hile numbers of waterfowl, sparrows, and shorebirds were disappointing-and depressed for several species, such as Buff-breasted Sandpiper-invasive species were legion in late fall 2004. Not many current birders witnessed the last irruption of Bohemian Waxwings in the early 1960s, and although this season's was modest by comparison, it drew scores of birders out to search for them at season's end. Perhaps a once-in-a-century event was the drift of Pine Grosbeaks into the Region, which continued into the winter season. Purple Finch numbers recalled old times, before the advent of House Finches, and there were scattered reports of Clark's Nutcracker and Evening Grosbeak, both irruptive rarities in the Region. Adding to these exciting invasions were state firsts such as Least Grebe, Reddish Egret, and Broadbilled Hummingbird, all commendably documented. Regional birders have been increasingly conscientious about documenting late dates, and many species show clear trends toward later lingering (e.g., avocets in November) in recent years. Birders have also become more accomplished at finding secretive species such as Yellow Rail and sparrows such as Nelson's Sharp-tailed, Henslow's, and Baird's, all reported this season.

Abbreviations: Cheyenne Bottoms (Cheyenne Bottoms W.M.A., Barton, KS); Hackberry (Hackberry Flat W.M.A., Tillman, OK); Quivira (Quivira N.W.R., Stafford, KS); Rainwater Basin (playa wetlands of s.-cen. Nebraska); Red Slough (Red Slough W.M.A., McCurtain, OK); Tenkiller (L. Tenkiller, Sequoyah, OK).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Tenkiller had 4 Pacific Loons 8 Nov (JWA, JS), while singles were in Jefferson, KS 6 Nov (MM, GP), Lancaster, NE 21 Nov (WRS), and Oklahoma, OK 22 Nov (JAG). The only Red-throated Loon detected was at Tenkiller 8 Nov (JWA, JS). Most exciting was a first state (and Regional) record of Least Grebe at Red Slough 8-29 Sep (DA, m.ob.). Rare in the Region any time, a Red-necked Grebe was in Sarpy, NE 26 Oct (CHy). Easterly was a Western Grebe in Shawnee, KS 15 Nov (DG). Single Brown Pelicans were in Oklahoma, OK 20 Oct (NH, MF) and Wagoner, OK 20-30 Nov (JWA, m.ob.). A Neotropic Cormorant in Cimarron, OK 20 Aug (VF) furnished one of few records from w. Oklahoma, and 2 were in Coffey, KS 14 Nov (DG, ML, m.ob.). Large counts of Double-crested Cormorants were the 3000 at Harlan 2 Oct (G&WH) and several thousand in Coffey, KS 25 Oct (MG).

An American Bittern in *Sedgwick*, KS 18 Nov (PM) was tardy; the only Least Bittern reported was in *Sarpy*, NE 21 Aug (EB). Lingering very late were single Great Egrets in

Southern Great Plains



Knox, NE 20-21 Nov (MB) and Lancaster, NE 21 Nov (WRS), as was a Cattle Egret in Scotts Bluff, NE 15-18 Nov (KD, AK, P&DD). Tricolored Herons remained through 8 Sep at Salt Plains (BH, JSt), with up to 2 at Red Slough through 22 Sep (DA, BH). Another Oklahoma first was a Reddish Egret at Lake Keystone, Osage/Pawnee 25 Aug-2 Sep (PP, m.ob.), only the Region's 2nd. Three juv. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were in the Rainwater Basin, where rare, 28 Aug (JGJ) and 12 Sep (PDu). Quite a surprise was a flyby White lbis in Douglas, KS 16 Sep (AN); 4 were at Red Slough, where expected, through 5 Oct (DA), and one was at Hackberry 5 Sep (KM, L&MT). A juv. White-faced Ibis in Buffalo, NE 13 Nov was late (PDu). Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks were restricted to Red Slough, where up to 8 spoonbills were seen 6 Aug-26 Oct (BH, DA), while 5 of the storks stayed until 5 Oct (DA).

