The Once and Future Nature Museum
by Joan Cwi

Beginning in mid-December, the Carriage House Nature Museum will be closing...at least for the foreseeable future! All of its contents—mounted birds and animals, eggs and nests, shells and skulls, rocks and books, butterflies and general bric-a-brac will be removed and put into long-term storage. Why, you ask?

Let's start from the beginning. In 1961 the BBC began to slowly develop a nature museum on the 3rd floor of the Cylburn Mansion. This initial endeavor was largely the work of Lois Odell and Martha Schaefer. In 1984 it underwent a substantial renovation under the direction of Patsy Perlman. Even Mayor Schaefer lent a hand! The current Nature Museum in the Carriage House opened in 2005 after Robert Dwight read a story in the Baltimore Sun about the Birds of Maryland Museum at Cylburn. The museum had been closed in 2004 for lack of handicapped access to the upper floors of the mansion. Mr. Dwight donated over $36,000 to BBC for the relocation of the bird museum and the nature collection to a refurbished Carriage House. BBC asked the Cylburn Arboretum Association (CAA) to administer the fund, and CAA raised additional money for the renovation. The City Naturalist, CAA and BBC continued to use the museum for educational programs for city school children and the general public. Although open only on weekends in warmer weather, the museum regularly draws about 3,000 people each year from the area and across the country. The museum is considered by many as a “crown jewel”—the best collection of Maryland birds on exhibit in the State.

Continued on page 8
Why are we birders? One reason is a deep feeling for the natural world. Watching bird migration brings us large numbers of beautiful visitors and involves us in a cycle that is millions of years old. As observers we can feel some of the grandeur of this natural process. It is little wonder that we want to help the birds along their way--by rescuing them from bright lights in big cities; by restoring and protecting habitat; by monitoring bird populations in Christmas and May counts; and by contributing to conservation organizations.

For me, as for many birders, the love of nature extends to other creatures, so that an outing to see birds can result in a celebration of mammals, or reptiles, or the Monarch butterflies that migrate like the birds each fall. In my two trips to Costa Rica, birders and guides alike have been excited by monkeys, sloths, coatis, agoutis, crocodiles and caimans. It’s great to visit a country where a commercial van service stops to look at monkeys and macaws.

Great non-bird sightings can also happen close to home. On a Western Maryland trip with Elliott and Nancy Kirschbaum, we paused to look at a Timber Rattlesnake sunning itself on a dirt road. This was a formidable snake, scary but also beautiful; I stayed twenty feet away. In Fall 2014 I led a Lake Roland birding trip where we saw three river otters playing in the stream near the concrete platform (Lake Roland birders will know what I mean). What an incredible moment! A few months later I read that river otters are making a comeback in the Mid-Atlantic states.

Which brings me to a very recent non-bird sighting. On September 7 at 2:57 am I awoke to a wordless melody outside my bedroom window. Somebody—an animal, not a human—was singing soft, minor key phrases. I carefully moved the window blind and discovered two foxes fifteen feet away in a garden patch. One was larger than the other, so I think a parent was singing to a child. After a minute or two the foxes walked away.

We still live in a natural and surprisingly wild world. As birders, we cherish that world.
Lights Out Baltimore in the News

Grant Award

In June, Lindsay Jacks, Director of Lights Out Baltimore (LOB) was awarded a $1000 personal grant for conducting bird-strike mitigation in downtown Baltimore. Besides being the Director of LOB, Lindsay is a full-time Aviculturist at the National Aquarium, caring for birds and bats in the Australia exhibit. She applied for the grant through American Association of Zoo Keepers, a national 501c3 organization striving to “advance excellence in the animal keeping profession.” There are three major grants awarded each year to keepers across the nation for various projects. Lindsay was awarded the Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration grant to put towards Lights Out Baltimore. With the money, LOB will prevent bird collisions to a downtown building by treating the glass with CollidEscape window film. This retrofitting of one building will be a first for Charm City -- to mitigate collisions by treating the windows. The building will hopefully inspire other building owners to take the initiative to save migratory birds. Over 3000 birds have fallen victim to collisions in Baltimore City since 2008. There will also be signage placed at the building recognizing the Baltimore Bird Club, Lights Out Baltimore, and the National Aquarium for contributing to the project. Once the installation is complete (by 2017), there will be update in Chip Notes. Stay tuned.

