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Letter from the editor

Spring Memories

One early May day last year, while sitting on my screened-in porch, I heard the distinctive song of a Mourning Warbler, a bird I had never seen in my backyard. I bounded outside stumbling over bird food and other paraphernalia to find the male in my honeysuckle, singing away, displaying his black bib.

Well, wasn't this a find? However when I told *Meadowlark* art editor Denis Kania about the Mourning Warbler that had been hanging around my backyard for more than a week, he responded with a blase: "Mourning Warblers are junk birds in backyards this spring."

And when my sister told a Libertyville man who is an IOS member about my Mourning Warbler, he said, "Big deal. Now if she said she had a Connecticut Warbler, maybe I'd be impressed."

Several days later while standing in my living room with windows open on one of the first sunny days during the unusually cold and wet spring, I heard the song that would impress him. A Connecticut Warbler was belting its heart out in the Norway spruce in my front yard.

I went outside and watched it fly to my next-door neighbor's black walnut where it hummed a few more bars, then ducked into her white fir. I rounded up two witnesses to confirm this sighting. But I remain today incredulous, thinking it was all a dream.

Two Clay-colored Sparrows also spent a half an hour feeding on my front lawn last spring. So I added three incredible species to my backyard bird list.

The spring of 1996, however, was bittersweet. Many small insect-eating birds perished unable to find food due to the low insect count and incredibly cold weather. The Cerulean Warbler my sister discovered on the ground in a parking lot at a forest preserve did not look like it would survive the spring.

I'm not sure if I want to experience another spring like that one.

Perhaps it's best to savor the memories by reading the stories in this issue about the spring that Paul Clyne said would never end.

Sheryl De Vore