Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

December, 2025 Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall may be drifting into winter by the time you read this, and we already have some interesting gulls and sparrows showing up at various places across the state. Less than two months ago many TOS members were enjoying the fall warbler migration at the TOS Fall Meeting, hosted September 26-28 by the Lee and Lois Herndon (Elizabethton) Chapter in Johnson City. Many thanks to all who devoted their time and energy to put on a fine meeting. Now we can start looking forward to the 2026 Spring Meeting, which will be hosted by the Kingsport Chapter May 1-3. See page 2 for additional information.

At the Fall Meeting Dave Gardner (Lee and Lois Herndon Chapter) agreed to take on the role of Vice-President for East Tennessee, but we are still searching for people to take over as editors for *The Migrant* (TOS journal) and *The Warbler* (TOS newsletter). Bob Ford and Theresa Graham are hanging on, but both would like nothing more than to help someone new take over the reins. Please contact me at tospresident1915@gmail.com if you are interested in or know of someone who might be interested in helping produce either of these publications.

TOS remains in good financial shape, but we've seen drops in membership at Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Memphis. With *The Migrant* moving to all digital format, annual costs will stay down and allow us to focus on supporting bird conservation, research, and education. We've provided over \$10,000 in support this year.

Chris Welsh and Cyndi Routledge are working with the Kentucky Ornithological Society to plan a joint Fall Meeting, likely in September 2026. We hope to attract a high-profile speaker, have plenty of birding opportunities in Tennessee and Kentucky, and enjoy a chance to connect with fellow birders from our neighbor to the north. Amy Wilms is working with TOS to make all past issues of The Migrant available via our website. When she's done, it will be a great resource for Tennessee birders.

Good birding to all, Chris Welsh President, TOS

TOS SPRING MEETING IN KINGSPORT

May 1-3, 2026

The Kingsport Chapter invites you to the 2026 TOS Spring Meeting to be held May 1-3. Friday night registration & social will be held at Bays Mountain Recreation Area. The Saturday afternoon Board meeting and dinner will be held at Taylored Venue & Events located at 115 Shelby Street in downtown Kingsport.

A "TOS Meeting" room block is in place for \$143 at Hampton Inn Kingsport located at 2000 Enterprise Place. Hampton Inn on-line reservation link or call 423-247-3888 before the April 10 deadline. All field trips will depart from the Hampton Inn parking lot. A room block is also being held for \$140 for a room with a king bed at Comfort Suites located at 3005 Bays Meadow Place. Comfort Suites on-line reservation link. If you prefer two queen beds, call 423-765-1955 prior to the April 17 deadline. Both hotels offer a hot breakfast at 6 a.m. There is also a Fairfield Inn nearby, but they don't offer breakfast until 7 a.m.

We are pleased to announce the speaker following Saturday's dinner will be Sheri L. Williamson, a naturalist, ornithologist, hummingbird researcher, and author of **A Field Guide to Hummingbirds of North America**.

The dinner menu is Parmesan-crusted Chicken, Bacon-wrapped pork tenderloin, salad, rolls, side dishes, and desserts.

We hope you will be able to join us. We are planning field trips for Saturday and Sunday mornings. For additional information, email <u>Susan Hubley</u>.

TOS SPRING MEETING 2026 REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s)	
Address	
E-mail	Cell phone
TOS Chapter	Office held
for Registrations \$10 each for Dinner Reservations @ \$	\$27 each Vegetarian Gluten-Free
Total amount enclosed. Make check payable to Birding Kingsport TOS	
s this the first time you've ever attended a l	ΓOS meeting? Yes
Mail registration form and check by April 10 to: Ken Hendrix, Birding Kingsport, 1016 Oldham Court, Kingsport, TN 37660	

THE BIRD CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

TOS is a member of the Bird Conservation Alliance (BCA). BCA provides an opportunity for organizations that focus on birds, bird conservation, or habitat restoration and protection to join forces to inform members of congress and relevant committees about issues related to birds. TOS signed onto a September letter to encourage passage of the Farm Bill, legislation with far-reaching impacts on birds. To learn more about BCA, visit https://abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-conservation-alliance/. If you scroll down the page, you'll find a wealth of information in their *Recent Updates from the Bird Conservation Alliance* section.