Creative Alliance Workshop: How to Make Your Home Bird-Friendly in Bird Town

We love our birds here in Bird Town, but according to the American Bird Conservatory, as many as a billion birds are dying annually from collisions with windows in the United States. Millions of birds pass through our area during migration, and we do our share of the damage here in Baltimore. It’s a terrible and unnecessary loss, but you can help!

Lynne Parks, a Baltimore artist/curator and Outreach Coordinator for Lights Out Baltimore, in coordination with Creative Alliance, offered two sessions on how to make your home bird-friendly. On September 10th and October 8th, she explained why birds strike, and offered creative solutions for problem windows.

This included a session on creating beautiful cut-out patterns from CollidEscape window film, which were then applied to a large window at The Patterson. “This is the future of birds in art: dying or absent. If we continue to live as we do, these beautiful and helpful creatures that represent peace, freedom, and strength will only remain as symbols.”
Bird Nerds and Proud of it?

*Bird Watcher’s Digest (BWD)* reported on a study that examined exactly what makes us think that other people are creepy.** They asked 1,341 participants what jobs creeped them out, and clown, taxidermist, sex-shop owner and funeral director led the list. They also asked which hobbies they thought of as creepy. Collectors of such things as dolls, insects and body parts were considered particularly creepy, followed by variations of “watching,” including, of course, bird watchers! Well, BWD concluded, at least we bird watchers seem to be less creepy than clowns and funeral directors, with apologies to these two occupations!

*September/October 2016

**In New Ideas in Psychology, by Frank McAndrew and Sara Koehnke from Knox College in Illinois.

Bird Stamps in Time for Christmas!

The bad news is that one is no longer able to buy the colorful songbird series of first class stamps that became available about two years ago. But the good news is that the U.S. Postal Service has recently released a winter series of colorful songbirds—the Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, and Red-breasted Nuthatch—just in time for the holiday season!
Middle River Christmas Bird Count

The Baltimore Bird Club participates in two important national bird counts each year—the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in December, and the Breeding Bird Survey in June. As its name implies, the CBC is coming up soon, and for the fourth consecutive year we will be doing our count in Middle River, this year on Saturday December 17th. If you want to help out, please contact Kevin Graff at keyweststyle2001@gmail.com. All skill levels welcome to participate.

BBC 2016 Financial Audit completed—thank you Peter and Mary!

Under BBC’s Bylaws, we are obligated to have a financial audit every four years, and 2016 was the year! During the summer, Peter Lev and Mary Gruver Byers volunteered for the task. As before, they found our financial statements to be in excellent shape, compliments to Dick Krejci, BBC Treasurer, who has kept meticulous records since he started ten years ago. They made a couple of suggestions for future implementation that will become part of operations. So, thanks again to our audit team and Treasurer for a job well done.

BBC on Exhibit at Cromwell Valley Dam Jam, August 20th

BBC and Lights Out Baltimore brought out their exhibits to the annual Dam Jam to spread the word about birding and bird strike prevention. Thanks to BBC volunteers Joan Cwi, Kevin Graff, Lindsay Jacks, Judy Harding, Jill Kessler and Dick Krejci for giving up part of their Saturday to help out!
the desired plant communities. These methods could include mechanical, manual, chemical, biological, and/or cultural methods. The plant communities, once established, would be mostly self-sustaining, reducing the maintenance costs that are often a utility company's largest operations and maintenance expense, and ultimately saving us customers money.

And although IVM's main purpose is to economically manage rights of way to keep the electricity flowing, a 'happy side effect' is providing habitat for wildlife that need this type of meadow and transitional low-growth environment. Rights of way also present one of the best opportunities to create miles-long, non-fragmented corridors, even corridor networks, that enable individual populations of species to connect with each other. They also provide routes for migratory species.

Studies of areas where IVM (Integrated Vegetation Management—remember that phrase!) has been implemented have repeatedly shown its numerous benefits. In looking into this issue, this birder and environmental advocate found it amazing the number of universities, environmental groups, professional organizations and utility companies that have come together all over the country to study this process. Not that it's been easy. Implementing IVM often requires changing people's mindsets. For example, judicious herbicide use can be a part of this management plan as part of a multi-pronged approach. I emphasize the words judicious and part. Any need to use herbicides has been found to greatly diminish invasive species as the native plant community takes over an area. A different work ethic involves replacing a simple mowing schedule with individual site evaluations, planning approaches, and the physical work of removing or killing undesirable vegetations to achieve growth that requires less and less human intervention and control as sites become established.

