

FROM : TX AUDUBON SOCIETY

PHONE NO. : 5123060235

Nov. 25 1998 05:08PM P1

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TEXAS AUDUBON SOCIETY--TEXAS STATE
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facsimile transmittal

TO: Stuart Gentling
FAX: 817.732.5448 DATE: _____
FROM: Cathleen Glasbrook # PAGES: 11
RE: Article (TPWD)
☐ Urgent ☐ For Review ☒ Please Comment ☐ Please Reply ☐ Please Recycle

Notes:

Stuart - Here is the article along
with my requested revisions -

I will fax this to TPWD on
Monday - I will wait for your
comments first.

See you on Tuesday at 9am -
Call if you need assistance with directions, etc

Memorandum

To: Susanna Harn
CC: Becky
From: Catriona Glazebrook, Ex. Dir. Texas Audubon Society
Date: 11/25/98
Re: Rich Haddaway

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to review the article and my quotes, etc..

Here are some recommended changes to more accurately reflect my views:

Page one - third to the last line "the Society is working with the Gentlings in putting out a smaller more affordable version of the Gentling's Of Birds and Texas, an icon of Texas Art. A limited edition of this smaller version will be made available to the general public.

Top of page two - line three -----

"Many of our members are hunters, she says. "I would rather see people enjoying the outdoors, gaining an understanding of it and developing a love for it, than having them not having a clue about nature. Its habitat loss not hunting that is the major threat to the survival of birds in Texas. In Stuart's case, and in the case of John James Audubon, hunting has led them to a greater appreciation of birds, and ultimately enabled them to inspire others about the beauty and value of nature through their art."

Side Bar 1

Texas Audubon Society will be launching its 100th anniversary of conservation excellence in Texas next year. Texas Audubon was started in Galveston in 1899. The Society is planning a year long celebration starting in Galveston on March 4th, 1999. Please call Texas Audubon Society at (512) 306-0225 for further information about this historic event.

- March 4th: Kickoff Celebration and Texas Junior Audubon Launching at Moody Gardens in Galveston breakfast with Audubon Dignitaries, children's story hour with Angela Medearis (winner of National Story Teller's Award), songs by Bill Oliver (famed children's recording artist)
- March 5th: Gala Reception at Bass Hall in Fort Worth. General Admission Tickets are \$100 dollars each. Private showing of the Gentling Paintings by Stuart Gentling offered earlier that evening at a nearby Fort Worth Gallery (call Texas Audubon for Tickets to exclusive private showing).
- March 6th: Joint Celebration at Dallas Blooms event at the Dallas Aboretum;
- June: Birding Tour in Austin and other events starting at the Governor's Mansion

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- November : An event honoring 100 years of Audubon and the Sabal Palm Sanctuary on the Rio Grande river in Brownsville

The Society is also co-sponsoring along with the Fort Worth Museum a year long traveling exhibit of 22 of the Gentling's Paintings. The show is presently booked at the following locations:

- March 1-28 : The Contemporary Art Center in Fort Worth
- June : The Texas Memorial Museum in Austin
- November 14-December 15 : The Brownsville Museum of Fine Arts
- September 2000 : The Bush Library in College Station

If you would like to book a show in your community as part of Audubon's celebration contact Texas Audubon Society.

Sidebar

While not everyone can find or afford to purchase the Gentling's Elephant Folio, Of Birds and Texas, a smaller more affordable limited edition of the book is being produced and advanced copy sales are available. Please contact the artists.

These are much more than typical wildlife illustrations. Neither are they done with scientific exactitude in a style derisively called "feather counting." Rather, what we have here are *portraits* of birds, idealized and impassioned.

"I wanted to do artful paintings of birds," said Stuart. "I wanted things that were personal, of magical poses, that came out of my memory of Audubon works."

That passion to capture the spirit of birds has been with the Gentings since childhood. Stuart says he doesn't remember *not* loving birds.

He took a correspondence course in taxidermy when he was 10 years old. He and Scott would collect specimens with a BB gun in their west Fort Worth neighborhood.

When they were 13 they discovered the work of Audubon in the library of the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History and were captivated immediately. That led to much studying and copying of the works, a trip as teen-agers across the eastern United States to retrace the naturalist's steps, and eventually it all bloomed into the idea of doing a Texas version of Audubon's famed *The Birds of America*.

Of Birds and Texas was 10 years in the making and, ironically the man who inspired them ended up saving the project.

At a point when they had mortgaged everything they owned to finance the bird book and were still coming up short of funds, Stuart found a picture of boat-tailed grackles in a catalogue from a Philadelphia print shop. The painting's owner wasn't sure it was an Audubon original, but Stuart, who had studied the painter all his life, knew better. He purchased it for \$18,000, proved its authenticity and sold it soon after for \$235,000. The Gentings' books, which cost the brothers about \$500,000 to produce, eventually sold out and they even made a little money on the deal.

Interviewing the Gentings is like being in the middle of a tennis match. The brothers speak in bursts of words, one volley after another. The listener is the net. And

sometimes it seems like more than one tennis ball is in play at once. Sometimes the volleys collide.

(That's also how they worked on the bird project -- in tandem. Stuart often did the initial sketch of the bird, and Scott painted it. "[Scotty and I] have a rapport that started in the womb," Stuart said once. "We really are the best of friends.")

Stuart is the spokesman for the team. He's voluble, charming, a raconteur, as opposed to his brother, who is much more task-focused. Although Stuart spends lots of time dreaming up business, cooking, hunting and hobnobbing with the cultural elite of Fort Worth, he doesn't neglect his art. His specialties are still lifes and landscapes.