Fall Count Data Available Soon Christmas Counts Coming Soon!

Thank you to all who participated in the fall counts and to the local compilers for putting it all together. The final crunching is underway and will be available in *The Migrant* soon. Christmas counts are around the corner (hope everyone gets their shopping done so you can count birds)! As you're working on your Christmas count data, please send me the following effort data in addition to the count data (that gets uploaded to Audubon):

- 1 Hours and miles by car, foot, and any night-birding
- 2 Number of observers and parties
- 3 Any feeder watching hours & names
- 4 Start and end times for the count
- 5 Weather data for the count
- 6 Names of all the participants
- 7 Anything else about the count (e.g., record high or low numbers, extraordinary weather, all-time species total for your count, etc

If you do not have a local compiler, you can send the data directly to me at the info below.

TOS appreciates your efforts to record and monitor our bird populations and abundance. Thank you for your help in archiving this data for future generations and researchers.

Liz Rutemeyer, TOS State Bird Count Compiler 2017 Willis Place, Knoxville, TN 37920 – 865-236-7646 zzalbers@gmail.com

Guidelines for Tennessee Ornithological Society Conservation and Research Grants

The Tennessee Ornithological Society invites applications for Conservation and Research Grants to support projects that will directly or indirectly help to protect the birds of Tennessee, increase scientific knowledge, or educate others about the importance of Tennessee's birds. A total of up to \$20,000 is available to be awarded for the grants, which may be divided among multiple recipients.

Anyone with a bird-related project, including students, professionals, and individual workers, may compete for a grant. The project may already be in progress at the time of application. Applicants should submit a project proposal using the form that is available on the TOS website (https://tnbirds.org/grants-and-awards/). Needed information includes: name, address, telephone, E-mail address, topic, problem to be addressed, objectives, expected results and significance, project location, beginning and ending dates, estimated field time, estimated total cost of project, itemized budget, funds available from other sources, how grant is to be used, experience of applicant in the project area, willingness of applicant to share results at a statewide TOS meeting, and whether the work is under the guidance of a mentor or is independent.

A letter of recommendation from a mentor or a knowledgeable associate is strongly encouraged. Up to \$50 of a grant may be applied toward the costs of attending an appropriate scientific meeting to present results of the project.

Criteria for judging applications include:

- Significance of problem addressed
- Clarity of proposal
- Adequacy of project design
- Adequacy of experience/training
- Adequacy of professional guidance
- Financial need
- Chance for achieving objectives
- Potential benefit to the species/resource
- Potential for advancing career/studies
- Potential for sharing results at a future statewide TOS meeting

The application and letter of recommendation should be emailed (preferably) or mailed to Michael Collins, Department of Biology, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN 38112; collinsm@rhodes.edu. The deadline for receipt of applications is February 1. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's decisions in early March. All grant awards will be announced in *The Tennessee Warbler*.

Respectfully,

Michael Collins

TOS Conservation and Research Funding Committee Chair

GLOBAL BIG DAY OCTOBER 11, 2025

Coinciding with World Migratory Bird Day, the Global Big Day is a worldwide effort to record as many of the world's 11,108 species as possible within one 24 hour period. By participating, birders not only enjoy a day of bird watching, but contribute to global bird conservation efforts.

Participants contribute valuable data via eBird (<u>www.ebird.org</u>), the citizen science project that collects bird observations from all over the globe. By reporting your observations using eBird, you help scientists track bird populations, migration patterns and conservation efforts.

On Saturday, October 11, 2025, 48,830 eBirders submitted 113,510 complete checklists, reporting 7,834 species (a little over 70% of the world's species). 75,022 photos were submitted to the Macaulay Library.

Birders in the United States submitted the greatest number of these checklists (40,204), followed by Canada (7,371), Brazil (6,611), Venezuela (4,379), and Argentina (4,253). Birders in Columbia reported the most species (1,342), followed by Peru (1,340), Brazil (1,263), Ecuador (1,104) and Venezuela (825). Birders in the United States came in thirteenth, with 705 species.

