

WINGED ADVENTURES: Walking Woodlawn

By Pat Valdata

"The natural function of the wing is to soar upwards and carry that which is heavy up to the place where dwells the race of gods. More than any other thing that pertains to the body it partakes of the nature of the divine." — Plato

When you think of a nice place for a stroll and birding, a former superfund site is probably not what most people have in mind. But Firetower Road near Colora has a small gem of wildlife habitat that also happens to be a model for how an eyesore can be turned into eye candy.

New Beginnings Woodlawn Wildlife Area was a 37-acre county landfill in the 1970s. When groundwater pollution was discovered there in the 1980s, the EPA designated it as a Superfund site. Because it had so many tires in it, Bridgestone Americas Holding, Inc. took over the site and began to clean it up. They acquired an additional 58 acres next to the contaminated landfill so they could monitor the groundwater situation.

"In the mid-1990's, something unexpected was discovered," said **Raissa Marks**, Biologist and Land Restoration Program Manager for the Wildlife Habitat Council. "The site was actually getting cleaner on its own. Naturally occurring bacteria were breaking down the contaminants in the groundwater. This unexpected event opened the door for innovative, ecological restoration methods to be put into practice at Woodlawn."

Bridgestone partnered with the Wildlife Habitat Council, which brings together individuals, conservation groups, and businesses, to show how a site like this can be made safe for wildlife and people. They have been working with local



A new resident of Woodlawn—a Barred Owl

organizations such as the Scouts, the Cecil Bird Club, Cecil County Master Gardeners, the Cecil Land Trust, the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, Department of Natural Resources and local schools.

"I'm so glad we have something like this in this part of the county," said **Anne DeMott**, a Master Gardener who is actively involved with New Beginnings. She took me on a tour of the site late in February, pointing out the well-kept nature trail, the raised beds where she and other Master Gardeners have planted bird-friendly perennials, and the meadows and woodlands located on the 58-acre Wildlife Area. "New Beginnings is really a poster child for projects like this, and an excellent example of what can be done," said DeMott.



The Wildlife Area is maintained by an enthusiastic group of volunteers. Anne mentioned that Boy Scout Troop 28 has been very helpful there, by digging post holes for bluebird boxes and helping to keep the nature trail bramble-free. One Scout built a picnic pavilion as his eagle badge project.

"Another gardener, **Bill Smith**, put in rain barrels under the pavilion roof, and a pump system so we can water the perennial beds," Anne said. "Before he did that we had to haul water here."

Another volunteer, **Jerry Newman**, a member of the North American Bluebird



Master Gardener Anne DeMott pauses near one of Jerry Newman's bluebird boxes

Society, installed a Bluebird Trail with a dozen nest boxes. According to Jerry, the Bluebird boxes are also used by Carolina Chickadees, Tree Swallows and House Wrens.

On the cold day Anne and I strolled along the nature trail, Cardinals and Mockingbirds perched in the trees, and large flocks of Sparrows and Juncos searched for lunch in the meadow and parking lot. In the spring, New Beginnings should be full of nesting birds. It packs a lot of habitat variety into 58 acres. And thanks to good management practices, not to mention those contamination-eating bacteria in the soil, it is a safe, clean place to enjoy the outdoors.

"New Beginnings is valuable natural area and a community resource," said Raissa Marks. "I encourage everyone to enjoy the site on their own or during scheduled classes or events."

Upcoming events include a rain barrel workshop, an open house, and classes on composting, nature photography, and plant identification. For more information and a full schedule, visit www.wildlifehc.org/brownfields/woodlawn_calendar.cfm or contact Raissa Marks at 301-588-8994 or by email at rmarks@wildlifehc.org. You can also see a list of all the plants, animals, and birds that can be seen at New Beginnings at www.wildlifehc.org/eweeditpro/items/057F7370.pdf.

Nino's Namesake

When I asked Gaetano Diomedes if he named his restaurants after his first son, Nino, he said, "No, we named the first store after my father, who passed away in 1983. Out of respect for my father, I named my store and first born son after him."

Then Guy went on to explain.

"Ed, the naming of my first born son is a strict Italian tradition. My two older brothers and I all have our first born sons named 'Nino' ('Giovanni'). This tradition goes back many-many years. 'Nino' is actually short for 'Giovanni'. 'Giovanni' means 'John' and 'Nino' and is like saying 'little John'.

"This tradition also works for girls. My daughter is named 'Veronica', after my mom. Because my wife is also Italian, my second born son is named after my wife's father, Leonardo. Are you confused yet?