Up to 53 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were present 17-24 Aug at Red Slough (DA,

Joseph A. Grzybowski

715 Elmwood Drive

Norman, Oklahoma 72072

(jgrzybowski@ucok.edu)

W. Ross Silcock

P.O. Box 57

Tabor, Iowa 51673

(silcock@rosssilcock.com)

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m.ob.); a single was in *Cotton*, OK 20 Aug (MTr, JAG, DB), the only other report. The newly-split Cackling Goose drew much attention. The regularly occurring subspecies in the Region is *hutchinsii*, but 3 dark-breasted birds in *Seward*, NE 16 Nov (JG) were unidentified to subspecies. A Brant in *Texas*, OK 24–28 Nov (SM, m.ob.) was possibly the same individual present the previous winter. Good finds were the 3 Tundra Swans in

Custer, OK 3 Dec (BLo) and 2 at Quivira 13 Nov (DK, JC, JWA). Increasingly rare, American Black Duck was reported just twice this season: singles at Quivira 14 Nov (SS, MR) and in Seward, NE 16 Nov (JG). Single Mottled Ducks were reported at Red Slough three times 2–16 Aug (DA, BH), but at least one of these sightings involved an apparent Mallard x Mottled Duck hybrid (JWA, JAG); the same was true of a bird found 4 Aug in Coffey, KS (ASW).

The highest Canvasback count was a remarkable 1000 in *Cherry*, NE 12 Nov (JED); probably summering were 2 at Quivira 9 Aug (HW). The fall scoter list included only one Surf Scoter, a juv. in *Lancaster*, NE 15–17 Oct (KP, LH, TEL); 5 White-winged Scoters 10–21 Nov from Nebraska (TJW, WRS, CE, MB), with one in *Johnson*, KS 2 Nov (ML); and a lone Black Scoter in *Sarpy*, NE 30 Oct (CHy). Long-tailed Duck reports were limited to Kansas, where singles were in *Lyon* 7–8 Nov (GP, DG), at Quivira 7 & 14 Nov (RW, SP, CH, MR), and in *Labette* 25 Nov (HA).

RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS

A nesting pair of Mississippi Kites was in Webster, NE in early Aug, only the 2nd known nesting site in the state (BT, LR, RH). Single Northern Goshawks were in Cass, NE 21 Nov (WRS) and Douglas, NE 28 Nov (JT). Rare in Oklahoma at any time, a Harris's Hawk was n. of its expected range in Texas, OK 24-26 Nov (SM, BH et al.). Rather late was a Broad-winged Hawk at Red Slough 24 Oct (DA); westerly were single Broad-winged Hawks in Morton, KS 24-25 Sep (SS) and Garden, KS 26 Sep (T&SS). Not bad for recent times were the 837 Swainson's Hawks 1 Oct along the Sumner/Cowley, KS county line (GY). A Golden Eagle in Otoe, NE 29 Oct (RE) and another over Johnson, KS 11 Nov (ML) were a bit e. of usual passage areas. Prairie Falcons appeared a little early, both in Oklahoma (fide JAG) and in Nebraska, where one was as far e. as Dixon 12 Sep (II).

Perhaps the best place to find Yellow Rail in the Region is Red Slough, where an amazing 16 were flushed by rope-dragging in late Oct, with at least 1–3 present for over a month, 14 Oct–16 Nov (DA, BH, m.ob.). Exciting were several Black Rails at various lo-

cations in *Meade*, KS 2 Oct, where they apparently occur regularly in summer (TF). A King Rail was found at Red Slough 22 Oct (DA, MW, BH), and a late Sora was there 16 Nov (DA). A rare summer visitor in the area, a Purple Gallinule was at Red Slough 3 Aug (DA, BH); 10 Common Moorhens lingered there through 5 Oct (DA).

Some 200,000 Sandhill Cranes estimated at Quivira in early Nov (fide DT) made an ex-



This Least Grebe at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, McCurtain County, Oklahoma 8 September 2004 provided a first Regional record. *Photograph by David Arbour*.

cellent count. Whooping Cranes had one of the best showings ever in the Region this fall. Birds were at Salt Plains 16 Oct–7 Nov, with a peak count of 32 on 7 Nov (AW); 59 different individuals passed through Quivira 13 Oct (LHi) through 6 Nov (22 present on latter date; fide LM). Unfortunately, hunters shot at a group of 3 near Quivira 6 Nov, ultimately resulting in the death of 2 birds, the other lingering at Quivira through the period. Elsewhere, 6 Whoopings stopped briefly in Brown, NE 7 Oct (CHa), 3 flew over Rush, KS 6 Nov (SS, DSe), and up to 3 were at Hackberry 21 Oct–8 Nov (L&MT, KM, KS).

