

# Local craftsman builds hobby from love of bluebirds

Audrey Horwitz  
Senior Reporter

Sixty-nine-year-old O.T. Bailey has a charming southern drawl, a gracious smile and a passion for bluebirds.

"I've fallen in love with bluebirds," Bailey said.

The retired counselor started making bluebird houses in 2004 after his former secretary gave him one as a present.

"I never get sick of making them," Bailey said. "It's my hobby."

It's a craft that has quickly consumed his garage. In his garage are dozens of bluebird houses neatly arranged on a table along with a framed photo of a bluebird.

Although Bailey stores his houses in his garage, he works up a sweat in his workshop out back.

"This is where I sit to build them," Bailey said. "I turn on my radio. I just love it."

Nailed to the awning of his workshop is a sign that reads "Pop Pop's Workshop."

"My grandkids call me Pop Pop," Bailey said.

Bailey enjoys sharing his enthusiasm for bluebirds with his grandchildren.

"My grandson and I used to sit on rocking chairs on the back porch and just watch the birds," Bailey said.

Before he retired and discovered his hobby, Bailey worked in Alamance-Burlington School System for 33 years. He worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor for 27 years, retired and then went back to work in a school cafeteria nine days later.

"I started to work in the cafeteria because we had a grandson that was starting school and I wanted to be down the hall from him," said Bailey.

Building bluebird houses isn't something Bailey takes lightly.

He spends his time researching bluebirds to ensure that his houses meet the birds' specific needs. The houses are made of cedar, which Bailey protects by brushing them with linseed oil. He doesn't paint the houses because he is afraid it will affect the baby bluebirds.

On the side of each house, Bailey installs a hinged door for easy monitoring and cleaning after each nesting. He also includes a five-foot metal pole on which the bluebird house fits. This is the recommended height, according to The North Carolina Bluebird Society.

Bailey sells his bluebird houses for \$40 at farmers' markets, craft fairs and church events. He also donates many of his houses to schools, churches and other organizations. As a member of the Elon Farmers' Market, Bailey has connected with the Elon community as well.

Pam Brumbaugh, the director of Experiential Education at Elon, acknowledges Bailey's high quality bluebird houses. She also values his affection for his craft.

"As a career counselor, to see someone acting out of passion is something I can appreciate," Brumbaugh said. "I didn't buy a birdhouse, but I live out in the country where there are a lot of blue birds, so I should. I will next time."

Bailey takes great pride in his craft. He has a genuine propensity for bluebirds and in turn his hobby has invigorated him.

"I may be 70 years old, but I feel great," Bailey said.

To check out Bailey's bluebird houses, stop by the Elon Farmer's Market or make an appointment with him at (336) 227-8640.



O.T. Bailey built his first birdhouse in 2005, and has crafted more than 400 since then. MERISSA BLITZ | Staff Photographer

## Student's music blog attracts following despite controversy

Adam Lawson  
Assistant Sports Editor

On a September 2010 day, an Elon University student got a text message that made his love for music much more tangible.

At the suggestion of his hometown friend, Sophomore Conor Ambrose co-founded Dirty Mexican Lemonade, a music blog that posts music reviews, links and videos.

Neither Ambrose nor Ryan Gardner, then a freshman at the University of Richmond, thought their site would gain fame.

The blog started as a place for the two friends to post links to songs from some of their favorite music artists and provide a place for fans to download the tunes. Shortly after bringing aboard Mike Swiger, a mutual friend of Ambrose and Gardner who helps with the computer programming side of things, the website went viral. The page has more than 10,000 likes on Facebook and got somewhere between 60,000 and 70,000 unique visitors last month, according to Gardner.

But with the widespread popularity came the realization that the title Dirty Mexican Lemonade could bring with it negative connotations and needed to be changed.

"Right now we're DML Music LLC operating under dml.fm, which is our URL," Ambrose said. "There's no more Mexicans or lemons. That's all in the past."

When the page views kept rising and users continued to download the music promoted on the site, people started to take notice that some of the songs were illegally shared as "leaks" not meant to get out to the public. SoundCloud, which provides the ability to share music on websites, shut DML's account down and the company was out about \$800, according to Gardner.

