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Spring 2011 e-Newsletter



2011 American Idol Finalists Meet America's Symbol "Challenger"



Stephano Langone, AEF President/Founder Al Cecere, and Challenger

Once again, the American Eagle Foundation's trained non-releasable Bald Eagle "Challenger" flew beautifully at Celebrity Fight Night, Muhammad Ali's annual Parkinson's fundraiser on March 19, 2011 in Phoenix - this time while Lee Greenwood sang a stirring rendition of his "God Bless The USA" song.

Challenger even took an extra show-stopping spin around the ballroom at the star-studded black tie event to wild applause. His spectacular flight caused emcee Reba McEntire to state, "We're so glad to have to Challenger back this year!" (after missing last year's event), and also inspired comedian Billy Crystal to open his tribute remarks to Muhammad Ali by jokingly stating (with a straight face), "When Challenger flew over my table, he pooped on my plate!"

Eagle Foundation Rescues Florida Bald Eagle Egg & Hatches It In Tennessee



Bald Eagles constructed a nest in this lighting tower at the spring training facility of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team in Sarasota, Florida

In early December of 2010, the American Eagle Foundation was contacted by the U.S. Fish & wildlife Service and an environmental consulting firm to participate in a special Bald Eagle egg rescue operation at the spring training facility of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team in Sarasota, Florida. A pair of Bald Eagles had built a nest atop a 135-foot light pole located in the outfield of the stadium - and laid 2 eggs.

If the eggs had hatched in that location, the eaglets would have been at serious risk due to heavy construction activities and extreme human and vehicular traffic. So, a rescue operation was launched to remove and hatch the eggs in a more favorable location.

We are happy to announce that one egg hatched on December 29 (the other was infertile). On Feb. 11, 2011, the eaglet was placed in an artificial nesting tower overlooking Douglas Lake in East Tennessee, and was released into the wild on April 17, 2011.

During the fund-raising event, Challenger and AEF President Al Cecere were also invited to visit the dressing room of this season's top American Idol finalists. When Challenger walked into the room on Cecere's gloved arm, all the Idol contestants rushed over to see the iconic bird, and eagerly began taking photos of him with their cell phones (along with the American Idol video crew). Challenger and Cecere did separate photos with each contestant present (James Durbin, Jacob Lusk, Lauren Alaina, Naima Adedapo, Scotty McCreery, Haley Reinhart, Thia Megia, Paul McDonald, Stephano Langone, Pia Toscano).

Former Idol winner Jordin Sparks, with whom Challenger has performed in the past (Celebrity Fight Night & AFC Football Championship), also attended the event, which was held at the J. W. Marriot Desert Ridge Resort in Phoenix.

[Read More](#)

###

Rehabilitated Eagles Released On Tennessee River



Participates in the release included Rob West (AEF staff), Bill Sansom, Governor-elect Bill Haslam, AEF President Al Cecere, Danielle Steckley (AEF Staff), Julia Cecere.

Do you remember the article in a previous AEF e-newsletter about a [Bald Eagle shot in Cumberland County, TN](#) (March, 2009) that suffered extensive damage to its left wing?

Over a year of dedicated care and rehabilitation by the American Eagle Foundation has resulted in "Cumberland" (the name the eagle was given) being released on the Tennessee River in December 2010. A second Bald Eagle, named "Patriot" (found in Loudon County last year with a wing injury, and also successfully rehabilitated by the AEF), was also released into the wild on the same day.

Participating in the eagle release ceremony on the river were Governor-elect Bill Haslam and former TVA Chairman (and current board member) Bill Sansom, along with AEF President Al Cecere and several AEF staff members and guests.

Cheryl Hornsby, a resident of Cumberland County, whose family had found and rescued the eagle "Cumberland", was present with her father to see both birds returned to the wild.

The eagles were released in honor of the men and women in the military who serve our country. The event was also a special way to cap off the American Eagle Foundation's 25th Anniversary year of bringing back eagles to America's lands and skies.

[More information and video](#)

###

Bald Eaglet Released In Smokies In Honor Of Fallen Soldier

Two links expand on the story:

"Florida Eaglet Taken To Artificial Nesting Tower On East Tennessee Lake"

"Florida Eaglet Released in Tennessee to Honor U.S. Army Ranger."

###

Eagle "Challenger" Soars At BCS Championship Game



Challenger performed brilliantly before landing on the arm of AEF President Al Cecere at the BCS Championship Game

On January 10th, 2011, the Oregon Ducks and the Auburn Tigers faced off for the BCS National Championship at University of Phoenix Stadium.

During the pre-game festivities, the trained Bald Eagle "Challenger" soared majestically over a giant field-sized American flag during the final notes of the "Star Spangled Banner" — and the Auburn fans took up their familiar "Waaaaaahhhhhrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr Eagle" battle cry as the majestic celebrity bird made his final passes over the flag and then landed! The fact that Auburn's mascot is an eagle did not play into the decision to select Challenger to fly at the event. In fact, Challenger has become a tradition at the annual BCS game, and it was just a coincidence that one of the teams that qualified for the championship game happened to have the eagle as their mascot.

[Watch Video of Challenger's flight](#)

###

2011 AEF Breeding Season & Eagle Nest Cam



One chick hatched; another begins the "pipping" process of breaking through the shell

It's nesting season again for the non-releasable Bald Eagle breeding pairs at the American Eagle Foundation. So far, two Bald Eagles have hatched this Spring, and we're hopeful that the remaining 5 eggs will produce young within the next week or so.

