



On The Wings of Eagles . .



Mew Construction Nears Completion

The American Bald Eagle Foundation is excited to announce construction has begun on its first three small raptor mews. These small mews will be completed by the first week of the new year and are designed to hold falcons and hawks but are marginal in size for bald eagles. Although mother nature began the winter gently and allowed construction to progress at a rapid rate initially, she has since returned to her normal status and the construction crew has been working in harsh winter conditions the last few weeks. With temperatures hovering near zero, wind chills in the minus 20 range, and three feet of new snow it has been difficult work thus far. However, builders Mario and Don have toughed it out and are now putting on the finishing touches. Mario Benassi is featured in another article in this newsletter as the new Director of the ABEF Raptor Center (see page 3). The new raptor center will initially hosts three to five falcons and hawks and provide a venue for live educational bird presentations to ABEF visitors. Upon completion of the master mew later this summer, the ABEF will also host between three and five bald eagles. These are exciting times at the ABEF with expansion into live educational bird presentations and several new specimens in the natural history museum as well. ABEF founder Dave Olerud, expressed delight at the thought of fulfilling a longtime dream of live educational raptors being part of the ABEF Natural History Museum experience. Obviously, completion of the mews and their inclusion into the ABEF educational package makes the Foundation a very unique center in Alaska with both a natural history museum and a live raptor center on site. All of this has been made possible by a combination of membership support, admission fees, gift shop sales, private grants, donations, and this year for the first time ever, a legislative grant from the state of Alaska. Although the country has been experiencing a difficult financial period this year, the ABEF has been able to continue pursuing its long term goals successfully thus far. Of course, it will require diligence, good management, and fiscal responsibility for many years to come to maintain and continue to enhance the ABEF experience. The ABEF would like to thank the many members, supporters, volunteers, staff, Rep. Bill Thomas, and Governor Sarah Palin for making this dream come true. Without all of their support it would be like so many other dreams that languish and die over time.

The American Bald Eagle Foundation

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MEET THE NEW ABEF ADMINISTRATOR

The American Bald Eagle Foundation recently hired a new administrator to replace Jennifer Norton. While we truly loved having Jennifer here, family needs dictated she move to Colorado. We will miss her hard work ethic and smiling face, and we wish her only the very best in her new home. In the meantime we have been blessed with a new member on our staff. Cheryl McRoberts and her husband Bill recently moved to Haines and have been very active in the community since their arrival. Seizing an opportunity we interviewed Cheryl and after reviewing her resume offered her the position of ABEF Administrator. We are happy to report she accepted our offer and is now on the ABEF staff. Rather than write a second hand introduction for Cheryl we opted to copy NBC News and asked her to introduce herself, "In her own words."

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am Cheryl McRoberts, I recently retired and moved to Haines in June with my husband. Since June we have immersed ourselves into the nature and awe of Haines. We have been volunteering throughout the town for the Alaska State Parks as Bear Monitors, at the Alaska State Fair, and here at the American Bald Eagle Foundation. I recently learned of an opening for an Administrator while volunteering here at the foundation gift shop this summer, and by the end of the Alaska Bald Eagle Festival I knew I would be very proud to be the Administrator of this Foundation. I want to make a difference here and feel this is a wonderful opportunity to do just that. As the new Administrator, I intend to build on my predecessor's groundwork. I have a background in income taxes and accounting as an enrolled agent with the I.R.S. I have owned my own businesses as an Owner/Operator including mobile home parks and a restaurant/ tavern. I have also had the opportunity to manage a fly fishing camp in Maine and a Hunting lodge in Wyoming. I look forward to the opportunity to work with our Trustees and Dave Olerud our Founder. I feel we have a very bright future with many exciting new programs planned for this year!

I also look forward to meeting each and everyone of you, so please feel free to stop in when you're in the area, or attending our Festival! I'd love to hear any ideas and input you may have! My office telephone number is 907-766-3094 and the email address is: info@baldeagles.org. Feel free to contact me anytime . . .

Sincerely,
Cheryl McRoberts, Administrator
American Bald Eagle Foundation



CHERYL MCROBERTS



MARIO BENASSI

ABEF SELECTS DIRECTOR FOR RAPTOR CENTER DEVELOPMENT

The ABEF has selected Mario Benassi as Director of Raptor Center Development. Mario is known as a cinematographer, director, and producer of wildlife related films. He has been a licensed falconer since the age of 14. His passion for environmental and wildlife preservation has been the major driving force in his career. He created a successful captive propagation program for barn owls at the Pueblo Zoo. He has also worked with golden eagles, the Peregrine Fund & Maya Project of Central America, and the rare and exotic bi-colored hawk of Central America. While working with the U.S. Forest Service he helped to locate the endangered Mexican Spotted Owl in Colorado. Utilizing his self taught skills Mario has been involved in Natural History film production for the last 25 years. Having worked directly with National Geographic, Discovery, Animal Planet, PBS, and Turner Productions, he is well known in the industry.

