

Phyllis Hand Bechtold comes out with newest Seymour Bluffs book for children about birds

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Phyllis Hand Bechtold has been a successful author in the past and she is now releasing a book titled "Seymour And Friends" that is educational to children about birding and some common birds.

The book is led off by a explanation of birding by Seymour Bluffs, an Eagle character.

Some of the birds depicted and described in the book are the American robin, the Northern Cardinal, the Northern Mockingbird, the Hummingbird, the Redbreasted Nuthatch and much more. On the adjacent page after the description of the bird is a coloring area and some questions about the bird.

Royce Vaughn is again the illustrator of Bechtold's beautiful children's book.

"I felt like children needed a guide for learning about birds," Bechtold said. "This combines my love for birding and the outdoors. It is pretty simplistic; I started out with four- or eight-line rhyme for each bird, which may be kind of corny, but sometimes that would catch the kids attention, then bullets about each bird, where it lives, eats and where they saw it and making notes on the opposite page. The opposite page is a diary so children can tell where they saw it and what they are doing. There is an outline of the bird on the page for children to color."

Bechtold sees this as a book for ages 4, who could read it with a parent's help, to older children and beginning bird watchers.

"I have always enjoyed bird watching," she said. "I always enjoyed the outdoors on the farm where I live today. My daughter gave me a bird feeder one year for Christmas and I started using it. Now I love to watch them and hear them sing."

Bechtold is a real estate agent and also occasionally goes on river excursions to cook and observe nature at its best.

"I work for a barge company on the river as a cook," she said. "I can be out one day or five days, it just depends on what they need. Now I am part time and I go out as a substitute. I love the water. It is soothing and healing. I love the water birds, and pelicans and eagles. Things look a lot different when you are on the river."

Bechtold has a large family with three children and nine grandchildren.

"I hope to sell my book everywhere," she said. "This is not just a local book. It will be available on Amazon. Nature is all around us now, so it is the time of year where children and parents will be getting together and enjoying the outdoors. This book will allow them to look at birds all around and make note of what they are doing."

Bechtold said she has had a very interesting life and done a lot through her time.

"I just kind of morphed into a lot of different things, some not of my choosing and others of my choosing," she said. "You make the best of what you have and I think you should do the things you enjoy doing. I love to write."

Bechtold's book will be available at the Godfrey Meat Market, 6017 Godfrey Road, Godfrey and Pere Marquette Lodge in Grafton.

Signings are set for the following dates:

Sunday, June 5, The Audubon Center at the Riverlands, West Alton, MO 1-3:30 p.m.

Friday, June 10, Mississippi Mud Pottery 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Saturday, June 11, Elsay General Store, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

For more information, call Bechtold at 618-466-1442.