



Photo by Bill Faver

Blue Jays are sometimes called "backyard bullies" because of their noisy habits of disturbing other birds.

'Backyard Bullies' Are Handsome Birds

BY BILL FAVER

Some of our common birds seem undesirable at times, and blue jays fit that category for many people.

They are handsome birds, but some of their habits give them the reputation of being "backyard bullies."

These jays are from 11 to 12 inches long and have blue backs and light underparts. Their wings and tail are a deeper blue with the feathers barred with black and tipped with white. A narrow black band runs from behind the head around the throat. On top of the head is a prominent crest. Wings are short and rounded and just reach to the base of the rounded tail.

Jays are common in oak and pine woods and can be found in tree-tops in city parks and along residential streets. They are noisy and attract attention by their "jay, jay" and a variety of other calls and harsh cries. Jays are often scolded and chased by smaller birds who join in the noise in the treetops.

Blue jays range east of the Rockies from southern Canada down to the Gulf of Mexico. They are the only jays in their range except for the smaller Florida scrub

jays found in central Florida.

Nests are made of bulky twigs lined with grass and placed in a crotch-forked branch of a tree. Nests can be as high as 50 feet up in a tree. Four to six greenish eggs with brown spots are laid in April and take about 17 days to hatch. After another 17 to 20 days the young will leave the nest, but the parents continue to feed them for another one to two weeks. A second brood will leave the nest around the middle of July. Birds are very quiet around their nests.

Jays dislike predators and sound noisy alarms at the presence of snakes, hawks or owls, alerting other birds to the dangers. But the jays are predators themselves, often raiding nests of phoebes and other birds nesting near them. Vegetable matter seems to be the mainstay of their diets, but they do eat eggs and even parts of other baby birds.

Jays will bury seeds and nuts in holes they dig in the ground, and in this way become successful tree planters when they are unable to recover all their treasures.

Blue jays are some of the "backyard bullies" we get used to if we are going to watch birds. They are plentiful in our area and offer us a handsome bird with distinct coloring to add to the life and variety of species along the coast.

What Goes Around Comes Back

Many moons ago about this time of year, my sister and I would get taken uptown to Frank Eskridge's department store for stiff new Polo Parrot saddle oxfords to put on feet which had been bare for three months, to Mack's dime store for canvas-covered Blue Horse notebooks and Dixon Ticonderoga pencils, and to the Women's Shop for shirtwaist dresses and wrap-around skirts.

It was time for school to start, and this was an integral part of the drill in the pre-mall, pre-Mart era. Stores were owned by people you knew who waited on you themselves. You could take things home "on approval." "Charge-a-plates" were made of metal and were useless in my little town.

Oh, you could buy things "on time," but you didn't need ID to do it. Folks knew where to find you and, probably, how much your employer paid you and what you owed all the other stores in town.

A scant three decades later, I can't buy my teenage son one sweatshirt he'd be seen in for the price of all my Camelot-era back-to-school booty.

His pre-grade-9 haircut will cost more than the Bass Weejuns and matching John Romaine handbag upon which I truly believed my self-worth hinged in my 14th year.

His sneakers will cost more than a month's worth of a whole family's groceries, which you could order by phone, charge and have delivered, in the mid-'60s.

The sheer exorbitance of outfitting a modern non-nerd for school necessitates putting these purchases on plastic. Consequently I'll still be paying for that sweatshirt when it turns into the rag you use to screw the gas cap off the weed-whacker.

Watching kids' fashion and observing their tastes these days proves to me that there's nothing new under the sun, with one twist. The only thing that changes forever is how much things cost.

Evidence? When I take my son to shop for school clothes (and this is done not in department stores, but in surf shops) I see racks of tie-dyed T-shirts. These can cost upwards of

Lynn Carlson



made me feel guilty that I hadn't been monitoring my son's recent musical selections. So I asked, nonchalantly, "Whatcha listening to on that Walkman (4 by 5 inches, 11 ounces, \$65) these days?"

He screamed his answer over the din only he could hear. "(Grateful) Dead, (Led) Zeppelin, (Jimi) Hendrix."

Holy moly! Those were popular when I was in high school 20-odd years ago! (Except at 77 cents per 45rpm single as opposed to \$17.95 per digitally remastered compact disc.)

"Yeah, I know," he replied, without seeming to be in the least bit embarrassed about this.

This gives me hope, and not only for the future of America's youth. It's this: if my son likes the same music I did as a teen, then maybe it's just a matter of time before you can again order groceries by phone, charge them and have them delivered.

