



# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 23 Issue 3 | May/June 2016

## Celebrating 25 Years!



**SPECIAL ISSUE:**  
Timeline, Scrapbook & More!

### BLOOMINGTON

816 West 98th St.  
(Clover Center)  
Bloomington, MN 55420  
**952.884.4103**

### EAGAN

2143 Cliff Rd.  
(Cedar Cliff Shopping Center)  
Eagan, MN 55122  
**651.459.0084**

### MINNETONKA

4759 County Rd. 101  
(Westwind Plaza)  
Minnetonka, MN 55345  
**952.935.5892**

### WHITE BEAR LAKE

2703 East Cty. Hwy. E.  
(Cty. Rd. E. and Hwy. 120)  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110  
**651.653.8705**

### WAYZATA & WILD BIRD DELIVERS

15710 Wayzata Blvd.  
(394 Frontage Rd.)  
Wayzata, MN 55391  
**952.473.4283**

### WILDBIRDSTORE.COM

*Bird's-Eye View* is published to share the joy of backyard birds with All Seasons Wild Bird Store's customers and friends.

### CHIRPS

By Founder and Co-owner, AL NETTEN

## Reflecting on a Quarter Century



*The first crew:  
Al & Lila Netten,  
Steve Endres,  
Diane Kissinger,  
Lisa Stewart*

### A Bird Lover in the Making

As I reflect on the past 25 years, I think "how does a graduate electrical engineer, having worked in the computer business

for over two decades, become involved in a backyard birding business?"

It all started when we purchased our home in Bloomington in 1973. The previous owner of our new home along with our neighbor were active backyard birders and he left a hopper bird feeder mounted on a pole right outside our kitchen window in the backyard. My first reaction was "what is that?"

I knew nothing about bird feeding so our next-door neighbor took the time to patiently educate me and got me interested in feeding the birds.

Over time, as I shopped for bird seed, I discovered this neat specialty store in Bloomington called the "Wild Bird Store" in the Clover Shopping Center next to REI. It had anything and everything you wanted or needed

for feeding the birds, especially great birdseed mixes. I thought I had died and gone to heaven . . . it was a great store!

### FOR SALE: Wild Bird Store

So I became an enthusiastic regular shopper and subsequently a VIP Member (now a Frequent Feeder Member) enjoying and receiving their monthly newsletter. One nice fall day in 1990, as I was relaxing and reading the newsletter in our three-season room watching the birds, what jumps out at me was an ad in the newsletter: "FOR SALE: Wild Bird Store"!

At the time, I was looking for a change in my career and it caught my interest: "hmm . . . an executive working for a large computer company with an interest in feeding the birds . . . owning and operating a small specialty retail store?"

Well, one thing led to another and with some trepidation I made the plunge and acquired the Bloomington Wild Bird Store in the spring of 1991 from Minnesota Greenery, which also had 6 other Wild Bird Stores in the area.

From there, we acquired their White Bear Lake store (1993) and their Newport store (1996),

*(Continued on Page 4 . . .)*



# Birdfeeding Business Over 25 Years

## What's New, What's Stayed True

"When we first started, we were very unique in terms of being a specialty store for wild birds. We had products—feeders, mixes, poles, those types of things—that you didn't find in other retail outlets and online like you do today," explains co-owner Al Netten. "Feeding wild birds wasn't the year-round activity that it is now," he adds. "It was primarily a winter pastime."

Son and co-owner Dave Netten comments on other ways the industry has changed. "Wild bird feeding has also become very specialized—you can attract specific species with the foods and feeders you use. And now we have mealworms, jellies and jelly feeders, nectars and nectar feeders to attract even more exotic birds.

"The industry is growing. Data show that 40% of households now participate in bird feeding. Higher quality products and foods are more prevalent in availability in the marketplace, too. Suppliers of bird feeding products are more educated about what's good for birds and are getting more creative with how to make products critter-resistant," Dave notes.

Despite changes in the industry, the core of All Seasons' Wild Bird Stores' philosophy has remained providing freshest, best quality food and feeders and expert advice to make sure both birds and customers are happy. In a **1992 interview in Bloomington Small Business**, Al described the knowledge and service that still makes All Seasons Wild Bird Store locations a favorite with customers: "We'll spend a lot of time with a beginning customer, even if it's a small purchase, to make sure they walk out of here with the right thing. You have to impart the knowledge to customers to get them on the right track."

By Guest Contributor KATRINA HASE

## The Path So Far . . .

25 YEARS AGO, THE TWIN CITIES HAD A SINGLE 612 AREA CODE, The Minnesota Twins were on their way to winning the 1991 World Series, the first President George Bush was in the White House, and electrical engineer Al Netten was contemplating purchasing a bird store.

1984-1989

Minnesota Greenery expands to 7 stores

1991

The Nettens acquire the first (Bloomington) All Seasons Wild Bird Store from MN Greenery



1992  
Home delivery begins

1993

White Bear Lake location opens



Joe Murphy, first White Bear Lake Store Manager



ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

Early logo, created by  
Larae Netten Evans



Al and Lila Netten in front of the first store in Bloomington

2012

Twitter

Joined Twitter

25<sup>th</sup>

ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE  
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

25th Anniversary!

2016

Join Instagram and Pinterest

2015

New website launches



2010

Facebook page starts



### Bloomington Small Business

#### Wild bird store features array of seeds, feeders

By Kim Hase

This story was in the local business section of the Bloomington Herald-Examiner. It was the first time a local business had been featured in the paper. The article was written by Kim Hase, a local journalist. It described the history of All Seasons Wild Bird Store and the passion of its owners, Al and Lila Netten. The article also mentioned the store's location in Bloomington and the variety of products it offered.