An example of the success of IVM is seen in Connecticut. Believe it or not, due to heavy reforestation in New England most of the open habitat was eliminated, greatly reducing many species. New managed power line corridors there have been shown to provide habitat for species such as the Brown Thrasher, the state-endangered Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, Field Sparrows, and many species of pollinators like bees and butterflies—species that had been on the decline because of the lack of their meadow and low-growth habitat requirements.

IVM can also be beautiful! For example, witness BGE’s experience in Columbia, Maryland. Due to bad weather, BGE did a clear cut of the local rights of way, inadvertently enraging local residents. The ensuing conversation resulted in a pilot IVM project there, and it now includes walking trails and information signs—used and appreciated by all. See below for a full list of the active IVM created by BGE and check out the National Wildlife Federation's article and photos about the wildlife habitats BGE has created along its power line rights of way.

With approximately nine million acres of power/transmission line rights of way and another 12 million acres for pipelines across the nation, the idea of "best use" of these often maligned and problematic areas can now be redefined by using IVM practices, resulting in benefits for utility companies, rights of way neighbors and native wildlife that would be hard to accomplish elsewhere.

BGE power line rights of way segments now under IVM include:

- Patuxent National Research Refuge, running from Route 295 to the Amtrak line in Laurel
- South River Greenway Partnership, from Waugh Chapel Substation to Route 50 in Davidsonville
- Columbia/Lake Elkhorn Vicinity, from Oakland Mills Road to Carved Stone, in Columbia
- Liberty Reservoir, running from Cockeys Mill Road in Reisterstown to Deer Park Rd
- Flag Ponds, running from Flag Ponds Parkway to the Calvert Cliffs Power Plant in Lusby, southern Anne Arundel County
- American Chestnut Land Trust, from Dares Beach Road to Parker's Creek in Prince Frederick.

*https://www.epa.gov/pesp/integrated-vegetation-management-fact-sheet
**http://e360.yale.edu/feature/electric_power_rights_of.way_a_new_frontier_for_conservation/2816/
Rogue Robin

By Joan Cwi

For the past 30 years we’ve been feeding birds on our second-floor deck, observing them from our kitchen table. During that time American Robins have occasionally stopped by, but seldom returned. That is until Rogue Robin found us this year!

I thought it was a “she” because of the lighter chest and back coloring. Rogue starting coming in March, stopping by every day to take advantage of the seed feeder and birdbath. I know robins will eat seed from the ground or tray feeders, but Rogue was regularly perching on the “squirrel-proof” tube feeder to get the seeds! And bathing could be quite a luxurious affair—a long bath getting half the deck wet, followed by a serious bout of preening. It was then that I discovered her brood patch, confirming sexual identity.

All About Birds describes American Robins as “industrious and authoritarian birds.” We sure got to see the “authoritarian” side of Rogue. She would sit in a nearby vine, and if a single European Starling landed on the feeder or deck, she would swoop in and give it a piece of her mind, physically attacking and generally winning. It is amazing how similar in size robins and starlings are, including their beaks.

Rogue seemed to have enough sense to leave well enough alone when multiple starlings appeared.

Rogue disappeared for a couple of weeks in late May/early June. We were hoping she was nesting, or maybe she had just gotten tired of us. Then she started to reappear. She fed less from the feeder now because I was throwing blueberries out on the deck since they had become cheaper. Although she had to share the berries with catbirds and cardinals, they didn’t seem to bother her at all—just any starling brazen enough to try to grab one. Rogue would gulp down a couple of berries, then fill her bill with 2 or 3 more and fly off, always in the same direction.

Bambinos? We got our answer in early August when she appeared on the deck with a very young fledgling. The fledgling tolerated, nay encouraged, the numerous berries she kept shoving down its throat. I was looking forward to watching Rogue 2 grow.

Sadly, that was the last we saw of either of them!! So, as I suspected, this whole charade was territorial display, protecting her turf from the marauder starlings before venturing off with her young one to new beginnings!

Postscript. On October 16th, Rogue appeared once more for about fifteen minutes—sitting on her favorite vine, bathing luxuriously in the birdbath, and stealing a few more blueberries. I’m sure it was she—no other robin has stayed around that long. I wonder if I’ll see her next spring?