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ABEF HOSTS MUSEUM INTERN WHILE PURSUING ACCREDITATION

This fall the ABEF was fortunate enough to host Jacqueline Fernandez as a museum intern. Jacqueline is a new face to Haines, but she is no stranger to Alaska. Earlier in 2008, she had a highly enjoyable experience interning for the Alaska State Museum at the Alaska Natural History Museum in Anchorage. After learning about the ABEF's collections management internship and the Foundation's mission, collections, and bright future, Jacqueline was enticed to return to Alaska. Since her arrival at the end of October, Jacqueline has inventoried, documented, labeled, and photographed the ABEF's vertebrate zoological collection, written a policies and procedures manual, assisted with a review for the Conservation Assessment Program; began a small resources library for collections management; and helped out during the Foundation's major annual Bald Eagle Festival. Jacqueline graduated with a Masters from the Tufts University's Museum Studies Program in May of 2008 and earned a B.A. in International Relations and African Studies from Mount Holyoke College in 2005. She has completed coursework on collections management, museum education, exhibition design, and best standards and practices for museums. Prior to interning at the ABEF, Jacqueline worked or interned at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, the Lynn Museum and Historical Society, Stonenhurst, the Robert Treat Paine Estate, the Massachusetts



JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ

Historical Society, the Museum of African American History (via the National Park Service), and the Alaska Museum of Natural History. Jacqueline enjoys visiting other museums, taking architectural history tours, reading, cooking, traveling, and socializing with friends. The ABEF will utilize Jacqueline's input and recommendations to pursue accreditation as an Alaskan museum. Although there is a great deal of work remaining before full accreditation can be applied for, it is a goal the ABEF feels is important and well worth pursuing. The ABEF would like to thank Jacqueline for her outstanding work in 2008 and wish her continued success and a prosperous 2009.

Having worked on such film productions as “**Underdogs: Prairie Dogs Under Attack**,” “**Cost of Freedom**,” a special on wolf reintroductions, “**Mountain Gorillas of Rwanda**,” and his own production “**Colorado’s Wildside**” about Colorado ecosystems--he has garnered multiple awards from the film industry. Mario has also been awarded an honorary degree in zoology from the University of Southern Colorado for his work with Colorado’s wildlife. In addition to his work with the ABEF, Mario also enjoys flying his own hawks at the Kroschel Films Wildlife Center before hundreds of thrilled visitors during the summer. In evaluating his goals and focus for the future, Mario has determined he wants to make a difference by embracing a sustainable lifestyle that is both wildlife friendly and ecologically sound. In doing so he hopes to have a profoundly positive influence on future generations regarding wildlife appreciation and education. The ABEF is thrilled to have Mario onboard and looks forward to a mutually rewarding relationship for both the raptors and Mario. Welcome to the team Mario, we look forward to working with you on our live raptor program.

ABEF SELECTS TWO NEW TRUSTEES

The ABEF has elected two new trustees to the ABEF International Board of Trustees. During their annual meeting in November the existing board elected to fill the two seats vacated by the late Ed Shirley and Hans Fluehler. The Board’s election of **Mrs. Susan Flowers** set a precedent for ABEF Board elections because she is the first ever, second generation family member to be seated on the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Flowers is the daughter of the late Ed Shirley, who was a Charter Trustee that served the ABEF from 1987 until his death in 2006. ABEF founder Dave Olerud, said he could not be more thrilled at Mrs. Flowers selection, noting that Ed Shirley was not only a great trustee but also a great personal friend. Mrs. Flowers resides in Buford, Georgia but has visited the Chilkat Valley many times over the years. She shares her late father’s passion for bald eagles and pristine wildlife areas such as the Chilkat Valley. Mrs. Flowers received her formal undergraduate training from Ohio State University and her graduate training from Kennesaw State. She is a retired teacher who now home teaches her son. With her wealth of knowledge in educating others and her desire to make the ABEF an even better and more prosperous organization we can’t think of a better selection anywhere.

Mrs. Flowers was also selected to oversee and direct the ABEF Student Internship Program. She will travel to numerous universities and colleges to interview prospective students before making her selections. In the past, the ABEF has hosted between two and five interns each year, depending on funding availability. The ABEF is most grateful to the **Shirley Family Foundation** for its full support of this wonderful, educational program. If you know an aspiring young scientist, biologist, or ecologist that you think would be interested in serving an internship at the ABEF please feel free to contact the ABEF and nominate them.

