

President

Dr. PAUL H. FLUCK, Washington Crossing Park, Pa.

Secretary

Rev. GARRETT S. DETWILER
194 Seventh St.
Salem, New Jersey

Treasurer

Mrs. STANLEY S. DICKERSON
222 DeVoe Ave.
Spotswood, New Jersey

Editor - Frank P. Frazier, 424 Highland Ave., Upper Montclair, N.J.

EBBA'S PRESIDENT SAYS Recently several banders have complained to this writer about certain derisive newspaper and magazine cartoons, and TV commercials and scripts in which the bird hobby has been the nub of some left-handed humor. One "amusing" piece which appeared in a Sunday supplement needled this writer so much that he addressed a salty letter to the editor. In reply he got a page-and-a-half letter in which the editor claimed to be a bird fan himself. In summing up however, the editor asked the rhetorical question, "After all bird watchers are a bit silly. Aren't they?"

This bander agrees that there may be a humorous slant to the early rising bird-watching group that pokes its assorted noses into the neighborhood arbor vitae making noises like love-smitten long-eared owls. He admits he has had difficulty controlling his own sense of humor when otherwise rational human beings have insisted on speaking to a Carolina Chickadee on the lawn at Washington Crossing -- in the Chickadee's own language! But he feels that it is important that nature and the outdoor hobbies be not ridiculed en masse by the public because of the antics of a few enthusiastic but ridiculous bird-watcher clowns.

A respected bander can do much in his own community to counter this derisive publicity. Find a bander and chances are, you have found a neighborhood where conservation has friends and where bird values are appreciated. In fifteen years of visiting banding stations this bander has never had a bit of trouble in locating any bander. Neighbors, adults and children alike, store-keepers, police, and passers-by all knew where the bander lived. Doubtless banders often wish their telephone numbers and addresses were not so well known, for every bander has his share of infant sparrows, cat-mangled robins, and BB gunned starlings brought to his door. But even in this dubious position, bird banders can earn respect. Whether or not a bander accepts these feathered handouts, or rejects them with a lecture on leaving birds alone, his well-informed attitude can do much to offset opinions his callers may have entertained while watching the "amusing" antics of bird-watchers on TV.

In his community the bird bander plays a far more important role than that of a Samaritan clearing-house for battered birds. By talking to PTA's, to Scout groups, to Garden Clubs, and Church groups, a bander can plug hard for banding, and for band recoveries. He can do his bit for conservation, and without realizing it he may open for many the doors that let juvenile delinquency and adult mental boredom out -- and let a good hobby in! Virtually every bander -- sooner or later -- finds himself actively doing something of this sort in his own community. Ed Noll, for example, has been banding only 3 years, but he has already talked to more than 100 community audiences. Vernon Rossman provides bird banding programs for YMCA camps. Mrs. Dumont, Garrett Detwiler, Burt Jarvis, Ray Middleton, Bennett Matlack, Don Warren, Frank Frazier, Mrs. Dickerson, Jeff Gill and many other banders talk to hundreds of nature fans every year. Howard Drinkwater writes a column for his local paper. Joe Cadbury conducts the Audubon Camp in Maine. Find a bander and you have found a citizen who is making his community a better place to live, and who is a citizen that other citizens respect.

The public respects the bird bander (if not the bird watcher) as a scientist. They respect him (or her) even more as a humanitarian, a guiding influence for children and for themselves. And there is a lot of satisfaction in seeing neighborhood children grow up with a feeling for birds and an understanding of nature and conservation.

This bander repeats what he has said before, "It is more fun to catch people with birds than to simply catch birds."

★ ★ ★

With these words this bander ends his career as an EBBA columnist. He does not know who EBBA's next president will be, but he extends his best wishes, and he bequeathes this column. With grateful appreciation he thanks those officers, Council members, and Committee members who have done all the work these past two years.

★★★

NETS and A limited number of mist nets will be available for sale
RESERVATIONS (in small quantities) at the annual meeting in Ramsey.
These are the last of the nets Mrs. Dater will import
from Japan for some time.)

Please make your reservations now for the Annual Banquet (April 12 - \$3.25) and/or for the Field Trip Lunch (April 13 - 75¢). It will help to simplify things for the arrangements committee if you enclose a check.

Write Mrs. Eleanor Dater, 259 Grove St., Ramsey, N.J.

★ ★ ★