In the U. S., California species (375), followed by Texas (363), Florida (273), Arizona (267) and Oregon (250). The most checklists were submitted by eBirders in California (4,463), followed by Florida (2,587), New York (2,5675), Texas (2006), and Massachusetts (1,713).

Tennessee birders reported a total of 178 species (25th) on 593 checklists (24th). Cliff VanNostrand reported the most species (105) followed by Tim Lenz (88), Ruben Stoll (86), Sophie Dismukes (83) and Patrick Higgins (81). Roi and Debbie Shannon submitted the most checklists (15), followed by Stephon Johnson (10). Cliff VanNostrand and Tim Lenz tied with (9).

The most species reported by county: Shelby (125), Hamilton (112), Davidson (103), Benton (91) and Knox (91). The most checklists submitted by county: Hamilton (78), Shelby (60), Davidson (60), Knox (40) and Rutherford (28). Sixty-seven of the states' ninety-five counties submitted at least one complete checklist, and 72 counties reported at least one species.

The next Global Big Day will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2026.

Source: Cornell University Lab of Ornithology (www.eBird.org).

For more details: www.ebird.org.

Editor's note: totals correct as of November 4th.

Southeastern Avian Research Ruby-throated Hummingbird 2025 Season Summary

As I look back on the 2025 ruby-throat hummingbird season, two words stand out: **technology and numbers**. Each plays a vital role in our work, and it was that union of technology and numbers that empowered SEAR to push the boundaries of hummingbird research in 2025. We celebrate the progress made and eagerly look ahead to the continued journey of discovery driven by technology, guided by numbers, and inspired by the incredible resilience of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds

Here are some of SEAR's highlights for the 2025 season:

- 2,800 bands cut and formed in early 2025 in preparation for the season.
- 15 CTT radio-tags deployed on 7 males and 8 female hummers in June and monitored for 50 days.
- 2,019 newly banded Ruby-throated Hummingbirds!
- 288 recaptured hummingbirds from previous years!
- Record for oldest known Ruby-throat species recaptured at age 9 years and 3 months at Ms. Bonnie Crutcher's home in August.
- 95 blood samples taken for our ongoing parasite study with Rhodes College. Only 405 to completion!
- 22 fantastic volunteers whose dedication and work makes all this possible!
- 16 wonderful hummer host families who open their homes and share their birds with us each summer some multiple times.
- 45 banding days from mid-June to early September.
- Participation in 5 hummingbird festivals.
- 5,000+ smiling and educated festival guests.
- 101 hummingbird adoptions supporting environmental education.
- 2 hummingbird banding demos to raise funds for 2 high school scholarships in Kentucky.
- 12 hummingbird educational lectures in Tennessee and Kentucky.
- 80+ hours devoted to data entry and reports.
- 3,500+ volunteer miles driven.
- 7000 followers on our social media page.
- Celebrated the 11th anniversary of Southeastern Avian Research.
- 19, 937 hummingbirds banded since 2014...20,000 here we come!
- 3 'one-day wonder' Rufous Hummingbirds reported to us in September and October.

Last but not least I would like to extend my most heartfelt gratitude to all volunteers, hosts and those who continually support SEAR and our work. Your dedication, generosity, and commitment make a profound difference and allow us to move forward and reach new heights together. Onward together we go...

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Got a Winter Hummingbird?



HAVE YOU HAD A HUMMINGBIRD AT YOUR FEEDER BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1ST AND MARCH 15TH? OR

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING OUT A HUMMINGBIRD FEEDER ALL YEAR LONG?

ONGOING 'WINTER HUMMINGBIRD' PROJECT!



Scan the QR code to find out more about winter hummingbirds and how you might become one of the lucky few who host one of these rare visitors.

CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER's first Birding 101 class takes place on November 20 at McCoy Farms and Gardens. OJ Morgan and Kent Pennington are teaching this introductory class to Birding, sharing the foundational skills needed to observe and identify birds, including how best to use binoculars, field guides, smartphone apps, and your eyes and ears. The class includes a short walk around McCoy to use what they learned.

