
EDITORIAL

How is *Blue Jay* doing? Is it reaching everyone it could reach? Do members of Nature Saskatchewan find it useful and interesting? These are questions that continually plague me as the editor. Since I began my stint editing *Blue Jay*, numerous people have written to me with their comments. Many of the letters I receive are very positive, saying that *Blue Jay* is interesting and that they read every issue cover to cover. Other letters feed my lingering doubts.

In 1991, Donald Hooper sent Mary Gilliland and the "Improvements to the *Blue Jay* Committee" a letter which said "some of our members are complaining that the *Blue Jay* has become too scientific and that they don't read it anymore." The numerous references attached to some articles turn off people who are just interested in the information or the observations, but the references help others who want to be able to find more information than what is written in *Blue Jay*. I have tried to strike a balance between scientific and non-scientific articles. This is why in any recent issue you will find both scientific articles, often written by professional biologists, and short write-ups of what a member saw in their backyard at the feeder, for example.

One of the biggest challenges is trying to get the "scientists" to write in an easy-to-read style, so that the information they provide will be read and absorbed by all *Blue Jay* subscribers. One long-time member wrote in to say "[*Blue Jay*] was a better magazine years ago in that the articles were not a bunch of figures

and all technical language."

Poetry is another contentious matter. Some love it; others hate it. It's impossible to edit. Who is to say what is good poetry and what is not? I think that poems add an extra dimension (perhaps a more spiritual one) to *Blue Jay*. For the time being poetry will remain.

Another suggestion for improving *Blue Jay* is to increase the actual physical size from 5.5 x 8.5 inches to 8.5 x 11 inches. The argument for this is that the detail in photographs would be improved and production may be cheaper.

One piece that may be missing from *Blue Jay* is a section for junior naturalists. There is no obvious source of material for such a section. Is this an important issue?

Other suggestions for improving *Blue Jay* are: to have more information about trends in conservation from other parts of Canada and the world; to pick an endangered species as a theme for particular issues; and to make book reviews very brief so that readers just get an idea of whether the book is worth reading rather than not having to see the book at all because all the good stuff is in the review.

Well, this brings me back to the original question — how is *Blue Jay* doing? I will continue to try to improve the journal and appreciate direction from concerned readers. Every little bit helps and will hopefully make *Blue Jay* a worthwhile journal for all Nature Saskatchewan members.