Rare and local as breeders and migrants in the Region, 4 Piping Plovers were in Osage, OK 27 Aug (BH, JM, JSt). Two Black-necked Stilts in Grant, NE 14 Sep (RG) were tardy. Almost unheard of during Nov in times past, 300+ American Avocets were still in Alfalfa, OK 14 Nov (JWA, JC). Five Long-billed Curlews at Hackberry 9 Oct (JAG, TG) were rather late, and one strayed eastward to Osage, OK 26 Aug (JWA, JL, JAG). A Red Knot at Red Slough 1 Sep (DA, BH) provided one of few records for se. Oklahoma. Most unusual in fall, a White-rumped Sandpiper was in Lancaster, NE 5 Sep (RD); very late were 2 Baird's Sandpipers in Lancaster 20 Nov (LE). A Dunlin at Hackberry 5 Sep (KM, L&MT) recalled

the 11 Jul record from that location. Quite late were 2 Stilt Sandpipers at Salt Plains 14 Nov (JWA, JC). The high count for Buff-breasted Sandpipers was only 50+ in Rice, KS 3 Aug (MK); the overall showing in the Region was poor this season (fide JGJ), as elsewhere through the species' midcontinental migratory route. Certainly good counts for Shortbilled Dowitchers were the 16 in Douglas, NE 7 Aug (JT) and 8 in Finney, KS 4 Aug (DL).

Other reports were of up to 3 at Red Slough 3 Aug–1 Sep (DA, BH) and a juv. in Clay, NE 12 Sep (PDu). A very late Wilson's Phalarope was at Salt Plains 14 Nov (JWA, JC). Single Red-necked Phalaropes were in Morton, KS (PJ, CG, KG) and Texas, OK (BH, JM, JSt), both 5 Sep. A definite "zootie" was a Red Phalarope at Cheyenne Bottoms 14–17 Oct (SS, StS, LHi); there are about a dozen previous records for the state.

Rather early were 50 Bonaparte's Gulls in Scotts Bluff, NE 5–6 Sep (KD); most arrive in mid-Oct. Rare in Oklahoma, a California Gull was in Oklahoma 22 Nov (JAG), and the observations of a single in Wagoner 22 Aug–22 Nov (JWA, JL) may all have been of the same individual. The only Thayer's Gull reported was an ad. in Dixon, NE 28 Nov (JJ); the same location also hosted the only Lesser Black-backed Gull, a first-winter bird 12 Nov (DSw). Rare in Oklahoma, 2 Common Terns were in Wagoner 2 Oct (JWA), and one

tardy Caspian Tern was at the same location 6 & 20 Nov (JWA). Also late were 2 Black Terns in *Wayne*, NE 26 Sep (NBr).

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

An amazing 59 White-winged Doves were in Finney, KS 27 Nov (T&SS, LEd, BKP), testament to the species' northward spread in the Region. Three at Red Slough 22 Nov (DA) were still a rarity there, as were singles in Saline, KS 4 Sep (NH) and Pawnee, KS 13 Nov (LS). As with White-winged Dove, reports of Inca Dove continue to increase in the Region. Most notable was the count of 18 at Garden City, Finney, KS 19 Nov (T&SS), where the environment clearly favors doves. On the other hand, Common Ground-Dove is still a Regional rarity, especially in Nebraska; one in Clay 26 Nov (JD) was exceptional, while the 2 in McCurtain, OK 22 Oct (BH, BHe, FH) were still unusual. A Snowy Owl in Johnson, KS 20 Oct (NB) was early; no other reports of the species were received for the season. A Barred Owl in Morton, KS 24 Sep (MT, SP, SS, MR) was quite far west. The only Northern Saw-whet Owls reported were in Kansas: singles in Riley (JN) and Morton (SP, CH, MR), both on 13 Nov. Rather late was a road-killed Common Poorwill in Lincoln, NE 1 Oct (TJW).

A good count of 31 White-throated Swifts came from Scotts Bluff, NE 5 Sep (P&DD). A very cooperative male Broad-billed Hummingbird appeared at a Finney, KS residence 10 Oct (PR, T&SS, m.ob.), a first state record. The bird was found near death on 29 Nov, a very cold day, and taken to a local zoo, where it spent the winter (fide KH). Two different Archilochus hummingbirds in Scotts Bluff, NE 11 (AK) & 12 Sep (KD) were thought to be

Ruby-throateds. The only Calliope Hummingbirds reported were 2 in Pawnee, KS 16–17 Aug (JN, SP, CH, MR). Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, still a find in the Region, were at Pratt, KS 20 Aug (LL), Finney, KS 5 Sep (T&rSS), and Morton, KS 3 Sep (SP, DS, MM, GP). A total of 8 Rufous Hummingbirds was reported, all in Kansas and Oklahoma between 8 Aug and 30 Nov, with some remaining later (fide JWA, LM).