Another project in the works is the establishment of a bird blind in Chattanooga. This began when OJ Morgan accompanied Pete Robinson, a well-known and long-time birder in Chattanooga, to the Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve just outside of Huntsville. Pete wanted to share with OJ the beautiful Bird Blind and Habitat located there as one of the stops on the Alabama Birding Trail. They spent most of the morning at the blind photographing a wide variety of birds including, among others, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, and several warblers (Ovenbird, Magnolia, Hooded, Chestnut-sided, Parulas, Redstarts, and Tennessee). A similar bird blind and habitat in Chattanooga would be a great way to give people more access to birds, and also serve as a fantastic educational venue, open to the public.

Our speakers this fall included Marie Landis, recreational birder and professional cartographer, who spent 8 years in Big Bend National Park and developed a healthy fear of heat stroke. Highlights included daily and once-in-alifetime adventures from birding in Big Bend, travel and survival tips, and just enough geology and geography to explain what makes this patch of Chihuahuan Desert such a special place.

Another speaker, Luke Thompson, a first-year student at Sewanee, spoke about his experiences Birding Northern Peru on Public Transit. Luke said, "I was lucky enough to experience the magic of one of the best birding routes in the world for under \$1,000 and one broken pair of binoculars."

Tim Lenz is our November speaker, bringing us up to date on the Birding App and its growth over the last two years. From Florida's beaches to Alaska's cliffs to right here in Tennessee, he presented photos and stories showing how BirdingApp has brought the community together.

In December, Kent Pennington will give us a summary of his adventures Birding in Colombia Santa Marta.

Ann Glass, Newsletter Editor

The LEE AND LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER of Tennessee Ornithological Society, also known as the Elizabethton Bird Club, has produced its annual calendar featuring bird photographs by its members and friends of the organization. This year's front cover features a gorgeous photo of a Black-throated Blue Warbler taken by club members David and Connie Irick. All sales help the club fund birding programs, public park feeders, conservation efforts and other bird- and nature-related activities in upper Northeast Tennessee. For more information on how to obtain a calendar, email ahoodedwarbler@aol.com.

David and Connie Irick recently presented a well-received program for a chapter meeting that focused heavily on the warblers they saw and photographed during a visit to Magee Marsh, a 2,000-acre wildlife area located in Oak Harbor, Ohio, situated on the southern shore of Lake Erie.

The chapter is also getting ready to conduct its annual Christmas Bird Counts for Roan Mountain and Elizabethton. Members will also gather for their annual Christmas party in December at the home of member Roy Knispel.

Bryan Stevens, Editor



The **HIGHLAND RIM CHAPTER** spends the months of June and July planning our monthly meetings and arranging for guest speakers and outdoor field trips. After two months of hard work, we kicked off our 2025-26 season with our annual covered dish supper, meeting yet again, at the residence of our gracious hosts Darryl and Jean Gibson. In addition to their hospitality, we so enjoyed their beautiful, "mini zoo" back yard that backs up to forest and which is chock full of wildlife. As we dined, we were blessed to see abundant wildlife including deer, turkeys, a rare white turkey hen, Ruby throated Hummingbirds and lots of bluebirds!

We enjoyed our second annual September pontoon boat tour on Tim's Ford Lake and were blessed with beautiful weather! Bobby Smith and Laura Butler were again our talented boat drivers, professionally watching out for overhead limbs and getting us close-up access to many species. We eased up close to a rookery island saw many Cormorants, a Great Blue Heron, Anhingas (sometimes called snake birds), and hundreds of vultures.



In September, club members met for a delicious BBQ supper and afterwards drove over to the parking lot of the local high school to watch hundreds of Chimney and Vaux swifts roosting in the school chimney.