"We incurred a lot of copyright infringement notifications with (SoundCloud)," Gardner said. "They banned our account about three months after we purchased the operation of the site. With SoundCloud, we just posted any track if we could get ahold of it. Regardless if it was for sale on iTunes we posted it up for a free download and also mentioned the artist."

DML now makes sure to promote

music legally, Gardner said, and there's no shortage of talent from unsigned artists to choose from.

Ambrose flips open his phone and shows 46 unread emails from people either wanting to write for the blog or wishing to have their music promoted on the site.

In addition to his role as co-founder of DML, Ambrose serves as an event executive for Limelight Records, Elon's student-run record label. There, he met Elon student Josh Bonney, whose rap songs Ambrose occasionally plugs on the blog.

"We've posted a lot of Josh's stuff because it's cohesive to what people are looking for," Ambrose said.

People come to DML looking for a wide-range of musical choice, according to Ambrose. The company has a staff of 15 writers that cover genres ranging from dubstep to traditional hip-hop. Whenever a new spot becomes available, a massive number of readers come calling for it.

"We put out an application, and it was so well-received," Ambrose said. "We were so happy about that just because we got like 140 applications. We had, like, seven kids from Cornell, a couple other Ivy Leaguers."

Despite the rapid growth of the company, DML Music LLC has yet to see much of a profit for its endeavors. Gardner says that doesn't bother him. Dirty Mexican Lemonade was an idea that he came up with in his dorm room, one that enabled him to meet the people behind the music he loves so much.

"It's awesome how many relationships we have with guys whose music we like," he said.



Sophomore Conor Ambrose spends many afternoons updating the music site he built with friends in his freshman year of college. CLAIRE ESPARROS | Photo Editor

## Wise words from recent graduate Alumna struggles after move from hometown

Elon University alumna Stacy Laue, Class of 2009 left her hometown roots for employment as a team leader for United Guaranty Corporation in Greensboro. Moving from Jacobstown, N.J. has been a challenge socially. The Pendulum asked her to reflect on her transition from student to resident in a new city.



STACY LAUE

Q: How is Elon different from "the real world?"

A: Elon was an incubator for loving relationships and friendships that are built to last. In my opinion, I'm stocked up pretty full of friendships that will last a very long time — "lifers," as my mother calls them. It's hard to open yourself up to new friendships and relationships when you've got all of these great ones already.

But think back to when you were graduating from high school and had the same opinion. There are people that fade away with time and distance and departing interests, and that's just a fact of life — plain and simple. It's natural for people to enter your life for a season and then drift off once you've grown and learned from each other. The same thing will probably happen this time around.

Q: What can I expect living in a new city?

A: I've battled this loneliness since I graduated, as people drifted out of my life. Sometimes it's pretty obvious, when the phone calls get kind of awkward and you struggle for common ground and things to talk about. Other times it's much more subtle, where

you can't really put your finger on it, but you know that something's changed. What I face is the need for the strong relationships I had such immediate access to while at Elon. I wish I had best friends right across the hall or just down the street. I've struggled to make new friends. Maybe it's because my standards are so high. Maybe it's because I'm borderline workaholic material, and I don't spend much time outside of the office. Maybe it's because I fear going out on a limb and becoming vulnerable to someone I don't even know.

Q: What can I do to accept what the challenge of moving?

A: In the end, I think it all boils down to good, old-fashioned fear. I fear change and the unknown above almost anything else. I don't even know where to go to make new friends. So I'm not going to glaze over this issue and say it's super easy, and you'll have no trouble. You might have a really easy time of it, and you won't have to worry about this at all. For me, once a social butterfly, this has been extremely hard. Luckily, I've made amazing friends at work, and that fills some of my friend needs. But there are times when I wish I had great friends like I did in college, where we could do nothing but sit on the couch and watch video montages on YouTube and have the best time doing it. It's definitely a process and I'm still working on it, but I'll let you know how it goes.

Compiled by Rebecca Wickel, features editor.

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