Chimney Swift Watch Sunday, September 18th

Photo by Mark Burchick

The migrating swifts gave us an exceptional show at the Bookbindery Chimney in Hampden this fall—about 1,800 entering the chimney, most of them in a brief five-minute period from 7:25-7:30. We had 42 spectators show up, including about 8 people from Howard County!! For a real treat, check out Mark Burchick’s video and photos (some seen below) of this event. You’ll learn a little more about swifts also at this site.

https://mfburchick.wordpress.com/2016/09/18/chimney-swift-communal-roost/
Urban Bird Fest a Success!
By Claire Wayner
Photos by Alice Nelson
A few kids scrambled around on picnic blankets, picking at owl pellets with tweezers and having staring contests with the stuffed Great Horned Owl supervising the festivities. Others snuck a bite of peanut butter while making pinecone bird feeders. Still others used loaner pairs of binoculars from the Baltimore Bird Club’s Cylburn stash to watch birds on a guided walk by the Stony Run stream. And some kids did it all!

This was the face of the first annual Stony Run Urban Bird Fest, hosted by Alice Nelson and me and sponsored by Friends of Stony Run (FSR). The event was intended to attract frequent visitors to the Stony Run* stream, parkland, and footpath and educate children and their parents about the importance of birds and good urban habitat for resident and migratory species. Through multiple craft activities, interactive bird walks, and a visit from Carrie Murray’s live bird ambassadors, the festival combined nature, science, and art into a wonderful experience for over 100 participants of all ages. As far as the actual birding went, it was

If you haven’t visited it lately, you will be shocked at the condition of the Carriage House! Over several hurricanes and major storms there has been severe roof and porch damage from falling trees. Although the roof has been repaired (twice!) since 2011, the porch is only surviving because it is propped up by 2x4’s (see photo). The good news is that the museum itself has had little damage, and other than during periods when the entryway was deemed unsafe, has continued to be open to the public.

But CAA is making big plans for the Carriage House, listed on the historic registry. Although their “vision” of a restored building is not finalized, at the end of this restoration, they anticipate a new and expanded museum. We will let you know more as their plans are developed. The Museum will remain open on weekends from 12-3 pm until November 27th, so this is your last chance to visit for quite awhile.

Meanwhile, BBC in collaboration with MOS, will be packing and storing our belongings beginning in mid-December. It is likely to be two or more years before the work is completed on the renovated Carriage House. A few mounted birds will be lent to Lake Roland for the duration, but most will remain in storage during that time. Hopefully when they see the light of day again they will be comfortably housed in a modern facility available to all for the next half century!
to Charles Street and Roland Avenue, about half way between these two major streets. It begins in the north just below Northern Parkway/Gilman School and ends in Remington/Druid Hill Park in the south, where it connects to the 7.75 mile Jones Falls Trail. It transverses the following urban neighborhoods: Roland Park, Hampden, Remington and Tuscany-Canterbury and abuts the following schools: Johns Hopkins University, Gilman School, and Friends School of Baltimore.

*For those not familiar with Stony Run Walking Path, it is a delightful and birdy woodland trail located in Baltimore City that follows a stream running parallel

**Miscellaneous**

**January Covered Dish Dinner**

We’ve changed the location of our big social event of the year to the Greenhouse Classroom at Cylburn (the Vollmer Center is not available) and the time to 2:00-4:30 pm (so people can be driving home before dark). We ask guests to bring hors d’oeuvres, finger food, small-portion desserts, or drinks to share—the idea is to have lighter fare than at a typical Covered Dish Dinner. Mark Johnson will be our featured speaker, and his topic remains the same: birding in Trinidad and Tobago. An on-line signup form, similar to what we used last year, will be available soon. When that form goes up we urge members to RSVP promptly. The Greenhouse Classroom is a smaller venue than the Vollmer Center and thus we may have to limit attendance. More information will be sent to members as planning continues. If you want to attend on January 8 but do not have online access, give me a call at 410-823-2962.

Peter Lev

**Welcome New Board Members**

Terry Ross is continuing as Acting Membership Secretary, but wants to relinquish this role as soon as possible. Fortunately we have found his replacement—Shirley Garret. Shirley is currently membership secretary at Senior Box Office, so she knows the ins-and-outs of what this means. As soon as Terry transfers the data to a different management program, Shirley will take over for us.

Robin Tress, after six years as our eNews coordinator, is resigning. Thank you so much, Robin, for a job exceptionally well done! Many of the beautiful photos you have been seeing of our trip locations were taken by Robin. We’ll be trying a new format, through Mailchimp.com. Kindly let us know if you have any issues or concerns with the new service by contacting our new eNews coordinator, Sarah Luttrell (luttrell.sa@gmail.com).

And last, but not least, Cathy Czajkowski is joining our ever-needed editing team, willing to give a hand to Chip Notes, the Program Booklet, and other BBC publications as needed.