Also elected to become an ABEF Trustee was **Mr. James King** of Juneau, Alaska. Mr. King has been a resident of Alaska for for 60 years, 10 years longer than Alaska has been a state. Mr. King was a pilot most of his life and has over 6500 hours flying biological missions for the U.S. Government. He is renowned for his work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in mapping and plotting eagle nesting locations throughout the Chilkat Valley. For over 33 years he served with USFWS all over Alaska. Mr. King also served as Supervisor of the Waterfowl Investigations

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ABEF Mission Statement

The American Bald Eagle Foundation is dedicated to the conservation of the American Bald Eagle and its natural habitat.



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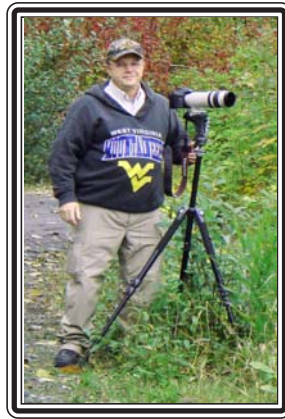
Trustees continued from p. 4

study as a Flyway Biologists for USFWS. Mr. King received his formal undergraduate training from Washington State College and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree by the University of Alaska for his groundbreaking work in wildlife. He has written over 50 journal articles on biological systems as well as a book entitled “**Alaska Birds.**” Although Mr. King has retired from the USFWS, he still serves as one of their primary consultants for all things biological. The ABEF is thrilled to have him as one of our own biological consultants.

The ABEF would like to formally express its gratitude to both of these new Trustees for their dedication and willingness to serve in this position. Congratulations to Susan Flowers and James King---and welcome aboard.

ABEF SELECTS 2009 MEMBERSHIP REWARDS PHOTOGRAPH

The ABEF recently selected the 2009 Membership Rewards Photograph from a portfolio submitted by Bill McRoberts. Bill has been an avid wildlife photographer since retiring from the U.S. Army in 2000. We would like to first say a big **THANK YOU** to Bill for his service, patriotism, and dedication to our country! Secondly, we would like to thank him for submitting his portfolio for our review. Bill shoots his wildlife images using a Canon EOS 40D digital SLR. He has found the Chilkat Valley to be a truly “target rich environment” when it comes to magnificent wildlife imagery opportunities. The photograph selected for this year is entitled “Screaming Eagle” and was taken in the Alaska Bald Eagle Preserve during the 2008 Alaska Bald Eagle Festival .



“Bill”

Bill McRoberts shown here, had his photograph entitled, “Screaming Eagle” selected as the 2009 Membership Rewards Photograph. Congratulations Bill on a really great image.

If you would like to have your wildlife photographs reviewed for possible selection as the membership rewards photograph of the year , drop us a line.



“SCREAMING EAGLE”

Would you like to help the ABEF raise funds? By simply using “**iSearchiGive**” for your internet searches, you can help finance the ABEF’s education and research programs without spending any of your own money. See page 5 for details about this great program.

2008 ALASKA BALD EAGLE FESTIVAL WAS A HIT!

The 2008 Alaska Bald Eagle Festival may be over, but the images below give a good sampling of the great experience attendees had at last year's festival. With the weather participating and over 2,000 bald eagles gathered, the festival was a visual delight for all involved. The weather was not too cold, not snowing heavily, and not too windy. This year's "Flight For Freedom" auction winner, Kiana Donat was only 6 years old making her the youngest winner ever to release a rehabilitated bald eagle back into the wilds of the Chilkat Valley.



The Awards Dinner was enjoyed by all and the food was great



"Flight For Freedom" winner, Kiana Donat helps release a rehabilitated bald eagle



Dan Hart presents flowers to festival director Jennifer Norton



Steve Kroschel presents one of his wolverines

AMERICAN BALD EAGLE FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The American Bald Eagle Foundation is a 501(c)3 tax exempt Foundation dedicated to the conservation and protection of the bald eagle and its habitat throughout North America. The Foundation relies on memberships, gift shop sales and generous donations from wonderful people like you to continue this important work. Please support the American Bald Eagle Foundation by becoming a member. If you do not wish to become a member, please consider making a tax-deductible donation.

You may download a membership application from our website or send in this copy. All members receive free newsletters, free admission to our museum and a color eagle photograph each year. Silver, Gold and Lifetime members receive additional discounts. Please visit our website for more information and consider becoming a member today.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

For memberships outside the United States, please add \$10 to the membership fees below.

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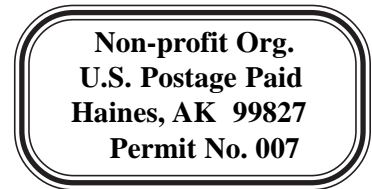
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