"It's a tradition going back many years and the reason for doing this is so the names in your family live on forever. Your name will re-circulate every other generation and people will know, 'Hey, are you such-n-such's grandson?' If I haven't confused you yet then you probably have some Italian in you!"

—ETB

WOMEN WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: Eileen Boyle

By Mike Collins

Oh sure, she's hard-working, pretty, energetic, and conscientious. But what really makes Eileen Boyle so unique is that so many of the tasks she undertakes are for the benefit of others. And they are numerous.

Her business card reads, "Eileen Boyle, Horticulture Consultant/Volunteer Coordinator, Cecil County, Maryland Cooperative Extension" but that barely hints at the range of tasks this lady takes on. She is the volunteer coordinator for the 4-H program in Cecil County, heads up the Master Gardener Program, is the program director (The Lecturer) for the Union Grange, and an active member of the Friends of Brandywine Springs Park. She is also a former Girl Scout Troop leader (from 1990 to 2003) but still active in the troop.

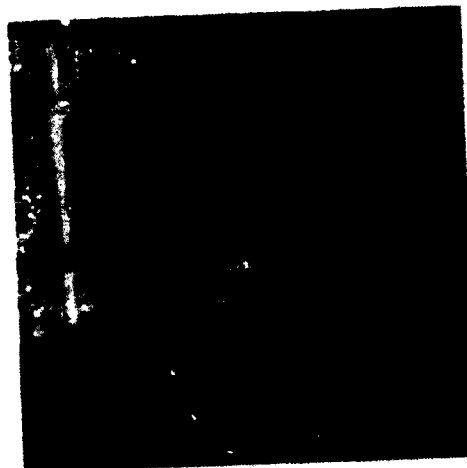
Through all of these activities Eileen seeks to enhance other people's lives. "I'm currently working with over 250 very active volunteers in the 4-H program in this county", she reports. "They're a great, great group of volunteers—everything from livestock to plants to teaching woodworking and rocketry. We involve kids from ages five to eighteen. We have great 4-H kids. The interest in this county is just tremendous."

As the local 4-H Horticulture Coach, Eileen escorted 15 students to the National Junior Horticulture Association Convention held this past October in Cleveland, Ohio. "The biggest thing for the kids was, 'Ohhhhh, we get to go to the Rock-N-Roll Hall of Fame!'," she relates.

Some of her students achieved national rankings against the best 4-H students in the country, including Joe Shortall, who was a National Winning Demonstrator in the Artistic Division; Kyle King, both a National Winning Demonstrator in the Landscape Division and 6th place on the Horticultural team; and Tamara Ward, who placed 5th on the Horticultural team.

As the Master Gardener coordinator Eileen also works with adults in the county. "It's just as great to work with adults", she enthuses. "They work together to create a lot of activities ... such as visiting the Philadelphia Flower Show, giving demonstrations, and working at Woodlawn."

A project near and dear to Eileen's heart, the Woodlawn Wildlife Area, is located next to a former county landfill and Superfund site. This area is in the process of being transformed into a park and wildlife area for the benefit of all Cecil residents. Under Eileen's guidance the Cecil County Master Gardeners have assumed the primary role (in conjunction with The National Wildlife Council) for the restoration and utilization of the site. They have built compost



piles and raised beds for a nursery stocked with native plants to be used in landscaping the area. They have also installed a rainwater catchment system, and have hosted a series of public education workshops.

"I'm also working with the Wildlife Habitat Council of Silver Spring, Maryland to develop gardens attractive to wildlife and butterflies," reports Eileen.

Ms. Raissa Marks, the Land Restoration Program Manager for the Wildlife Habitat Council, says that, "Eileen is one of the most enthusiastic, dedicated, and knowledgeable people we work with. She knows everyone and is a great resource."

The fact that she is so knowledgeable and knows everyone in the local horticulture community should not come as a surprise. She was born and raised just across the line in Middletown, Delaware, and after graduating from Thomas McKean High School, she first attended Essex Agricultural College in Hawthorn, Massachusetts, and then the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware, graduating in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture/Plant Science.

She's funny, she's smart, she's loyal, and she works untold hours, but that's not the whole story of Eileen Boyle. She is dedicated to helping people, and through her hard work with the many, many volunteers in this county she strives to make a difference in the lives of everyone she comes in contact with. Whether it's working with the Girl Scouts, organizing a workshop at the Woodlawn Wildlife Area or encouraging young women she's befriended over the years, Eileen strives to help others reach their full potential and in the process make Cecil County a better place to live. That's called making a difference. That's Eileen Boyle.