Our non-releasable Golden Eagle pair incubated one of the two Bald Eaglelets eggs, which recently hatched. The pair is taking good care of their foster baby. A disabled Bald Eagle pair housed on the Dollywood Park was not able to incubate their own eggs this year, and the Golden Eagle pair was available to step in as qualified foster parents. [See video.](#)

Our [Eagle Nest Cam](#) is back this year, where you can view our Bald Eagle breeding pair "Franklin" and "Independence"



Bald Eaglet "Ranger" is released in honor of U.S. Army Ranger Cpl. Ryan Casey McGhee

A 14-week old bald eaglet was released into the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains in honor of a fallen soldier.

The eaglet was named "Ranger" by the mother (Sherrie Battle McGhee) of U.S. Army Ranger Cpl. Ryan Casey McGhee.

The Fredericksburg, Virginia native helped save two of his fellow soldiers when they were pinned down by enemy gunfire in Tikrit, Iraq in May 2009.

McGhee was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star and other awards.

The eaglet was hatched and raised in Tennessee by the staff of the American Eagle Foundation after the egg was rescued from a stadium lighting tower nest in Sarasota, Florida.

"We are always happy to honor our soldiers and veterans who so bravely and unselfishly defend our nation's precious freedoms and the rights of others," said AEF founder/president Al Louis Cecere.

McGhee was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Fort Benning, Georgia.

The eaglet was released on April 17.

[YouTube video](#)

###

Eagle "Challenger" Participates In Special Event At The University Of Iowa



Entertainer Tony Orlando, F.O.E. Pres. Mary Myers, Univ. of Iowa's Dr. John Stokes, F.O.E. Pres. Mike Lagervall, Sr., & AEF President Al Cecere with Challenger attend naming ceremony for Diabetes Research Center at the University of Iowa

The Fraternal Order of Eagles (FOE) recently pledged \$25 million to establish and operate a new Diabetes Research Center, and celebrities Tony Orlando and the trained non-releasable Bald Eagle "Challenger" were invited to help highlight the announcement at the University of Iowa.

Eagle members from across North America gathered in Iowa City to mark the official naming of The Fraternal Order of Eagles Diabetes Research Center at the University of Iowa campus. The state-of-the-art center will host leaders in the field of Diabetes research in an effort to find a cure for a disease that has become a worldwide epidemic. The F.O.E. has pledged to donate the \$25 million over a five-year period.

caring for the 3 eggs they laid in March 2011—which are due to begin hatching on or about April 27, 2011 after an approximate 35-day incubation period.

###

Window On The Environment: Starving Eagles Falling From The Sky



Celebrate Earth Day April 22, 2011

As Earth Day approaches, we are reminded of how fragile our blue planet and its animals and plants really are—due to the lack of care and respect they often receive from the humans who are "in charge" of its care. Some things are dreadfully out of balance. The earth has difficulty replenishing itself fast enough to meet the insatiable demands of humans, resulting in lack of resources for the other life forms that inhabit our world.

The Vancouver Sun recently focused on a current problem: an "extreme die-off" in the Northwest where starving Bald Eagles have literally been falling from the sky due to poor chum salmon runs, which have resulted in depleted availability of the eagles' food source.

Wildlife officials are caring for the ailing birds, usually found lying on the ground lacking the strength to fly. The cause for this tragedy is overfishing, development and pollution, which severely limit the eagles' food source, resulting in poor health and death.

So, although the Bald Eagle is no longer on the Endangered Species List, we must continue to protect it from habitat destruction and pollution.

[Read more](#)

###

New Blog Feature & Share Buttons Added To "Eagles.Org" Website



New Blog and Share features on the AEF website

You may notice 2 new features on the American Eagle Foundation's www.eagles.org website. We have just launched an [Eagle Blog](#) to share timely information and events about eagles with our viewers. The primary contributor to the Blog is Bob Hatcher, Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Coordinator for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency from 1978 – 2001 (Bob currently works

[Read More](#)

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Celebrate Earth Day By "Adopting" An Eagle

To celebrate Earth Day, consider adopting a very special non-releasable eagle or eagle pair.

All eagles you adopt are cared for by the non-profit American Eagle Foundation (AEF) for educational and propagation purposes. Your [Adopt-An-Eagle donation](#) will be used to conduct our birds of prey care and public environmental education programs.

###

for the AEF). Bob's expertise and encyclopedic knowledge about Bald Eagles makes him immensely qualified to share information and facts he has gleaned through his decades-long work. If you have a question you'd like him to answer about Bald Eagles, email him at eaglemail@eagles.org or visit our [Eagle Blog](#).

On several pages within our website, we have added an ability to share a webpage on your Facebook, Twitter (or other social networking) account. If you see a news item or a page you would like to share with your own network of friends and family, simply click on the Share icon, and the mission of the American Eagle Foundation can reach an even wider audience!

###

If you would like to Adopt An Eagle, become a member of the American Eagle Foundation (AEF), or buy an eagle-themed gift, please click on the links below. You will be assisting the AEF in its efforts to ensure that our national bird keeps flying strong and free for generations to come.

[Adopt An Eagle](#) ~ [Visit Our Gift Shop](#) ~ [Become A Member](#)

The American Eagle Foundation is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization dedicated to the mission and vision of preserving the U.S.A's majestic eagles and fragile environment for future generations to enjoy.

We are located in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Visit us online at www.eagles.org, email us at savetheeagle@aol.com, or contact us at (865) 429-0157.

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