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Spring 2013 e-Newsletter Edition



American Eagle Day - June 20th



2013 Nesting Season Arrives



The AEF's captive Bald Eagle breeding pair, "Independence" and "Franklin," perch on the edge of their snow-capped nest at Dollywood awaiting their new nesting season to begin.

The American Eagle Foundation urges U.S. citizens, companies, and organizations to help raise awareness about the Bald Eagle by educating the public about its symbolism, history, biology, and the need to protect it for the future.

The AEF continues to be a major proponent of establishing "American Eagle Day" nationally and annually on June 20th, the day in 1782 that the Second Continental Congress officially selected the Bald Eagle to be the central image of the Great Seal of the United States.

During 2012 and previous years, State Governors across our nation proclaimed "American Eagle Day" to be celebrated on June 20th in recognition of our nation's symbol and its successful recovery in the lower 48 states.

In total, 40 state Governors have signed Proclamations for American Eagle Day to be observed in their respective states

Our non-releasable Bald Eagle breeding pair, "Independence" and "Franklin," have already been seen actively involved in preparing their nest for the season ahead and have already laid two eggs. This massive nest, located at Eagle Mountain Sanctuary on the Dollywood Park, in Pigeon Forge, TN, has been recently refurbished and upgraded by Al Cecere and Rob West at the American Eagle Foundation in preparation for the arrival of some baby eaglets.

Two new high-definition PTZ (Pan-Tilt-Zoom) cameras have been purchased and installed. When connected to the Internet, these cams will enhance the experience of our loyal on-line viewing family, whom we affectionately call "The Chat Group." Two existing cameras will remain in place, so that the virtual visitor to the nest can see what's going on in the nest from 4 different angles 24 hours a day. The eagles are very vocal, and our microphone picks up all

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United States Senate and House of Representatives have also issued Special Resolutions recognizing this day.

Because each state must renew its Proclamation for American Eagle Day annually, the AEF encourages individuals, organizations, agencies, and companies across the country to write to their Governors and elected representatives in support of making this national day permanent. Last year, 25 Governors issued Proclamations. We'd like this number to double!

Together, we can make June 20th an annual day to remember and commemorate this majestic and important American symbol. [Visit our website](#) for letter writing instructions.

###

AEF Builds New Raptor Weathering Yard



The American Eagle Foundation's weathering yard is a place where birds of prey are taken frequently to enjoy fresh air, sunshine, and sometimes even a light rain shower.

A new weathering yard was recently built behind the main bird barn. Our previous weathering yard, in another location, would get flooded every time it rained. Sometimes it would be a sunny day outside, but the yard would still be soaked from rain that had fallen one or two days before. When this occurred, staff would be unable to perch the birds outside. The new location has helped resolve this problem.

The staff also thought that it would be awesome to have the weathering yard covered with netting, since wild birds of prey (and even wild eagles) fly overhead and perch in nearby trees. That is when the Eagle NestCam Chat Group stepped in to help raise the money needed to cover the cost of the netted roof.

The new netting is up, the birds are safe, and the staff is elated. Big thanks to the Chatters!

###

The viewing and educational experience is made very special because of a group of knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers who act as Moderators at our [Eagle Nest Cam site on UStream](#). They welcome everyone who drops in to see what's going on in the nest, and are always there to answer any eagle-related questions that newer viewers might have.

###



Visit our Eagle Nest Cam and stay to "chat."
[CLICK HERE!](#)

Eagle "Challenger" Thrills Audiences During Football Season

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Al Cecere Honored By Trace Adkins On "Great American Heroes" TV Program



Country entertainer Trace Adkins and AEF President Al Cecere worked together on "Great American Heroes" TV show.

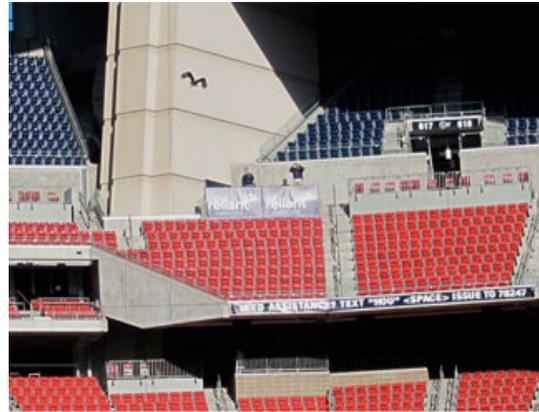
On November 28, 2012, Al Cecere, Founder and President of the American Eagle Foundation, was honored on the GAC national cable network's **"Great American Heroes"** TV show hosted by country music artist Trace Adkins. Al was recognized for his 30 years of dedication and accomplishments contributing to the rebound of our National Symbol, the Bald Eagle, through his passionate work at the AEF.

Video highlights can be seen here.

Trace enjoyed a VIP tour of the American Eagle Foundation facilities and donated many eagle carriers, and other equipment and supplies to the AEF.

###

Spotlight On Volunteer Terry Sherrad



Top photo: Eagle Challenger rehearses in Reliant stadium before game.

