



# Wingover Newsletter

Dear Friends,

No director or volunteer, no matter how long they've been here, can ever predict who next will walk through the door or what will be in the mailbox or from where the next phone call will originate. And needless to say, no one knows whether the next event or experience will involve a person or an animal.

Two totally unexpected things happened to the IRC in 2013. One came by phone. It was a call from our anonymous donor who has been generous to the organization on many previous occasions - including backing the purchase of the education center and offices in 2012. But we were totally taken by surprise by this next gesture of generosity!

Our anonymous donor decided to turn over the stocks and investments they used to back the education center to the IRC. While these investments are pledged for the length of the loan on the education building, in thirteen years the education building will be paid off and the donated investments will be free and clear for the IRC.

The board has agreed that these stocks and investments will be kept as an emergency reserve 'Forever Fund' to protect the future of the IRC. That is very comforting to me, as a founder, to know that the IRC has a safety net for the future. I wish someone would create a word that means more than "thank you" because our anonymous donor surely deserves it.

Another unexpected happening came through the mail. It was a letter from a law office stating that the IRC was named as one of the twenty-one beneficiaries of the Mary Kaiser Trust.

Mary lived in Chicago. She died in January, 2013. We never met Mary but she had made a contribution to the IRC every year since 1998.

I only wish Mary could see what we were able to accomplish with her gift. I wish we could thank her. They say "*where there's a will, there's a way*". That takes on a completely new meaning for me today. Mary's will certainly made a way for dreams to come true.

Our education center has been renovated completely with a beautiful handicap ramp and handicap bathroom. Along with a grant from the Wildlife Preservation Fund that provided \$2,000.00 toward new sinks and cabinets, and \$800 for a new air conditioner, the wildlife hospital got a makeover including its driveway and parking lot. And, we have an oxygen machine and new computers for the office!

The grounds and prairie restoration work will be much easier with the John Deere tractor and Gator that Mary's gift made possible.

Mary gave us the tools to grow our mission. Our wonderful anonymous donor gave us a secure future. Contributors fund our daily operations. Staff and volunteers perform the work that benefits and supports orphaned and injured wildlife and conservation education for the community.

Without your continued support from the beginning, the IRC wouldn't exist today. The IRC cannot thank you enough - but we will keep trying!

Your IRC Executive Director,

It has been a long time since we have added anyone to our board of directors.



## Tweets from the Directors

We have been looking for energetic, intelligent, practical, fun, creative individuals who have the same profound love for wildlife, nature and the environment that has motivated the Illinois Raptor Center for 22 years. Our search is over. **Jane Seitz, Jacques Nuzzo and Chris Young** are thrilled to welcome **Jo Fessett** and **Dr. Travis Wilcoxon** to the Illinois Raptor Center Board of Directors.



Jo Fessett has been a longtime friend of the IRC. She is the Assistant to the Executive Director of the Illinois Audubon Society at their state headquarters at Adams Wildlife Sanctuary in Springfield. Jo brings

with her a true understanding and love for the outdoors along with many years of experience working within environmental groups and conservation education.



Dr. Travis Wilcoxon is an Assistant Professor of Biology at Millikin University. He currently teaches human anatomy and physiology and immunology courses as well as ecology and evolution courses.

Travis' research interests include ecoimmunology, physiology and behavior of birds and amphibians. Travis is also a bird bander.

The IRC is looking forward to 2014 with excitement and confidence. Our network of people and organizations is becoming larger and larger. We have many more opportunities than ever before to do wonderful things for the wildlife and people we serve.

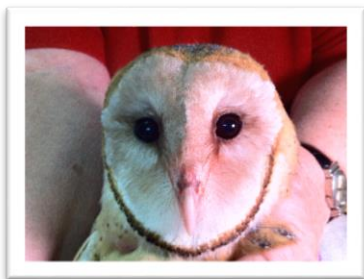
## Reporting from the Wildlife Hospital.....



This little Eastern Screech Owl came in with an eye injury. Unfortunately it has lost sight in the eye. We have contacted a nature center that may give her a permanent home.



This American Kestrel was caught up in burning brush and terribly burned. As you can see, his feathers were melted and a few of his little toes were burned off. We tried our best – but unfortunately he died.



