

## Boys' and Girls' Section

In our last issue it was stated that the essay contest closed with this issue, but that was an error: The boys and girls will still have an opportunity for winning valuable prizes as well as the camera donated by Bird Films. But send the essays in as soon as possible as the **JUBILEE ESSAY CONTEST CLOSSES ON JUNE 30**. A complete list of all those winning the Field Guides since the contest began, the guide they received, and the donor, will be listed in the next issue.

Dick and Ada Bird, of Bird Films Ltd., will then announce the grand winner of the \$50 camera they have donated.

A committee of Judges consisting of Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Houston and Margaret Belcher selected the three following essays as the prize winning ones for this issue. Those donating field guides for this contest are Ralph Stueck, Abernethy, E. Symons, Rocanville and Doug Gilroy, R.R. 2, Regina.

(Will those, not familiar with the contest rules please consult the last issue of the "Blue Jay").

### Ruffed Grouse Episode

By Bob Buhr, Mennon, Sask.  
Age 14, Grade 8

Last spring a Ruffed Grouse nest was accidentally discovered by my brother when the bird suddenly flew up in front of him. The nest was very expertly concealed at the base of a tree beside a patch of heavily tangled shrubbery consisting mainly of wild rose bushes. It was constructed of dry leaves and bark, being lined with the latter, and contained nine yellowish colored eggs.

After the nest was first discovered I did not find the bird off the nest at any time. I imagine she fed early in the morning. I could walk right up to the bird while she was sitting on the nest and even touch her without her batting an eye. This was an excellent example of wildlife "freezing". It was practically impossible to see her from a few feet away because her markings matched perfectly the surrounding twigs and dry leaves. Although I had the vicinity marked with a pile of stones, often I had to search for a considerable time before I could locate the exact situation of the nest.

Several days after the discovery of the nest I returned to the same place and found the bird still on her bark and dry leaf nest. Only this time, as I neared the nest, the bird, with wings half spread, scuttled away in the underbrush. Immediately fluffy Ruffed Grouse chicks began to spread in every direction from the nest in a wild frenzy. In the nest were left only broken eggshells. I quickly left.

A few hours later I came back to the nest to see if the bird had returned. She had. But this time when I neared the nest, the grouse, instead of scurrying away, rushed right at me only to turn aside at my feet and rush away.

I did not see anything of the Ruffed Grouse until late summer when I again found myself on a hike in the same woods. While wandering through these woods I saw a full-grown grouse with several two-third grown young fly up in front of me and go racketing through the trees. I am positive that these were the birds from the nest as I knew of only one flock of Ruffed Grouse in that particular bush.

### Animal Engineers

By Colleen Farrell, Tonkin, Sask.  
Age 13, Grade 7

One day last summer my younger brother burst excitedly into the house. "Mom, Dad," he cried, "Look what I found". He held up for our inspection a poplar sapling neatly chiseled to a point at one end. It was undoubtedly beaver handicraft. We immediately plied him with questions. He reported that he had found several poplars cut along the bank of the creek which runs through our farm.

Several beaver lodges had recently been seen in our vicinity, and it had been our hope that some would settle in our creek. Now our wish was fulfilled. We watched the beavers with growing interest that summer.