But, for the boy's sake, I hope those miserable, stiff, ugly saddle shoes remain in fashion purgatory, at least until his adolescence is over.

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MORE LETTERS

Calabash Fire, Rescue Groups Overlooked In Festival Article

(Continued From Previous Page)

To the editor:

I read your report of the Calabash Festival, but I was disappointed that you omitted two segments that should have had your recognition.

The Calabash Fire Department, in combination with the Sunset Beach Fire Department and the Calabash Rescue Squad, put on a Jaws of Life demonstration that showed their ability to help people in life-threatening circumstances.

In regard to the Calabash Rescue Squad, the volunteer staff of their thrift shop, headed by 89-year-old Madgeene Bennett, participated with other local businesses to put on a fashion show. They did this in order to promote the thrift shop's ability to provide substantial funds for the operation of one of the finest rescue squads in the state.

Edith Correll
Sunset Beach

Sources Can Be Found To Accept Recyclables

To the editor:

Thanks to Dona Lee for her letter of last week on recycling. We were helping Chance and Bud Scramton over the past two years, and we had a really great group volunteering—and we took everything!

I find it most disappointing that now that we have a lovely recycling and collection place that's manned but which doesn't recycle junk mail, office paper, magazines and, most particularly, plastic!

If our little group of volunteers with no town or county clout could find outlets, there is absolutely no reason why the powers that be, with the power they have, can't find an outlet for plastic, especially. We worked and phoned and cajoled very hard to get folks started to save the stuff, and now the county comes along with our new center and won't take it. This means that plastic, with its thousand-year life, will again fill our landfills. That's no help!

If we don't all wise up, our grandchildren will be drowning in garbage. Come on, Brunswick County, get on the stick!

Tom and Charlotte Maher
Sunset Beach

Squad Made Birthday Wishes Come True

To the editor:

We would like to thank the Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad, whose assistance in getting Mrs. Ruth Lambeth up the steps into our beach house is gratefully appreciated.

You see, this was Mrs. Lambeth's birthday wish, to spend a few days one more time at Holden Beach for her 90th birthday. Having lived at Holden Beach for more than 25 years, she loved the island and hated to leave it. But Father Time finally caught up with Ruth, and she had to take up residence at the Methodist Retirement Home in Durham.

Five years' absence did not erase those beautiful memories of Holden Beach. She relived every moment rocking on the front porch looking at the beautiful Holden Beach ocean.

On Sunday, Coastline came back and placed Mrs. Lambeth gently in her granddaughter's car for the return trip to Durham. We thank them for helping to make this birthday wish come true.

Jim and Marilyn Russell
Durham

Frustration With Sheriff Aired in Carolina Shores

To the editor:

I was most interested in the front page article last week in the *Beacon* which chronicled the county commissioners' frustration with Sheriff Davis over his reneged promise to staff the county office at night for security purposes. Commissioner Pinkerton, in particular, was outspoken in his criticism of, and frustration with, the sheriff.

As President of the Board of the Carolina Shores Resort Homeowners Association, a board that represents 124 unit condominium owners in Calabash, I share that criticism and utter frustration.

After a series of security incidents at the condominium complex early this year, our board wrote a letter on March 17, 1992 to Sheriff Davis outlining these incidents, lamenting the lack of acceptable response by the sheriff's office and requesting a meeting to establish an effective

channel of communication between our board and the sheriff's office. Not only didn't we ever receive a written response to that letter, the sheriff did not even have the common courtesy to telephone his acknowledgement of that letter.

Since I am also a resident of Carolina Shores, in mid-April I discussed this situation with the Board of Governors of the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association, knowing that Carolina Shores had experienced similar problems and frustrations. Incidentally, this organization represents about 1,200 residents in the community.

Both organizations were represented at the April meeting of the Calabash Board of Commissioners, during which this subject was further discussed, and frustrations were vented. Subsequently, the mayor of Calabash on April 21, 1992, wrote a very cordial letter to Sheriff Davis, asking for his assistance and responsiveness. That letter, too, has never received the courtesy of a response.

As taxpayers in Brunswick County, we do not have to endure this managerial ineptitude in the sheriff's office. While we are fully reminded in the *Beacon* article that the sheriff position is an elected office, Sheriff Davis may well be assured that in the next election his inactions will be well remembered by at least the residents in this corner of Brunswick County.

G.G. Dale
Calabash

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