PASSERINES

A well-described Eastern Wood-Pewee in Lancaster, NE 11 Oct (RD) was the latest ever documented for the state. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher banded 7 Aug in Washington, NE (RS) documented the early fall date for the state. Detailed measurements documented an Alder Flycatcher in Washington, NE 7 Aug (RS). Undocumented reports of Empidonax flycatchers are difficult to

evaluate, but some sightings with details included Hammond's Flycatchers in Morton, KS 5 Sep (PJ, CG, KG) and Cimarron, OK 11 Sep (JAG) and a Dusky in Cimarron, OK also 11 Sep (JAG). A Gray Flycatcher in Scotts Bluff, NE 5 Oct (TR, EW) was remarkable. Extralimital Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatchers were found in Sheridan, NE 31 Aug (SJ), Morton, KS 5 Sep (PJ, CG, KG), and Sioux, NE 11 Sep (AK). Quite tardy were single Say's Phoebes in Pawnee, KS 23 Nov (SS) and Cimarron, OK 30 Nov (BH, m.ob.) and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Cherokee, OK 20 Nov (RSm). As many as 7 Vermilion Flycatchers were found in Cimarron, OK 6-11 Sep (BH, JM, JSt, JAG).

At least in Nebraska, Northern Shrikes were numerous this season; the earliest reported were 3 in sw. Nebraska 21 Oct (TJW), and southernmost was one in Trego, KS 13 Nov (SS). A Yellow-throated Vireo in Dundy, NE on 25 Oct (TJW) was the latest and westernmost for the state. A Plumbeous Vireo in Cimarron, OK 6 Sep (BH, JM, JSt) and a Cassin's Vireo in Morton, KS 5 Sep (PJ, CG, KG) were the only ones of their species reported. A westerly Philadelphia Vireo was in Scotts Bluff, NE 6 Sep (KD). A Western Scrub-Jay appeared a bit out of range in Finney, KS 10 Nov (L&BR). Single Clark's Nutcrackers

reached the Region in Cimarron, OK 5 Sep (PS) and Stanton, KS during Sep (PB); 3 in Dawes, NE 13 Oct were also a hint of things to come (TJW). Edging onto the Plains were 2 Bushtits in Clark, KS 30 Oct (GP); 8–12 were in Wichita, KS 22 (LHi) & 27 Nov (MR). A Rock Wren in Harlan, NE 3 Oct (G&WH) was e. of typical range, while a Sedge Wren in Lancaster, NE 25 Oct (LE) was late.

Townsend's Solitaire appeared in good



This Bohemian Waxwing in Leoti, Wichita County, Kansas 21 November 2004 was part of a small influx of the species into the Southern Great Plains Region, a very rare event. Photograph by Pete Janzen.

numbers in Nebraska and Kansas, with one in Cimarron, OK as early as 7 Sep (BH, JSt, JM) and singles e. to Douglas, KS 20 Nov (GPa), Harvey, KS 6 Nov (RW), and Sedgwick, KS 24 Oct (PJ). A very late Wood Thrush was in Tulsa, OK 19 Nov (TMi, BC). A Varied Thrush was seen 8 Nov in Shawnee, KS (JB), where quite rare. A Gray Catbird was rather late as far n. as Thomas, NE 4 Nov (TJW). A Sage Thrasher at Red Slough 22 Oct (DA, MW, RT) was well se. of typical range, whereas the Curve-billed Thrasher in Morton, KS 5 Sep (PJ) was less unexpected; one has been resident for two years in Sioux, NE (LF). Certainly a surprise of the season were the numbers of Bohemian Waxwings found in w. Kansas (best count 21 in Wichita; PJ, KG) beginning 12 Nov (SP, CH, MR, TM), and in Nebraska, where the first were singles with Cedar Waxwings in Washington 15 Nov (CE) and Lancaster 20 Nov (LE). A more complete accounting of this flight will be presented in the winter season's report

