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## Notes from the Nest - June 3, 2012



*Panting helps these 3-week-old eaglets regulate their temperature. You can also see pin feathers replacing the first down they had when newly hatched.*

### Pin Feathers Push Out Baby Down

In this [AEF video](#), we can see the first feather "down" being pushed out and pin feathers starting to grow in. The eaglets are now 3 1/2 weeks old and are about a foot high, with their beaks and feet noticeably larger than just a week ago.

The eaglets are growing in other ways as well, becoming sturdier and more adventuresome (one was observed carrying around a stick, apparently with no real purpose in mind.)

They are still totally dependent on parents to feed them, and eagerly gather round when Independence or Franklin miraculously appears on the side of the nest with a big fish dinner! They line up like little soldiers, waiting their share — and all get fed. We've been so privileged to see the "fish buffet" being served up by eagle caregivers, Indy or Frank (or sometimes both)

navigating the steep hillside to pick out a tasty dinner — and then bringing it back to their young.

Watch [How the Eaglets Get Their Food](#), as Independence is seen at the bottom of the hill, contemplating which piece of food to take to the eaglets. Franklin decides the wait is too long, grabs a piece right out from under Indy's beak, takes it to the nest, and begins to feed the babies. Not to be outdone by her mate, Indy brings a bigger piece, and finishes the feeding herself while Frank watches.

There is also a tub of water close to where the fish are laid out - and sometimes there's nothing that feels better to an eagle than to cool off with a "splash in the pool." As we all know, the heat normally associated with later summer months has arrived much earlier than normal. Eagles do not have sweat glands, so panting helps them control their body temperature. This behavior has been frequently observed in both the eaglets and their parents, and you can see it in close ups on most of the videos.

### Away From the Nest! - Memorial Day Weekend

Memorial Day Weekend brought with it a busy schedule for Al Cecere and Challenger.

This year, as in the past, these stalwart ambassadors for the Bald Eagle made special appearances in the New York City and Chicago areas. On May 27, they appeared on Fox and Friends in NYC, where Al spoke about this year's nest cam and the AEF program which allows the family of a fallen soldier to name an eaglet when the eaglet is released later this summer.

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memorial exhibit at the Hinsdale Oasis to honor that state's brave U.S. military service members who gave their lives to protect our freedom.

On Memorial Day, May 28, after making an appearance at Channel 5 Chicago, Al and Challenger participated in the opening ceremonies at Wrigley Field for the baseball game between the Chicago Cubs and the San Diego Padres. Challenger made an awe-inspiring flight during the final notes of the Star Spangled Banner, landing precisely on Al Cecere's outstretched arm.

Several chatters and a moderator were at the Cubs game to see Challenger in person - an experience they will undoubtedly long remember! As one of the lucky chatters posted on Facebook, "The 'loonnggg' drive to Chicago and back was 'sooooo' worth it! Getting to meet Al Cecere and Challenger Eagle and their crew, Suzie Cooper and Crystal Slusher and their husbands was a thrill. Finally watching a Cubs game in Wrigley was beyond exciting (and especially the fact that they WON!), and watching Challenger fly on Memorial Day while the anthem was sung was PRICELESS!"

The Cubs snapped an 11-game losing streak - can we doubt that Challenger played a role in the win?



**Top photo:** (L-R) Noel Syriac, chat members Suzie Cooper, Crystal Slusher, & Carol Cesar with Al Cecere and Challenger at the Cubs - Padres game Memorial Day.  
**Bottom Photo:** Bald Eagle Challenger flies toward his handler, Al Cecere during the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" during pre-game ceremony. (AP Photo/Brian Kersey)



*These eaglets which were brought to the AEF from Florida are scheduled to be released on June 20th.*

**And at the Hack Tower....**

Our two Florida eaglets are nearly grown. They are now in the hack tower overlooking Douglas Lake in East Tennessee where they will be released on or about June 20th. The eaglet born to Isaiah and Mrs. Jefferson on April 12 has also moved to the hack tower.

Roomy accommodations, soft pine straw, & a million dollar view overlooking the lake and woods will acclimate these eaglets to the world which will soon be their home. Sturdy perches are in place for the eaglets to jump on to practice their wingerizing skills.

Fresh fish (initially cut up into bite-size pieces) and water is delivered through a sliding drawer in the wall by caregivers - the eaglets do not see that humans are providing their food. Each

compartment also has a built-in two-way mirror so that the eaglets can be daily observed and monitored by the

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### Tuesday Night Live At The Nest - With Al Cecere!

This is an event you will want to attend! Mark your calendars for June 5, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. EST and join the Chat Group as Al answers questions submitted in advance to the moderators from the chatters. If you have a question you'd really like answered concerning eagles or the work of the AEF, be sure to let the mods know!

It's also a good time to invite other kindred spirits to our nest - so please publicize this on Facebook or other social media so that others outside our immediate group know about it. [Click here to be transported to the nest.](#)



*Don't miss "Live at the Nest" with Al Cecere June 5, 2012 - 6:30 p.m. EST*



### From the Diary of a Dollywood Eaglet - by Nancy Huff

I am glad to be an eaglet  
Born on Eagle Mountain  
I crave sanctuary  
I feel security  
I obsess to be wild  
I know protection  
My doting mother Independence  
She rules the roost  
My watchful father Franklin  
Stands proud sentinel in my midst  
They have taught me well  
I love fish and quail and any old rodent  
I hope my feathers grow straight and strong  
I desire to learn all the eagle ways  
And take them with me when I fly away  
You know I may soar back someday  
My chatters and fans who watched me grow  
I plan to give them a  
Splendid  
Magnificent  
Awesome  
Show.



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