They're fraternal twins, both lifelong bachelor. Stuart is darker, bearded, athletic; Scott is shy, serious, with a monk's pallor. Scott rises at five every morning and works all day in his bedroom, on his bed, barefoot, in shorts and T-shirt, as the television plays unattended in the background. Outdoor light is painful to him because of a cornea problem.

They were born in Rochester, Minn., in 1942, to a physician father who moved the family, including two other siblings, to Fort Worth when the boys were five. The twins soon established themselves as a pair of Renaissance boys.

The boys hunted birds and learned to stuff them, raised rare pheasants in their back yard, built a replica of a French guillotine that could cut a two-by-four in half, and constructed a rocket that, in a miscalculation involving a can of gunpowder, left the boys eyeblindness.

Today the Gentings' house is the story of their lives, and what it reveals is one magnificent obsession after another, in layers.

For instance, the coat closet by the front door is stuffed with authentic 18th-century costumes -- military uniforms and royal court regalia.

There's no furniture in the front room. The twins got rid of the furniture ("It was a bunch of junk," says Stuart) when they made a deal to trade a portrait of a prominent

interior designer for some new stuff. That was three years ago. The portrait is finished and it's time for the trade, but now Stuart has decided he likes the room without furniture.

Across the room, on a stand, is a stuffed Artwater's prairie chicken. Stuart is working on a sketch of the bird, and his pad is nearby. When the picture of the bird is finished, it will be donated to the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, which will tax it into a poster and the proceeds will be used to help restock the birds in the wild.

Looking down on the stuffed brown bird is a newly acquired *objet d'art*, a life mask of George Washington that Stuart recently purchased through a Sotheby's phone-in auction. He's been working to restore the mask to its original condition, and believes he's made a shrewd investment.

Nearby is a scale model of the Great Temple in Tenochtitlán, the capital of Aztec Mexico. That's the most pressing of the Gentling obsessions, "rebuilding" -- with paintings, scale models and genuine artifacts -- the great civilization that existed at the time of Cortés's invasion.

Aztec artifacts are everywhere in the house, as are African masks, models of wooden ships, and prints from India and China, Nepal and Japan. Unframed art leans against walls, a dozen deep. Scott is back in his bedroom, working on a portrait of a socialite's daughter. A white cat is curled up nearby.

In the next room is a single zebra finch, tasteless because of the aforementioned cat. A *Melrose Place* rerun is on the television in Scott's room; Stuart is playing a videotape of *Hamlet* in his room. In a corner of Stuart's room is a musket, part of a still life he's working on for Fort Worth's sesquicentennial.

Pieces a museum between shows. The old exhibit has not been packed away, but the new one has just been unraveled. Add three more exhibits, crum it into a 2,000-square-foot house and put the artists themselves in charge. That's the Gentling household.

Although the Gentlings try to distance themselves from their bird art to show their range and varied interests, birds still play a central part in their artistic lives.

They've been an integral part of the art in Fort Worth's \$80 million Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall, which opened in May 1996 to international acclaim as being a work of art in itself.

The dome of the ceiling is the work of the Genthings. Floating in an expanse of Mediterranean blue sky are two golden eagles. A motif of wings sets off the ceiling. Scott painted the portraits of the namesake Besses that hang in the foyer. Gentling murals show images of Texas natural history, and Stuart is working with financier Ed Bass on plans for another mural, this one featuring Texas birds.

Dutch Phillips, a Fort Worth art dealer and the Genthings' longtime friend, believes that just as Audubon has been overlooked as a great American painter, the Genthings have yet to be recognized for their great contribution to art.

He believes that not only will the bird book be recognized as an icon of Texas culture the way the works of J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb and Roy Bedichek are, but he believes Scott Gentling is one of the three best portraitists in America today. And then there's the massive Aztec project.

In an age of specialists, the Genthings stand out, Phillips says. "I just don't know of any American artists who have that kind of breadth," he says.

(Rich Haddaway is a freelance writer from Fort Worth.)

SIDEBAR 1

The Audubon Centennial, 1999 events [editor: call close to your deadline for changes and addition to this schedule; this is very tentative]

- Kickoff celebration March 4 at Moody Gardens in Galveston with breakfast honoring ^{with other 2000} Audubon dignitaries. Galveston plans to initiate an annual birding festival in conjunction with the centennial.
- Gala reception March 5 at Bass Hall in Fort Worth. Tickets are \$100 each. Nearby gallery will be exhibiting Gentling brothers' paintings. A tour of the Gentlings' art will continue across the state, from Austin to Brownsville and finally at the Bush Library in College Station in September 2000.
- Joint celebration March 6 with "Dallas Blooms" event at Dallas Arboretum.
- Outdoor breakfast first week in June at Governor's Mansion, plus birding tours and other events.
- An event in the fall promoting the Sabal Palm Sanctuary in the Rio Grande Valley.

- Rich Haddaway

SIDEBAR 2

Stuart Gentling also believes in the art of cooking. He offers this as his favorite recipe for mourning doves.

Doves: Gentling

- Start with 20 plucked and gutted doves.
- Fill a bag with flour, quite a bit of crushed tarragon, a little pepper and shake up the birds in the bag, lightly dusting them.
- Put them in a frying pan with clarified butter, saute them till they're brown and put them in a big pot.
- Use any packaged gravy - chicken, beef, pork - he prefers pork or beef. Mix up four packages and pour over doves. Add chopped onions, crushed tarragon, a little bit of basil and lots of garlic powder, parsley and chopped celery. Put one piece of bacon on top and simmer for 45 minutes.

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- Add a can of sliced mushrooms and cook another 10 or 15 minutes. Season with one-third cup of sherry or to taste.
- When doves are about to fall apart, they're done. Put mixture over a combination of white and wild rice. Serve with asparagus or broccoli and a pickled peach.

Rich Haddaway