Middle photo: Challenger lands perfectly after a flawless fly-over during the National Anthem.

Bottom photo: Texans owner Bob McNair, former President George Bush, AEF founder and president Al Cecere, and Challenger at the Texans vs Bills game.

The AEF's eagle Challenger and staff were busy as usual during the 2012 football season. Beginning with an appearance at the Titans vs Steelers Game in Nashville on October 11, other venues followed at a fast pace. On October 28, they were in Philadelphia to perform during

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AEF volunteer Terry Sherred assists in removing a Bald Eagle egg from a nesting compartment for placement in an incubator. This egg was replaced by a wooden egg, which the parents will sit on as if it were their own. When an eaglet hatches from the real egg, it will be placed back into the nest for its parents to care for. This method assures that the anxious and jumpy parents won't accidentally break the egg before it hatches.

Terry Sherred is a much-valued volunteer at the American Eagle Foundation. Growing up on a dairy farm in Pennsylvania, his familiarity with animals was an asset he brought with him when he began volunteering in July 2010. Terry says that he looks forward to every Wednesday – that's when he comes to the AEF facility, wearing a smile and ready to lend a hand with whatever project needs to be done that day. From cleaning bird rooms in the barn, to refurbishing perches, to bagging fish – Terry loves helping out. He especially enjoys flying his favorite non-releasable bird, "Buzz," the black vulture. The staff feels very fortunate to have an always cheerful and hard worker like Terry as part of the AEF Team!

###

Wild Eagles Build Nest Near Kroger Supermarket In Sevierville, TN

Falcons game. Within hours after Challenger flew at that game, Hurricane Sandy hit with all its fury and devastation, grounding the AEF team and Challenger for several days at their hotel. Then, on Nov. 4, having recovered from Sandy, they were in Houston for a Texans vs Bills game at Reliant Stadium. Challenger was greeted with a deafening roar as he flew flawlessly during the National Anthem.

2012 Texans vs Bills Video.

For many years, Challenger has flown during the opening ceremonies at the BCS Championship college football game. This year was no exception, and on Jan. 3, 2013, he again flew majestically during the final notes of our National Anthem at the 42nd Annual Tostitos Fiesta Bowl in Phoenix.

2013 Fiesta Bowl Video

###

Veterans Day Activities



American Eagle Foundation President Al Cecere shows off the eagle Challenger at New York City's Veteran's Day parade on November 11, 2012.

On Nov. 11th, the AEF's Al Cecere and eagle Challenger appeared on the **Fox & Friends** TV show in NYC. Then, they visited and took photographs with hundreds of veterans and active military, representing all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, at a park where a Veterans Day celebration was being held in the Big Apple.

Meanwhile, back in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, another non-releasable eagle named "Mr. Lincoln" participated in Veterans Day festivities

###

AEF Outreach Programs Spread Message Of Conservation

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Last year, AEF volunteer and hobby photographer, John Douglas Prickett, observed a pair of adult Bald Eagles building a nest next to the Kroger supermarket on Rt. 66 in Sevierville (just 2 miles from AEF headquarters in Pigeon Forge).

John and Al Cecere monitored the nest and were worried that these eagles were building it too far out on a tree branch. Their worries proved legitimate when the nest came down during a severe windstorm in February of last year.

However, the same pair came back this year and built another nest on much stronger tree limbs, but still farther from the tree trunk than desired. The birds have now laid eggs and are incubating them.

This nesting pair has occasionally visited the AEF bird facility in Pigeon Forge, sitting high up in the trees, watching our non-releasable and rehab eagles below. We have also observed them perching in trees above the new weathering yard, which now has a netted roof (for protection from wild birds).

When John visited the nest a few days ago, he noticed a juvenile eagle perched on a limb right next to the female. The "juvie" has been hanging around all year. As John continued to photograph the nest, yet another juvenile buzzed the nest tree, but kept on going.

On the afternoon of February 18th (before the eggs were laid), Al Cecere visited the same wild nest, and saw that a Great Blue Heron was standing in it! (The eagles undoubtedly explained to the Great Blue Heron that it was in the wrong nest!)

On February 18, some over-enthusiastic people had scared the adult eagles from the nest by going under the nest tree to take photos. On Feb. 25, the AEF installed warning signs at the site to keep the public from unknowingly "loving the eagles to death." When the adults are away from the nest for even a few minutes, crows could potentially quickly swoop down and break the eggs, or the eggs could chill and



School children enjoy Birds of Prey show given by the American Eagle Foundation. In this picture, Rebecca Krebs holds up an infertile eagle egg, while Karen Wilbur shows the Bald Eagle "Mr. Lincoln" to the students.

Photo credit: Jeanean DePlanty, Jeanean Deplanty Photography

Since 1998, the American Eagle Foundation has annually traveled to Indiana's Duke Energy plant during January to present Birds of Prey shows at Duke's "Eagle Days" event.

Duke Energy has a coal-burning power plant that is very environmentally friendly. Their plant warms the water of the Wabash River, making possible an abundance of fish for the many eagles that come there to feed.