October 3rd was the date of a "Distinguished Lecture Series" program sponsored by The Lyndhurst Organization and the Tennessee Valley Chapter of The Wild Ones, an organization advocating biodiversity in the southeast. The featured speaker was Dr. Doug Tallamy—renowned entomologist, ecologist, and bestselling author who delivered a wonderful lecture at

the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Wolford Athletic Center. Dr. Tallamy has inspired thousands with his groundbreaking work on native plants and biodiversity. At our October 7th meeting, Don Hazel from the Tennessee Bluebird Society was our guest speaker. He delivered a very educational program on the successful recovery of the Eastern Bluebird population. Dean Rust was the guest speaker who gave an informative talk on the nesting habits of the Eastern Bluebird. Dean is the current President of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania, and he personally monitors over 300 bluebird nesting boxes weekly. He is the author of *The Beloved and Charismatic Bluebird*, considered to be the best and most informative book on the Eastern Bluebird.

At our meeting on November 4th, Don Davidson shared with us about his transition from, in his words, being "just a birder" to being a naturalist. Interestingly, his mentor in his early years was Ruth Luckadoo, a former member of our club, who taught him to become aware of and to appreciate the beauty of the world around him.

We are preparing for our upcoming Christmas banquet where one of our members will tell us about his experiences at the 2025 Hummingbird Festival at Barfield Crescent Park, Murfreesboro, TN. At the end of every summer, hundreds of hummingbirds can be found at the park, filling up with nectar and insects before making their way south.



Before adjourning for Christmas, we will pass out materials to our teams who will be taking part in the Audubon's 2025 Christmas Bird Count.

Merry Christmas, everyone! Murray King, President

KINGSPORT CHAPTER - Emmy James presented a very educational program titled "If You Can't Take the Heat: Birds and Behavior in a Warming World" in August. She is a third year Ph.D. student at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. Thirty folks attended. Our September program was "A Birding Adventure to the Canary Islands and Morocco" by Ron Hoff and Dollyann Myers. In October, Ben and Anne Cowan presented "Birding and Bicycling in New Zealand".

On September 2, twenty-one folks participated in a hummingbird banding event at Seven Islands State Birding Park. Thanks to Mark Armstrong, Clare, and Stephanie for the opportunity. In total, we witnessed 19 hummingbirds being weighed, measured, and banded. It was an awesome experience! On September 7, seven folks enjoyed a delightful, sunny afternoon scoping shorebirds at Rankin Bottoms. Scopes were required as most species were across from the tipple area. Twentyeight species were tallied, and due to the distance, we were unable to make positive identifications on several other shorebird species. On September 13, we had a bird walk at Warriors Path State Park. Twenty folks enjoyed birding on a gorgeous morning. Thirtysix species were tallied, including some warblers. On October 4, eight participants birded along the Greenbelt, beginning at Riverfront Seafood Restaurant, and continuing west. Thirty-eight species were seen. It was a beautiful morning for a stroll along the river. In celebration of Global Big Day, a bird walk was held at Warriors Path State Park the morning of October 11. Thirty-four species were tallied.

Several members attended the TOS Fall Meeting in Johnson City.

Southeastern Avian Research has an ongoing "Winter Hummingbird" project through March 15. Visit southeasternavianresearch.org for suggestions on caring for your feeders and who to contact if you're lucky enough to host a rare visitor in your yard.

Leadership Team

In Fall 2025 the **MEMPHIS CHAPTER** held field trips to frequently visited locations like Johnson Park in Collierville and Overton Park in Memphis, and also visited Nonconnah Creek at Halle Stadium, an area typically not visited by many birders — until October 25. On this date chapter Field Trip Coordinator Ryan Pudwell spotted an Ash-throated Flycatcher, quickly followed by a Vermillion Flycatcher. Following postings of the rare bird sightings, over 40+ birders from various parts of the state came to see the birds and observed 58+ species in a week's time at this spot.



On the November 15 chapter field trip to the Maynard Stiles Wastewater Treatment Plant, a newly arrived Surf Scoter was seen, plus the Black Scoter (in residence a week+ ago) was still on site. Other north-downtown Memphis stops were made on this field trip.

Of note, on September 13 the Shelby County Fall Count produced 123 species, a very good total for this Count, including five Eastern Screech-Owls.