This adult Barn Owl, an Illinois Endangered Species, was found with a broken leg and has a wing injury. If not able to go back into the wild, it will become a surrogate parent to help orphaned Barn Owl chicks that come into the IRC.



Two Red-shouldered Hawk chicks came in this year and were a joy to raise. One of them had feathers that grew like a Mohawk haircut! Both were successfully released.



The IRC was happy to be part of the Illinois Osprey Reintroduction Programs. Here Jack does a physical on one of the Osprey with the help of a UIS student.



This Red-tailed Hawk swooped down on its prey only to impale its wing on a 3 foot piece of rebar sticking out of the ground. The rebar did not hit any vitals or break any bones but a huge hole was left in the wing. We are hopeful he will be able to be released.



It is incredible to be able to raise a Bald Eagle chick. This year we happen to have two (left). They are both healthy now and will be released in the next few days.



Jack recoils jokingly (?) as “Midas” the Golden Eagle grips his gloved hand. We have to creance (fly on a line) eagles to make sure they can get lift. Our current flight cages aren’t adequate. We are starting a campaign to raise funds for a “Super Flight”. Midas had a wing injury that healed and he was successfully released near where he was found.



Several “waves” of orphaned American Kestrels came in during the year. Luckily we have two surrogate Kestrels moms. Every one of these chicks was successfully released thanks to our little hardworking surrogates.



The IRC is now completely handicapped accessible. We were able to build a quite beautiful handicap ramp that allows wheelchair access to both the upstairs and downstairs of our education building.



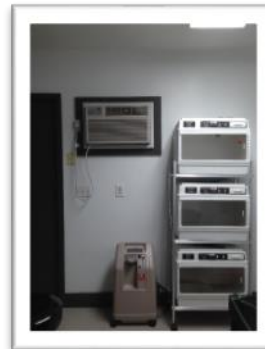
Because the grade from the front to the back is quite steep, we had to go out quite a ways and then turn back toward the building. Because the ramp was so long we decided to build a deck at the turn that seems to please everyone.



The wildlife hospital got a makeover after 20 years of hard use. Here workers had already torn out the old cabinets and sinks and were preparing to install the new ones as seen in the next picture.



Bright and shiny new! More cabinets and more counter space!



This is a picture of the new air conditioner that came to us through a grant from the Wildlife Preservation Fund. (Remember to leave that dollar to the charity of your choice on the check off at the bottom of your Illinois state taxes!)

Also in the picture are our new intensive care units that were from a previous Wildlife Preservation Fund grant and the new oxygen machine that we have wanted for so long. This will be of great benefit to animals with breathing difficulties and head trauma.

This is a picture of Skow (*meaning dweller of the forest*). Skow is a Broad-winged Hawk and the newest member of our Wildlife Ambassadors.



Being blind in one eye does not deter this bird from being the sweetest looking raptor to.....sit on the new sink faucet!! She was very content to sit on the faucet while we cleaned her cage.

These are just a few of the wonderful changes we were able to make to the IRC. With your help we will continue to serve wildlife in peril for years to come.



## Every wonder what happened to Ruby?

Many people have asked over the years. Well I am happy to say that Ruby is still with us. Like we said in the first article that we wrote about Ruby – she is a survivor.

Ruby was found on the ground in Garrett, Illinois on May 22, 2006. She was helpless, thin, starving and weak. Jacques rescued her and brought her to the center where she seemed overjoyed at our hospitality. She certainly wasn't bashful when it came to eating in front of people.

A trip to the vet found that her eyesight in her left eye was gone. The right eye was deteriorating. It also found her to be a very old – possible 15 to 20 years old. And Ruby has now been here almost 8 years!



The IRC requested permits to give Ruby a permanent home as an education ambassador and she has been here ever since.

The two pictures at the top of this article are from 2006. The two at the bottom were taken in 2013.

Ruby's left eye has atrophied and is nearly closed but she still has some sight in her right eye and gets around really well. She still loves to eat! She eats more than any other bird in the facility. Ruby can have her food eaten before you can close the cage door behind you!

All the volunteers know that when we go near Ruby's mew (cage) we should announce ourselves so she knows we are coming. No one wants to scare her. So usually once she knows you are there she will throw her head back and greet you with the eagle "cry".

