

R.L. THORNTON III

November 14, 2001

Mr. Stuart Gentling
Mr. Scott Gentling
4801 Harley Avenue
Ft. Worth, Texas 76107

Dear Stuart and Scott:

In our little urban world of charity balls and pin-striped suits we don't often run across wildlife artists—and especially ones of your high caliber who both technically and magically have captured the wonder of birds. The old master, Audubon, needs to move over and make room for the Gentling boys. Your book is that good.

U. T. Press did a terrific job with the production, and the marvelous paintings punctuated by the colorful prose gave the entire work both weight and charm. And that's always a difficult combination to pull off.

Your lifetime fascination with birds have served you both well, because for many of us this birding thing is a more recent calling. And we're trying to catch up.

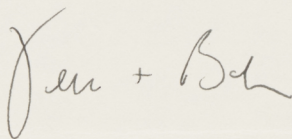
A couple of years ago, for example, we received a letter from Phoebe Snetsinger, who became the most accomplished birder of all, having located and identified over 8,400 of the 9,000 plus birds that exist on the planet. She had just read our book, *Chasing Warblers*, and commented on the Blackburnian Warbler on its cover. She said, "the first one I saw that magical spring over 30 years ago, and the impact of something so beautiful that I had never seen before, was strong and immediate—and changed my life." Years earlier, we had ourselves experienced a spiritual re-connection with nature in much the same way during a "fall out" of

neotropical migrants on the Texas Gulf Coast. It was quite a moment, as birds of all colors dropped from the sky like holiday ornaments and began dancing at our feet as they feverishly tried to re-nourish. We could have reached out and touched them. It was magical. In some respects it was if we had never before been dazzled by a sky full of stars until one crisp, clean night someone softly whispered the suggestion—that we simply look up.

Your marvelous book captures this special wonder of birding, and we feel privileged to have it, and to also know the two special people who produced it.

Warmest regards,

RLT:clh

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jen + Bel". The "J" is large and loops around the "en", and the "Bel" is written in a similar fluid style.