Al and Lila Netten, who have been in business for over 25 years, are proud of the store's success. They have grown from a small store in Bloomington to a chain of stores across the state. The article also mentioned the store's commitment to customer service and the quality of its products.



Home and Garden Show 1993



Tom Westman, original owner of MN Greenery, at 1996 holiday party



**1994**

*Al and Steve Endres working on the new Bloomington store*



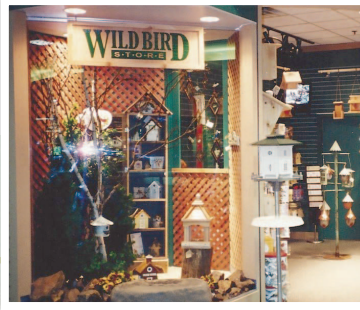
Bloomington store expanded and relocated within the Clover Center

*New logo, designed by Imagehaus*



**1995**

The Mall of America All Seasons Wild Bird Store location opens



*The original Mall of America store location*

*Dave Netten, Linda Gorr and Al Netten at the Newport store*



**1996**

Acquired the Newport Wild Bird Store

*Joe's retirement party*



**1998**

Joe Murphy (inventor of Joe's Mix) retires

**1999**

Minnetonka Store opens



White Bear Lake store expands

**2002**

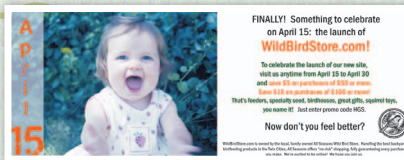
Eagan store moved to Cliff Lake Center in Eagan from Newport

**2003**

Acquired The Feed Store of Wayzata to open Wayzata location

**2007**

Eagan store expanded and moved to Cedar Cliff shopping center; MOA store converted into an apparel store called Relaxadaiscial



**2006**

Online store opens

**2004**

Website launches: wildbirdstore.com

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS



*Birding tour to view Tundra Swans and Bald Eagles in SE Minnesota*



*Birding tour to Hawk Ridge and guide Oscar Johnson (left)*



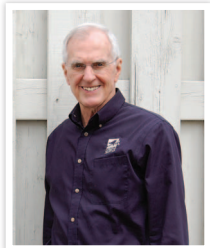
*Naturalist Jim Gilbert at the new White Bear Lake location in 1993*



*Al playing Santa at 1992 holiday party*



which we later moved to Egan (2002). We also started up two other stores from scratch: Mall of America (1995) and Minnetonka (1999). Our last acquisition was the Feed Store in Wayzata (2003). Over that 12-year period we grew from one store to six stores—and that is still the number of stores today.



Al Netten



Dave Netten

### Local and Family Owned

We are a family owned and operated business. Lila, my wife, was involved in the business for a few years early on, buying and merchandising nature and bird-related gift products. Her decorative touch gave our stores a boutique ambience. Dave, our son, was a student at the U of MN at the time and he began working in the business as a part-time sales associate. Upon graduation he said, "I'd like to work in a small business." I said, "I'm a small business." So he joined our family business full time and since has become a valued full-time partner and co-owner, sharing operating duties with his "old man".

### Grateful for our Customers and Employees

Yes, it is gratifying to be in business as a father-son family business. However, the most gratifying part of the business is the people—customers and employees. I have found that people who shop at our stores are some of the best—caring, loyal and trustworthy. They will tell you what they like and, in a respectful way, what they dislike . . . VERY MINNESOTAN. Likewise, our employees are like our customers. Why? Primarily because most all of our employees have been former customers like you; they are passionate about birds and therefore passionate about the business . . . they too are the best.

So to all of our customers and employees a heartfelt thank you for supporting our family-owned business over the past 25 years.

It's been a Chirping good time! ~ *Al Netten*

### ANNIVERSARY PICKS

## Three Time-Tested Products

Each of these products has been sold in our stores since the first day we were open. Why not give 'em a try?



1



2



3

- 1) Our exclusive Joe's Mix
- 2) Droll Yankees A6 tube feeder
- 3) Heath seed scoop and funnel

## In Recognition of Our Staff!

**Our All Seasons Wild Bird Store Managers**  
are friendly, knowledgeable . . . and loyal!  
Just take a look at how long they've been with us!



25 YEARS

Steve Endres,  
Bloomington Manager



20 YEARS

Linda Gorr,  
Egan Manager



17 YEARS

Melissa Block,  
Wayzata Manager

*Steve's been with us since our very first day having worked 6 years prior at the Bloomington Minnesota Greenery, which became the first All Seasons Wild Bird Store!*



13 YEARS

Carol Chenault,  
Minnetonka Manager



6 YEARS

Julie Ziemer,  
White Bear Lake Manager

### Special Recognition Also to These Long-term All Seasons Wild Bird Store Employees!

20 YEARS

**Roy Shemanek**  
Bloomington Sales Associate

13 YEARS

**Deb Courts-Brown**  
White Bear Lake Sales Associate

13 YEARS

**Lori Lundeen**  
Wayzata Senior Sales Associate

11 YEARS

**Laurie Murphy**  
Administration

10 YEARS

**Stan Brehm**  
Wayzata Home Delivery

10 YEARS

**Jakki Kaiser**  
Egan Senior Sales Associate

10 YEARS

**Katy Shannon**  
Wayzata Sales Associate

10 YEARS

**Karen Wisti**  
Bloomington Sales Associate

**Have an idea for a future issue of *Birds-Eye View*?** Photos and articles may be submitted by email to [info@wildbirdstore.net](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.net).  
**Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter** at [WildBirdStore.com](http://WildBirdStore.com) to receive information about backyard birding, store events and exclusive discounts.