And in With the New

It will be hard to live up to both the introduction and track record that our departing president, Randy Hoffman, has left me. As illustrated by the accomplishments and on-going activities of the organization referenced above, WSO did indeed progress significantly in the past two years under Randy’s guidance. My goals as president, outlined below, include both the continuation of the activities that the Board set in motion under Randy’s presidency and a few new initiatives as well:

1. Complete the long-range plan for WSO’s Honey Creek Sanctuary. I will ensure that any recommendations forthcoming from this plan will not be acted on until the membership has been polled.

2. Expand and strengthen the organization’s education and outreach activities. If WSO is to instill an interest in bird observation (and consequently, ecological awareness) in the minds of present and future generations, our education activities should be expanded.

3. Work with the Editor, Associate Editor, Seasonal Field Note Compilers and other interested parties to improve the quality and quantity of bird records submitted to WSO; identify ways in which to automate the compilation and storage of seasonal records; and explore alternative methods of presenting seasonal information to the membership.

4. Support the efforts by the Records Committee Chairperson to improve, and hopefully institutionalize, the Committee’s interactions with the membership.

5. Continue to improve the administrative facets of the organization, including the adoption of formal by-laws and management of the budget.

6. Continue WSO’s excellent field trip program. Jeff Baughman and Tom Schultz deserve much thanks for their years of effort in putting together a topnotch field trip agenda.

Two years will fly by quickly, and I hope that we, as an organization, will be able to reach all or most of these six goals in that time. I stress the “we” because I believe the strength of WSO is in the many members who volunteer their time to conduct field trips, maintain our Honey Creek Sanctuary lands and properties, plan conventions, conduct bird studies, submit seasonal reports, staff WSO displays, sell books, represent WSO at meetings and on committees, and the myriad other activities which encompass WSO. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to the success of the organization in the past! Let’s keep up the good work.

As many of you may not know me, I have provided a short biographical sketch. Born and raised in Rochester, New York, I cut my birding teeth along the shores of Lake Ontario spending many hours counting raptors as they migrated past the Braddock Bay or Derby Hill hawk lookouts in the spring or sorting through
the gull and waterfowl concentrations in the fall. I migrated to Madison in 1976 to attend graduate school and have resided here ever since. I am proud to be employed by the Department of Natural Resources where I manage the budgets for the Department's environmental quality programs. My wife Suzan and I have two wonderful teenage daughters, Jami and Melissa. Suzan is my partner for almost all my birding activities, and is quite possibly more enthusiastic about birding than I am.

Since moving to Wisconsin, I have been very active in birding for fun, environmental education, and bird study. I have served a four-year stint as the Field Trip Chairperson for the Madison Audubon Society and continue to lead trips for that organization. I annually conduct two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey routes, as well as one or two breeding bird surveys for the Department's natural areas program. I participate in three to four Christmas Bird Counts each year, and serve as co-compiler on the Madison CBC. I have an absolute passion for Big Days, conducting two or three marathons each May. Until two years ago, my contributions to WSO had been limited largely to the submittal of seasonal bird records. However, in addition to my duties as President, I also presently serve as a member of the Records Committee and as the Spring Field-Notes Compiler.

Let me close by saying I am very honored to be the President of WSO, an organization with a rich history of accomplishments, strong leadership, and supportive members. I hope that in some small way, my two years "at the helm" will continue this rich tradition.

Al Shea

President

Al Shea, our new President
Eastern Bluebird by Lori Jean Hubanks, 2217 West Hart Road, Beloit, WI 53511.