The Memphis chapter continues to add new members and grow interest in our group within the community. In calendar year 2025, 16 new members have been added to the roster as of early November. On a sad note, longtime chapter member Virginia Reynolds' husband Tom died on November 4 at the age of 91. A nice write-up about Tom's life can be found at:

https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/dailymemphian/name/thomas-reynolds-obituary?id=59958240

Barbara Pyles, Treasurer/Membership Chair

Migration started strong with numerous sightings in the **KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** area, including Golden-winged, Bay-breasted, Magnolia, and Chestnut-sided Warblers, as well as Barred Owls. As the weather cooled, bringing foggy mornings, we observed the arrival of many waterfowl, though a few Golden-winged Warblers lingered. The month concluded with a handful of Vesper and Lincoln Sparrows. Notably, we also recorded a higher number of Red-breasted Nuthatches in October.

In community news, the annual Fall Heritage Days at the Museum of Appalachia took place in October and November. Members assisted attendees, both children and adults, with local bird identification and proper binocular usage. Additionally, Ijams Nature Center hosted a record-breaking number of visitors at their Hummingbird Festival in August, where KTOS was also present. (See attached photo: Kristen Smith at the booth with Astrid, an American Kestrel from Owl Ridge Raptor Center.)



Our fall club meetings featured engaging presentations. Renata Beco shared insights on female ornamentation and territorial defense in Antbirds. Kelly Fox discussed her recent research at Seven Island State Birding Park, focusing on point counts and ongoing efforts to increase Bob White numbers

We enjoyed a variety of field trips, including hikes at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, Kyker Bottoms, and the American Eagle Foundation, as well as kayaking at Rankin Bottoms and a visit to the Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery.

The KTOS fall icebreaker was a successful potluck hosted at the home of Chris and Deb Welsh. As always, both new and returning members are welcome to join us at Tomato Head every Wednesday before our monthly meetings—we had another great turnout! (See photo below)



Kristen Smith, Secretary

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CHAPTER NEWS

It's been another wonderful season for our **NASHVILLE CHAPTER**. Our summer hiatus ended with our annual 'Fall Flock' Pot-luck celebration at our September meeting. Kingsport Chapter members Susan and Mike Hubley travelled to Nashville to present a wonderful program on their adventures to 3 of the Hawaiian Islands. Thank you for the wonderful presentation.

Our 48th year of Wednesday morning Radnor Lake migration walks began on September 17th and ran through October 8th. With over 130 people participating, these walks continue to be an excellent source of outreach for our Chapter. We couldn't continue to do these walks without our volunteers. Many thanks to Avery Fish, Ari Fremont, Andy Lantz and Ken Oeser for leading the walks this fall. Our Spring Wednesday morning walks will begin on April 22nd and conclude on May 13th. We invite you to join us if you're in the greater Nashville area.

Our Fall Count took place on October 4th. A hearty thanks to Barbara Harris for coordinating, Scott Block for compiling and for all who made it out that day and counted. The results of the count were posted on our Facebook page and on our webpage.

Those members who attended the Fall TOS meeting in Johnson City enjoyed a wonderful weekend. Many thanks to the Elizabethton Chapter for all the terrific work arranging and hosting the meeting. It's always wonderful to reunite with old friends as well as make new ones at these biannual meetings. I personally encourage you, especially if you've never attended a state meeting before, to make note of the next TOS meeting coming up the first weekend in May of 2026 and join the fun.

Elections for our new Officers and Committee Chairs will take place this month at our annual holiday meeting. Many thanks to outgoing Vice Presidents, Mike Smith and Cherie Parker. They provided our Chapter with adventuresome field trips and educational programs respectively each month. And thanks to our secretary, Margie Dunham, for her work and dedication, keeping accurate records at all our meetings. New officers and chairs will be announced in our first quarter newsletter, as well as on our webpage. We hope you'll join us in

thanking our outgoing volunteers and congratulating the incoming ones.

We invite you to join us at our monthly meeting or any of our field trips, if you're in the Middle TN area. That schedule, along with all other events, can always be found on our webpage – www.nashvillebirds.org

Happiest holidays to everyone.

Until next time, Happy birding... Cyndi Routledge, NTOS President

MARCH 15[™] DEADLINE

The deadline date for the April issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is March 15th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:

Theresa Graham, Editor (901) 489-0795

e-mail: 2graham@bellsouth.net