

# Hummingbirds Can Be Fun

BY BILL FAVER

Sometimes it is hard to believe hummingbirds belong to the bird world. Their dives and dashes through the air seem more insect-like than bird-like. They hover, back-up, and zip around like many insects.

Of the 500 species worldwide, we have only one in our area—the ruby-throated hummingbird. This beautiful small bird is mostly a metallic green above and whitish below with a rich ruby throat in the male. The female and young have white throats. These hummers weigh about 1/10th of an ounce and are about 3/4 inches in length.

Ruby-throats come north from tropical Florida, Central America and the Gulf Coast in late March or early April as the flowers begin to open. Their diet consists of nectar and the tiny insects they might find around the nectar in a flower.

Their long needle-like bills can be thrust deep in a flower blossom for nectar as they dart from flower to flower. The rapid wing beats set up a vibration causing the "hum" for which they get their name. Hummers can travel at 650 miles per hour in direct flight.

Males display a courtship ritual for females sitting on a bare limb. The male will fly in a pendulum-like circle to impress the female and win the right to mate. Nests are small lichen-covered cups into which two pea-size white eggs are laid. Incubation is 11-16 days depending upon the temperature. Once the nest is built, eggs are laid, and the female is on the nest, the male loses interest and may look for another mate. Two broods are usually raised in a season. Young are fed by the adults thrusting their long bills down their throats and regurgitating partially digested nectar and insects.

Hummingbirds fill a vital role in nature by helping to cross-pollinate plants. Because of the intensity at which they move and feed hummingbirds must spend most of the daylight hours searching for flowers and nectar. According to the scientists, hummers use more energy in a day than any other warm blooded animal. A part of this energy is used in warding off predators and other birds, even as large as crows, blackbirds and hawks.

Smallest of all birds, hummingbirds are attracted to tubular red-orange flowers, such as trumpet vine, salvia, jewelweed, columbine, cardinal flowers, and the like. They will come to lantana, thistle, bee balm, mimosa, honeysuckle, azalea, larkspur, gladiola and other flowers. Red tubular feeders filled with sugar water mixture can attract them readily if flowers are not available. Feeders should be placed near flowers and moved closer to your porch or deck if you want to bring them in for closer observation.

Large hawk moths, or Sphinx moths, are some-



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

**HUMMINGBIRDS** can be attracted with a feeder offering sugar-water.

times mistaken for hummingbirds, but they seldom show up before dusk and are attracted to other flowers as well.

We can expect to see these interesting birds until late September or early October when the males leave early, followed by the females and young a month or so later. Watch for them this summer and enjoy one of our most interesting bird species.

## STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

# 14 Students Earn Degrees At UNC-CH

Fourteen area students earned degrees in May from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They are as follows:

From Shallotte, Burnice Joseph Causey Jr., J.D.; William Gregory Bland, A.B., education; Michael David Graham, B.A., recreation administration; Marselene Johnson, master's in social work; and Melanie Ann Lewis, B.S., pharmacy.

From Southport, Cheryl Lynn Borszich, A.B., education; Deborah Lynn Formyduval, B.A., psychology; and Andrew Baxter Stirling Jr., B.A., international studies.

From Supply, John Leslie Bell, B.A., economics; Arris Annie Golden and Reginald Lavance Hewett, B.A., political science;

Also, Whitney Elroy King of Ash, B.S., business administration; Melinda Gail Rabon, Bolivia, B.A., speech; and Dondi Ramsey of Holden Beach, B.S., nursing.



HILL BLANKENSHIP

### On Electric Tour

Bridget Hill of Shallotte and Sherman Blankenship of Southport recently represented Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation in Shallotte during the week-long North Carolina Rural Electric Tour in Washington, D.C.

The group took part in educational sessions, visited members of North Carolina's congressional delegation and several government agencies. They toured the Smithsonian Institution museums, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, and the Capitol Building.

### UNC-CH Lists Nine

Nine area students made the spring 1991 dean's list at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

They are as follows: Deborah Lynn Formyduval, Ronie Meshelle Hart and Freeman Edward Kirby Jr., Southport; Reginald Lavance Hewett of Supply; John Patrick Hunt, Bolivia; Becky Nicole King and Whitney Elroy King, Ash; Tammy Lynn Scheid, Calabash; and Kelly Leanne Ward of Shallotte.

Students must earn at least a 3.2 grade point average while taking 15 or more letter grade credit hours or a 3.5 grade point average while taking at least 12 letter grade credit hours. Students must have no grades lower than a C.

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## So How Do I Pay For It?



How can I say no to a smile like that? When our dentist recommended Hillary wear braces, there was really only one question I had: How do I pay for it?



She's gonna need a room of her own. I can see it in my head. Some kind of little-girl wallpaper. Stuffed animals.

I think we can add on over the garage. Maybe we'll need another bath there, too. The neighbors recommended a good contractor. Only thing is, how do I pay for it?



I started with a travel agent. Looked at all the brochures. I asked questions. And finally picked out the spot for my dream vacation. The question now is, how do I pay for it?

Definitely red instead of blue. I think stick, not automatic. Probably go with the optional stereo package and leather seats. There's only one thing I haven't figured out. How do I pay for it?



**Just Ask.**

We started with a list of almost 50 schools. Narrowed it down to a dozen or so. Then my son was accepted by a couple of his top picks. Now I just have one question. How do I pay for it?



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