck in with him. He would either sit against the stuffed duck looking in the mirror, or sit on top of the stuffed duck. It really broke my heart that he was so lonely.

After about four weeks I rescued a group of three-week-old ducklings whose mother had been killed by a Great Horned Owl. You wouldn't think ducklings are mean, but after a certain age they will not accept an individual into an established group.

I didn't want the one duck to be alone any longer but I feared the new group would not accept him. So I took all of them to TreeHouse and put the single duck in a large cage first. Then I released the other eight ducklings. The ducklings did not attack the older one but he stayed far away from them. I went out an hour later to check but the single duckling was still staying by himself, unharmed. One more hour went by and I checked again. Much to my surprise, he was in charge of the younger ducklings and they were all following him all around the cage.

I was so glad he integrated with the others so he did not have to grow up alone. All were released together as a group.

ACT OF MERCY

My husband, Jack, and I went on a call about a Great Horned Owl caught in a barbed wire fence. It was dark, so we took flashlights and finally found the bird bound in barbed wire hanging by one wing. It was trying to hold onto the center wire with its large feet. Jack was able to free the bird, but the wing was so torn up from struggling we could not save the patient. All we could do was painlessly end its suffering.

Let's all hope TreeHouse gets enough funding to rebuild so we can continue to rescue animals like this so they will not suffer until they die of dehydration or starvation.

WE TRY HARD*Short Tails continued*

I attended the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association conference last spring. It's good to meet with other people who have had the same successes and disappointments that we've had. It is also really wonderful how many vets are getting involved in saving wildlife — it has changed a lot since I started in 1988. Our own vet, Dr. Myer from Hawthorne Animal Hospital, has been a godsend, as he cares for all animals from the majestic eagle to my friends, the ducks. He says "Ducks are God's creatures too."

We don't know why terrible things happen to helpless wildlife, but we try our best to rehabilitate all animals we take in. However, it is not always a success. So many animals have endure insurmountable injuries. I know it is frustrating for those who, filled with hope, bring us injured animals only to hear us say we cannot save them. We wish more than anyone that we could perform miracles and save each and every one of them.

Still, after all these years it is a very hard part of our job when we have to humanely put these animals down and it does take a toll on everyone here. As much as we hate it, we are not allowed to — nor could we afford to — keep all unreleaseable wildlife.

We have had many dedicated animal lovers over the years who have helped us do our best and we want to thank all of our supporters who trust us to do what is best for the animal.



Photo provided by Tina Sheppard



Above: Pam at Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge. (Photo provided by Two Rivers)

Left: Pam releasing a rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk at Grigsby Middle School in Granite City. The bird had flown into a window at a nearby home.

TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER MEMBERSHIP

TreeHouse receives **NO** state, federal or county funding.
Our only funding comes through you, the concerned public.

One way of helping TreeHouse operate is through purchasing a membership.
You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped us
give something back to the wild.

TreeHouse Membership fee consists of a minimum donation of **\$15.00** annually.
Lifetime TreeHouse Membership fee consists of a **one-time** minimum donation of **\$1,000.00**.

TreeHouse is registered as a non-profit corporation 501 C (3).
All contributions are tax deductible.
Please make checks payable to **TreeHouse Wildlife Center**.

**(Any Boeing employee who contributes to the Employee Charity Fund
can now designate TreeHouse as the specific recipient of donations.)**

- ☐ I would like to **renew** my membership to Treehouse Wildlife Inc.
(A renewal sticker will appear when your membership fee is due.)
- ☐ I would like to **become** a member of TreeHouse.
- ☐ I would like to make an **additional contribution** to TreeHouse.
- ☐ I would like to make a **donation** to the **TreeHouse Building Fund**.

Please check the appropriate box and mail this form with your donation.

☐ \$15.00 ☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$50.00 ☐ \$ _____ Other

- ☐ I would like information on becoming a **volunteer**.
- ☐ I would like information on **volunteering to staff a TreeHouse booth at fundraisers**

Send to:

**TreeHouse Wildlife Center
1825 Fosterburg Road
Brighton, Il. 62012**