Among the seasonal "zooties" was a Golden-winged Warbler in McCurtain 14 Sep (DR). A Northern Parula feeding a fledgling in Sarpy 20 Aug (B&LP) provided the 3rd confirmed breeding record for Nebraska. Two Black-throated Blue Warblers were reported, one rather late in Sedgwick, KS 19 Oct

(D&FV) and another even later in *Douglas*, NE 30 Oct (PSw). Black-throated Green Warblers were located w. to *Comanche*, OK 26 Sep (BHo). Regular-but-rare migrants along the w. edge of the Region in fall, 4 Townsend's Warblers were in *Cimarron*, OK 6–7 Sep (BH, JM, JSt). Surprising were the five reports of Pine Warbler from Kansas in *Sedgwick* 9 Oct (MLi) and 13 Nov (KG), Ellis 14 Nov (TM, GF), Harvey 21 Nov (GFr), and as far w. as

SOUTHERN GREAT PLAIN

Stevens 3 Sep (DS, SP, GP, MM). A very late Prairie Warbler in Sedgwick, KS 30 Oct–25 Nov (PG) was unexpected, as were a tardy Palm Warbler in Tulsa, OK 12 Oct (PP), a Prothonotary Warbler in McCurtain, OK 12 Sep (BH), a Worm-eating Warbler in McCurtain 12 & 14 Sep (BH, DR), and a Yellow-breasted Chat in Scotts Bluff, NE 2 Oct (AK). Connecticut Warbler is a casual fall migrant in the Region; one was in Sarpy, NE 4 Sep (EB).

Among the more difficult species to locate in the Region, a Greentailed Towhee was found in Morton, KS 6 Sep (PJ, CG, KG). Early American Tree Sparrows were in Jefferson, NE 25 Sep (RR) and in Sioux, NE 29 Sep (HKH). Presumably regular but rarely seen in the Region, 2 Baird's Sparrows in Beaver, OK 15 Oct (JAG, MGr) provided the only fall record for the species in Oklahoma. Departure dates for Henslow's Spar-

row are difficult to assess because the species is quite secretive on migration; one in Lancaster, NE 30 Oct (RE) and 3 at Red Slough 26 Oct (DA, BH) were of great interest. With more attention, the status of Nelson's Sharptailed Sparrow has become clearer in the Region; there were seven reports of the species 29 Sep (GP) through 1 Nov (AP). Fox Sparrow arrives in Nebraska in late Sep (earliest arrival date was 26 Sep in Wayne [NBr] this season) but often much later in Kansas and Oklahoma. At the e. edge of the migration corridor was a Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco in Lincoln, NE 9 Nov (TJW).

There were "hundreds" of Snow Buntings in Knox, NE 21 Nov (MB), and a few were found as far s. and w. as Stafford, KS 13 Nov (BL). The 100+ Chestnut-collared Longspurs in Cimarron, OK 17 Oct (JAG, MGr) seemed a week or so early. A pure-looking singing male Lazuli Bunting in Dixon 2 Aug (JJ) provided about the 4th summer record for e. Nebraska. An Indigo Bunting at Red Slough 3 Nov (DA) and 2-3 Dickcissels there 19-22 Oct (DA) were rather late, as was a Bobolink far to the n. in Dixon, NE 26 Sep (JJ). At the peak of migration, flocks of Common Grackles estimated at 100,000 were observed in cen. and e. Nebraska-5 Oct (TJW) and 25 Sep (EB), respectively. Lingering Orchard

OUTHERN GREAT PLAINS

Orioles were noted in Clay, NE 25 Sep ([G]) and Muskogee, OK 19 Oct (JM). Carefully observed was a somewhat easterly ad. male Bullock's Oriole in Sarpy, NE 4 Sep (EB).

Perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime event was the small invasion of Pine Grosbeaks in the Region. A female in Sedgwick, KS 6 Nov (R&PB) was the first discovered, but all others were westerly: one in Wichita, KS 12 Nov+ (SP, CH, MR), a female in Morton, KS 13 Nov (SP, CH, MR), and 4 in Grant, KS 22 Nov+ (KH, SG). This was also the season for an upsurge in Purple Finch numbers, recently almost rare, the first a westerly bird in Sioux, NE 27 Sep (HKH). Rare anywhere in the Region, a Cassin's Finch appeared in Grant, KS 27 Nov (T&SS). And Red Crossbills were widespread in generally low numbers in Nebraska and Kansas; easterly were 4 females in Nemaha, NE 12 Nov (WRS, JoS) and one in Douglas, KS 20 Oct (MRo); the best counts were 20 in Riley, KS 28 Oct (LJ) and 15-20 in Ellis, KS 11-14 Nov (TM, GF). Unexpected was a female White-winged Crossbill at a Douglas, NE feeder 15 Nov (DSt), the only report. Common Redpoll reports included 2-4 in Dixon. NE 27-28 Nov (II) and scattered singles in Grant, KS 22 Nov (KH, SG). Pine Siskins were at last widespread and in good numbers this fall in Nebraska and Kansas. A Lesser Goldfinch of the black-backed form was found in Sedgwick, KS 25 Jul-7 Aug (BR); an-

