

Mike:

I read the minutes from last Saturday's meeting and was a little surprised at the section on Sea & Sage. In my opinion, it doesn't reflect accurately what happened or what the issues are. Let me explain.

At our March meeting Dick made a presentation to the board to formalize a relationship between SC Bluebird Club and Sea & Sage Audubon Society. An extensive and wide ranging discussion followed and the consensus was that such an association would be of benefit to both organizations if we could work out the details.

There was more discussion in April (Dick was not there) and agreed we needed to have Dick come back to finalize details. In order to make sure things went smoothly I drafted a proposal for the board's review that covered the significant issues to be agreed upon. I met with Dick and discussed it and modified until we had complete agreement and then I sent a copy to all board members for their review prior to our May meeting. I also queried some of the board members individually to be sure we were all in agreement and they saw no problem. This process doesn't seem autocratic to me. The text of the proposal read as follows:

### "Proposal to Sea & Sage Audubon for Bluebird Committee

**Background:** The success of the bluebird nest box and monitoring program is well known to the Board. The 20-year effort has resulted in thousands of recorded fledging of Western Bluebirds (WEBL) in the county. Last year alone there were over 5200 WEBL fledged in Orange County, 8600 statewide. We were over 60% of that total and the smallest most urbanized counties participating in the program. Other cavity nesting birds accounted for another 8700 fledglings statewide. This is truly an impressive record in bird conservation in both the county and state.

**Purpose of Committee:** The purpose of having a Bluebird Committee in Sea & Sage is to take the program to an even higher level and to formally recognize the importance of this effort within the chapter. The committee will also use this relationship to encourage other organizations that provide nest boxes and monitoring for cavity nesters (such as the informal Southern California Bluebird Club) to join their local Audubon chapters and expand the program even further.

**Funding:** The committee will solicit and raise funds to promote and fund the construction of bird boxes. Golf courses management companies will be one area of solicitation and the committee will not endorse or otherwise approve their environmental practices in exchange for donations. All monies raised will go in to the chapter's General Fund to be used at the board's discretion. The committee will have an annual budget to be used primarily for out-of-pocket expenses to build boxes. Recommendation for first annual budget would be \$400. Incidental cost reimbursement may be requested prior to establishing next year's budget.

**Insurance:** Sea and Sage Audubon members who volunteer for the bluebird program will be covered by the chapter's liability insurance for volunteers. Coverage does not extend to non-members.

Dick Purvis  
Tom Croom  
May 3, 2007"

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On the day of the May meeting Al Baumann and myself received the following e-mail:

"Hi guys,

A number of bluebirders have expressed some doubt about the closeness of the affiliation with Sea and Sage. Some may have been thinking of a very loose connection such as merely a statement that "We are both environmental organizations with common goals and we support each other with publicity and by encouraging volunteers".

I guess everyone hates to give up autonomy. I do know that most would be opposed to changing our name from "The Bluebird Club of Southern California". The name has attracted a large number of people from several counties. Also, they do want to emphasize that we are not Orange County but all of Southern California.

I suggest that we put it on the back burner, not bring it up to the council, and think about it for the next few months.

I really, really appreciate all the energy, effort, and thought that you Al and Tom have put into this. It has not been wasted since it has really raised awareness in all parties. Let's see what develops. Call me if you have any other questions or comments.

Dick Purvis"

The main issues the board were concerned about were: First, having members of the SCBC covered by our liability insurance. It was no problem as long as they were also members of the chapter. At no time did we say all SCBC members had to be chapter members, only if they were to be covered by our insurance (and we checked with the insurance co.). I don't think any insurance company would leave the potential number of insured open ended without some qualifier. At no time were we thinking about using the affiliation as a source of new members. We have over 2400 and I know how many dedicated bluebirders there are in SoCal and it would make no impact on our membership. Second, there was concern the letters to golf courses had to be structured in such a way to as not imply endorsed of their environmental policies. This is a big deal with all Audubon chapters as golf courses are a major source of pollution through run-off and their use of chemicals to keep their grass green. And third, was how to handle monies collected by SCBC and I think the proposal addressed that issue also.

As a closing comment Mike, we are very large, successful Audubon chapter. We are a regulated 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and we raised over \$100k a year and spend on our programs that focus on bird conservation, education and otherwise provide benefits to the birding community. To do so takes a dedicated board of directors willing to put in the time and effort to do "due diligence" on issues that come before us so that we can continue to be successful.

As an avid bluebirder (50 boxes/yr x 10yrs) and S&S board member I'm anxious to resolve any issues you folks may have. I hope to attend your next meeting on July 7th.

Tom Croom  
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