

Boys' and Girls' Section

The following two essays have been selected as the winners for the final stage of the Jubilee Essay Contest. The donors of the prizes selected by the competitors will be Mr. Frank Roy, Saskatoon and Mr. Jack Shaver, Regina.

The judges have not yet been able to determine the grand winner of the \$50 camera. After consultation with Mr. Dick Bird, of Bird Films, Regina, the winner will be selected and the announcement made in the fall issue of the Blue Jay.

Feathered Neighbors

By ANNE MATTHEWS, Age 15,
Nipawin

Have you ever watched a Sparrow Hawk, high in the air, watching with its sharp eyes for the slightest movement of a mouse in the grass? It is wonderful that they can hover so motionless with only the tips of their wings moving:

Last year a pair of Sparrow Hawks found a nest box we had beside the house. Every day an egg was laid until there were five and the parents then sat on them for weeks. Finally, five scrawny youngsters replaced the eggs and the old birds could be seen all over the farm, hunting so their babies could survive. Within a few days an almost indescribable smell from the remains of mice and gophers filled the box.

When the young hawks were feathered we brought them down from the nest to band them and to take a picture. Oh, what a time we had! As soon as one was put on the ground it fluttered away and it was some time before the five were close enough together for a good picture.

Soon after they began to fly my brother caught one in the field and brought it home. It stayed all day and we fed it pieces of meat. Towards evening it flew away.

This year another pair of Sparrow Hawks have a family in a box, forty-five feet up in our tower. There are only three young birds this time. The parent hawks work in shifts of about two hours. One will be seen flying to the nest and it will alight on the perch on the box. It will enter the box as soon as the other comes out.

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The Sapsucker

By VALERIE JOHNSON, Age 13,
Sturgis, Sask.

One day during the late cold spring last year, I came home from school and was told that there was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker around in the trees. I was very glad because I had never seen a living sapsucker.

It was interesting to watch the sapsucker pecking on the trees. After he had left a tree you could see all the little holes on the trunk.

Toward evening the sapsucker came and perched on the side of the porch. From a distance he looked like a clump of mud which had been thrown against the wall. We could get a very good look at the sapsucker for you could get near enough to touch him. The bird tucked his head under his wing and went to sleep on the wall.

After a while he flew away and pecked at a few more trees.

In the evening the sapsucker came, and much to our surprise, flew into the porch, and perched himself high on the rafters of the roof, where he spent the night.

During the following day the sapsucker flew around and pecked on trees. Maple trees seemed his favorites. In the evening, my mother, my sister and I were standing by the doorway on the porch watching the sapsucker. He was flying around trying to get into the porch, but we were there. Suddenly, he alighted on my pant leg. He stayed there a minute and then flew into the porch.

The next morning the sapsucker didn't do much, he just sat huddled against the house wall. After a

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Hudsonian Chickadee

By TONY CAPUSTEN, Prince Albert



One day in May on the west side of Christies's Lake about three miles north of Prince Albert we saw a Hudsonian Chickadee hopping from branch to branch on a spruce tree and making querulous sounds.

After a few minutes it flew into a hole in a decayed birch stump and proceeded to carry out pieces of the soft pulpy wood to drop them some distance away.

The birch stump was located where the spruce swamp merged with poplars at the foot of a sand ridge. It had broken off about fifteen feet above the ground and the entrance was about ten feet above the ground where the stump was about four or five inches in diameter.

After five or six trips it flew away. The excavation extended for about a foot down. Later in the season the bird completed its nest and laid eggs.

PATTERNS OF JOY

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so many birds in full song even in July; everything gathering joy only to dispense it with prodigal hand as did our pioneers of long ago.

No need for Omar's "jug of wine, the loaf of bread" this golden year for the Prairie is a "Paradise enow".

A Prairie Slouch

By J. H. GRANT

All the long, hot day we travelled in the teeth of a chinook that sent tumble weeds bounding over the searing plain and whipped grass tops and weed seeds into our blistering faces — and at evening arrived at a tiny lake on the edge of the scrubland.

The red sun sank behind a hill and down with it went the wind. Air, cool, soothing and laden with the smell of water crept out from the slough which mirrored dark-green clumps of choke-cherry bush and one patch of crimson sky. A pair of muskrats swam leisurely, leaving in their wake twin "v's" of tiny ripples. A robin sang from a silverberry bush, his inimitable liquid notes mingling with the murmur of the streamlet that fed the pond. From her nest on a cottonwood stump, a mourning dove crooned her plaintive lay, and from somewhere in the range lands beyond, faint and faraway came the lowing of cattle.

As dusk settled, the oxen, full-fed on the lush grasses of the lake shore, lay down by the wagon, drawing deep contented breaths and ruminating peacefully. We lay on the warm sand, the fresh vapor-laden air balm to our wind-chafed lips and nostrils, and the mellow gurgling call of the bittern lulling us to rest.

THE SAPSUCKER

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while Mom came in carrying him. He had fallen off the wall and was lying on the ground. He was so light we figured right away he was half-starved. We got some warm milk, mixed syrup with it and tried to feed the sapsucker with an eyedropper. He wouldn't drink he just spit the milk back. We made the sapsucker as comfortable as we could.

Within about one hour our sapsucker was dead. I guess hunger had made him so tame.