other stayed in Johnson, KS 19-28 Aug (M&EC). An Evening Grosbeak was in Sarpy, NE 25-30 Oct (KCR, CNK), a somewhat early date, with another in Ellis, KS 8 Nov (TM) and 3 in Cheyenne, NE 12-15 Oct (AS).

Cited observers (area editors in boldface): NEBRASKA: Elliott Bedows, Norma Brockmoller (NBr), Mark Brogie, Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Kathy DeLara, Jon Dinan, Phyllis and Dean Drawbaugh (P&DD), James E. Ducey, Russell Duerksen, Paul Dunbar (PDu), Rick Eades, Larry Einemann, Corey Ellingson, Lonnie Frimann, Ruth Green, Joe Gubanyi, Carolyn Hall (CHa), Robin Harding, Carr Heaney (CHy), Lynea Hinchman, Glen and Wanda Hoge (G&WH), Helen K. Hughson, Jan Johnson, Stephen Jones, Joel G. Jorgensen, Alice Kenitz, Clem N. Klaphake, Thomas E. Labedz, Babs and Loren Padelford (B&LP), Kevin Poague, Lanny Randolph, Roy Reinarz, Tommie Rogers, Rick Schmid, W. Ross Silcock, Dave Stage (DSt), Audrey Sterkel, Jon Strong (JoS), Dave Swanson (DSw), Phil Swanson (PSw), Barb Tebbels, Jerry Toll, Edge Wade, T. J. Walker. KANSAS: Henry Armknecht, James W. Arterburn, Roy and Pat Beckemeyer (R&PB), Nathan Behrends, Joanne Brier, Pat Buckhaults, Mark and Elaine Corder (M&EC), Jeff Cox, Lisa Edwards (LEd), Greg Farley, Tom Flowers, Gregg Friesen (GFr), Matt Gearheart, Dan Gish, Chet Gresham, Paul Griffin, Kevin Groeneweg, Sam Guy, Kellye Hart, Leon Hicks (LHi), Nancy Highgate, Chris Hobbs, Pete Janzen, Lowell Johnson, Dan Kilby, Marvin Kuehn, Mark Land, Dan Larson, Betty Leader, Matthew Linnabary (MLi), Linda Loomis, Terry Mannell, Patty Marlett, Mick McHugh, Lloyd Moore, Adolfo Navarro, Jackie Nooker, Gerry Parkinson (GPa), Sebastian Patti, Brandon K. Percival, Galen Pittman, Alexis Powell, Mike Rader, Leonard and Betty Rich (L&BR), Phil Rich, Mark Robbins (MRo), Ben Rogers, David Seibel, Diane Seltman (DSe), Scott Seltman, Steven Seltman (StS), Tom and Sara Shane (T&SS), Layton Strong, Art Swalwell (ASw), Dan Thalmann, Max Thompson, Don and Fran Vannoy (D&FV), Rod Wedel, Harley Winfrey, Gene Young. OKLAHOMA: David Arbour, James W. Arterburn, David Barrett, Bill Carrell, Jeff Cox, Paul and Jean Eads (J&JE), Vic Fazio, Max Fuller, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Michael Grzybowski (MGr), Thomas Grzybowski, Berlin Heck, Berlin Heck III (BHe), Ford Hendershot, Neland Hill, Bill Horn (BHo), Brian Lockwood (BLo), Jo Loyd, Jeri McMahon, Kurt Meisenzahl, Steve Metz, Terry Mitchell (TMi), Pascal Pelletier, Dan Reinking, Kelvin Schoonover, Pat Seibert, Jerry Sisler, Rebecca Smythe (RSm), John Sterling (JSt), R. Treadway, Lou & Mary Truex (L&MT), Mary Truex (MTr), Matt White, Anne Wilber.

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