Everyone loves and respects Ruby. You can't help but wonder how many chicks she hatched over her lifetime in the wild or where she travelled or how many mates she might have outlived. I only know that she is in the best case scenario we can provide for her. Ruby is content and that makes us happy.



You can purchase a bottle of "**Ruby's Wine**" at [www.benefitwines.com/IRC](http://www.benefitwines.com/IRC) if you are looking for a gift for the Bald Eagle lover in your life – or yourself! There is also a wine for Solo, Watto, Spud, Phoenix and Banshee! IRC receives a donation for each bottle of wine purchased.



## A Volunteer's Perspective

### By Carla Jordan

My first day as a volunteer at the Illinois Raptor Center was October 8, 2010. I asked if the center needed volunteers at the Avon Theater a couple months earlier when they had a demonstration of Banshee, a Barn Owl, flying prior to the showing of Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole. At the time Jane Seitz said, yes they did need volunteers and to call her. After I called her we decided on my starting date.

One of the questions on the volunteer form asked about interest and/or why I wanted to volunteer with them. I had volunteered at the Humane Society for three years and had decided my interests were more in line with wild animals – something besides feral cats. Also, I had become far more concerned with the environment and wildlife in general. And most of all, I love to learn!

There are so many ways to learn: by observing, being taught, memorizing, repeating tasks over and over again, reading and experiencing. At the IRC I have learned how to tie the falconer's knot, clean cages, cut up quail, feed baby squirrels, opossums, and other animals. I have observed the imping of feathers on raptors, and have, on occasion, learned how to pass a falcon or owl from one person to another. I have learned the identification of the birds at the IRC as well as what makes a raptor – a raptor.

It was new to me to discover that all raptors regurgitate their pellets, not just owls. One of the most fascinating bits of knowledge is that a female opossum has thirteen nipples, and its pouch runs lengthwise on its belly, not crosswise like a kangaroo. I actually got to see this on a baby opossum.

I have also participated in a prairie burn and, on one occasion, was allowed to release a rehabilitated Barred Owl.

Recently, taken on a field trip by Jane and Jacques, the volunteers present that day were shown a Barred Owl's nest in the wild.

This is just a smattering of the activities that I have had. Some of what I do I call "grunt work", menial labor such as washing dishes, cleaning floors, but I don't mind if it gives Jane more time to do all the endless computer/paperwork she HAS to do. One of the sad aspects is that not every animal brought to the IRC will survive. If the animal cannot survive on its own then it either becomes a program animal or is euthanized.

What are the benefits to all this? Well, I have learned so much about so many different things: identification of the raptors, other birds, trees, flowers, and so much more. I hope that whatever I have done is a benefit to the IRC and that they will forgive any mistakes I have made.

This type of work brings together so many people with a common interest, and it is a joy when we all together – artists, photographers, social workers, students, teachers, young and old, and everyone in between. It is also a comfort to me when I am with a group of people who will take the time to enjoy watching several rabbits running and playing with each other along the newly cut trails in the prairie or listening to the Spring Peepers.

# Illinois Raptor Center

## DONATION FORM

### Donor Information (please write clearly)

*\*For donations of investments or stocks to the IRC "Forever Fund" please contact Lee Morthland at Raymond James Financial Services, Hickory Point Bank | 225 N. Water St. | Decatur, IL 62523 | 217.872.3909*

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Name               |    |
| Address            |    |
| City/State/Zip     |    |
| Telephone          |    |
| E-Mail             |    |
| Amount of Donation | \$ |

### Matching Donation Information (if applicable)

Donation will be matched by \_\_\_\_\_ (company/family/foundation).

form enclosed  form will be forwarded  Submit on line at \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Receipt Information

Please use the following name(s) in all receipts for tax purposes:

\_\_\_\_\_

I (we) wish to remain anonymous.

A receipt is not necessary.

This donation is my gift  IN HONOR OF.....  IN MEMORY OF.....

Recipient

Purpose or Personal Note:

Send an acknowledgement of my gift to:

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Please make checks, corporate matches, or other gifts payable to:

Illinois Raptor Center  
5695 W. Hill Road  
Decatur, IL 62522-9520

*Where there's a will, there's a way.  
Remember a charity in your will.*

**PLEASE KNOW THAT THE ILLINOIS RAPTOR CENTER WILL NEVER SHARE OR SELL YOUR INFORMATION.**