Duke created "Eagle Days" to help educate the public about the USA's National Bird. This free event provides telescopes to guests, which are set up at various locations to watch eagles perching in trees and fishing. Duke also sponsors the AEF's Bird of Prey show, which is presented multiple times per day over a three-day period.

Falconry techniques (that are centuries old) are used in the training of the AEF's non-releasable educational birds. Four birds were brought to this event, including 2 Kestrels (male and female), a Crested Caracara, and a Gysaker Falcon. Also performing in the bird show were a Screech Owl and Barred Owl, a Black Vulture, a Swainson's Hawk, and a Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle. To complete the show, our beautiful Pied Crow from Africa, "Friar Tuck", came along to take donations from his human friends.

Duke Energy's plant is not the only place that the AEF

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It is most gratifying to see wild Bald Eagles return to our area!

###

"Rare Eagle Life" Finalist Award Goes To Al Cecere



On Feb. 21, 2013, Al Cecere was chosen as a finalist in the **Rare Life Honor Award** and was given a \$3,000 grant from the Eagle Rare Bourbon company to be used by the charity of his choice. Of course, Al picked the American Eagle Foundation to be the recipient.

To qualify for acceptance into the contest, the person whose name was submitted was required to be heroic and inspirational—someone who had made an impact in their corner of the world and who had, in essence, led a "rare life." Upon reading the criteria, one of the members of our EagleCam Chat Group, Carolyne Foley, submitted Al's story for consideration.

When the contest ended, the top 20 contestants who had received the most votes were selected from the larger group. Then, a panel of judges decided who the grand prize winner and the 6 finalists would be.

Al has announced that the grant money from this award will go toward the purchase of two high-definition pan-tilt-zoom cameras to be placed over the nest of our captive non-releasable eagle pair, Independence and Franklin.

###

Eagle Cam Chat Group Contributes To Work Of AEF

travels to for presenting educational bird shows. We reach tens of thousands of people through a variety of local and national programs. We know how very important it is to educate the public about the importance of protecting these beautiful creatures of the sky that help us keep the eco-system balanced on Planet Earth. By teaching the public about the importance of birds of prey, there is less need for rehabilitation.

While on this weekend trip, the AEF staff and birds also visited several schools in the area to provide additional educational outreach initiatives.

~ Written by Karen Wilbur, AEF Wildlife Program Coordinator

###

AEF Lends Support To New Raptor Center In Kentucky



American Eagle Foundation staff members Mike Acuff, Rebecca Krebs, & Rob West with Bald Eagle Challenger at Independence Bank event in Kentucky.

On November 14, 2012, Independence Bank of Kentucky sponsored a challenge for their employees to come up with ways to give back to the local community. Ideas had to be self-sustaining, with the goal of continuing to give back to the community for a long time to come.

One of the ideas was prompted by Brent McCarty, a former employee of the American Eagle Foundation, who now works for Kentucky Fish and Game. Brent's love for birds of prey is quite contagious, and inspired one of the groups to suggest a rescue and rehabilitation center for birds of prey and other wildlife species. Animals that could not be released, but were otherwise healthy, could then be used in educational programs for local schools and other community organizations.

As a demonstration of the educational impact of a bird of prey, the eagle Challenger, the AEF's famous free-flying non-releasable Bald Eagle, was invited to appear at the event. He was joined by AEF staff members Mike Acuff, Rob West, Rebecca Krebs, and Brent McCarty.

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Enthusiastic Eagle Nest Cam Chatters visited the AEF for a special tour in July 2012.

When we began our partnership with UStream two years ago, we knew the viewing experience would be rewarding to those who frequently visited our **Eagle Nest Cam Channel**, but we had no idea what a wonderful group of advocates we would gain in the process. Those who visit and stay to "chat" with each other and with our "Mods" are intelligent, giving, and kind individuals. They have gone out of their way to share our mission with others, and to collectively raise thousands of dollars for things we need at our AEF bird facility. They have become our extended family, and we are so very grateful for their support.

###

Afterwards, Challenger was taken to a local school where students were given an up-close and personal look at him. The children were elated and learned about the importance of protecting wildlife of all kinds. Next, Challenger visited a Veteran's retirement center. Mike Acuff explained Challenger's life story and the AEF's mission. Challenger was personally shown to each of the service men and were given the opportunity to get their individual photo with the majestic bird. The servicemen were very grateful to see a bald eagle, our Nation's Living Symbol of Freedom, up close. Some of the Veteran's were even moved to tears.

At the Independence Bank award ceremony, Challenger flew over the crowd as a representation of the powerful educational value of non-releasable wildlife. Of course, he was a huge hit! The Rescue and Rehabilitation idea received a \$10,000 grant to get their project underway. Additionally, many of the other groups were also awarded cash prizes and a total of \$100,000 was given to sustain their initial phase of development. Independence Bank is to be applauded for this truly generous gift to their local communities.

Challenger is deeply admired and serves to educate all those who have the opportunity to meet him. The AEF is honored to have him as their primary celebrity Bald Eagle ambassador!

~ Article by Rebecca Krebs, AEF Staff Member

###

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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