**Wild Birds Unlimited Holiday Open House**

December 3 (Sat) Noon—3 pm

Hot drinks and food. Live raptors from the Phoenix Wildlife Center.

Kevin Graff will be there to hand out discount coupons to BBC members.

Address: Wild Birds Unlimited of Timonium, 2438 Broad Avenue (off of West Padonia Road, closest to York Road), Lutherville, MD 21093
AUG 30 - Cromwell Valley Park - Nice day and lots of bird activity in spots. Early on, the area around the garden was very busy--oriole, flycatcher, sparrows. Great views of a Great Crested Flycatcher and a White-eyed Vireo (Lou got some great pix). 53 species. 11 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.

SEP 6 - Cromwell Valley Park - Diversity of species was average, but we saw a number of American Redstarts, Common Yellowthroats, Prairie, Chestnut-sided, and Black-throated Green Warblers. A Philadelphia Vireo was well seen and well photographed. We saw both Least and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers. A Nashville and a Wilson’s Warbler were on our list but observed by only one or two birders. 52 species. 20 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

SEP 13 - Cromwell Valley Park - We had a beautiful morning for a bird walk. It started off cool and clear. The birding was a bit slow but we did come across several groups of mixed flocks. There were several vireo species as well as 8 types of warblers. The highlight was a Tennessee Warbler and a juvenile Mourning Warbler seen by several members of the walk. 37 species. 18 participants. Leader: Mary Anne Fluke.

SEP 18 - Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park – This trip featured a good view of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and a brief look at a flying Solitary Sandpiper. A Kingfisher was heard. Only a few warblers were seen, including Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Black-and-white and Magnolia Warblers. 36 species. 8 participants. Leaders: Paul & Elise Kreiss.
OCT 4 - Cromwell Valley Park - We began the bird walk near the hawk watch area where we found a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a female Purple Finch and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We then walked along the willow forest path where 6 warbler species, both types of kinglets and 4 Blue-headed Vireos were seen. Along the way we also spotted migrating Broad-winged Hawks as well as several American Kestrels and a Northern Harrier. 58 species. 17 participants. Leader: Mary Anne Fluke.

OCT 11 - Cromwell Valley Park - As Kevin Graff said, “our best October day.” We saw 63 species, lots of Palm Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, as well as Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, and Black-throated Green Warblers. A few got to see a pair of Common Raven on the way back. Birdy from start to finish with lots of great birders who helped everyone “get on” the birds. 63 species. 17 participants. Leader: Ron Davis.

OCT 9 - Lake Roland - Despite threatening windy weather, 6 people turned up for this trip. We had 5 woodpecker species including Pileated and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. The only warbler were 7 Yellow-rumped's. We also had one immature Bald Eagle (1st year). 28 species. 6 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

OCT 16 - Oregon Ridge Park & Farm Park - Fourteen birders met on a foggy and overcast day for an introductory walk to Oregon Ridge Park. We explored the fields and riparian habitat at the park, with highlights including very cooperative Purple Finches and kinglets flitting at eye level that were enjoyed by all participants. In the community gardens Field Sparrows perched obligingly. To search for more sparrows, the group moved across the street to the Center for Maryland Agriculture and Farm Park. Here Palm Warblers and Savannah Sparrows were encountered in the sorghum fields, often sitting up on exposed stalks for photo opportunities. A Cooper’s Hawk seemed to follow us around the property, and gave field guide views to all participants as we could observe it in flight and perched throughout the entire walk. 46 species. 14 participants. Leader: Simon Best.
Baltimore Bird Club
http://baltimorebirdclub.org

A Chapter of
Maryland Ornithological Society
4915 Greenspring Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21209

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Joan Cwi, Editor
David Nelson, Design

Submit materials to
Joan Cwi - jafjsc@verizon.net

Moving or email change? Send update to
Terry Ross at tross@ubalt.edu

Baltimore Bird Club
APPLICATION

Membership year is September 1–August 31. New members only joining after March 1 may pay half-year rate. A full year’s dues received after April 30 will be applied to the next membership year.

Name:________________________________________________________

Address:______________________________________________________

City:_________________ Zip:________ Phone:___________________

Email:________________________________________________________

Benefits include membership in the BBC and Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), free field trips, quarterly BBC and MOS newsletters sent electronically, lectures and other events.

Check dues category and circle amount sent.

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* Through 17: record age here ____

+Chapter Only membership is available to MOS members who are already members of another MOS chapter or who are MOS life members.

Deadlines for submitting articles for upcoming issues:

January 24, 2017

Mail completed application with check payable to:
Baltimore Bird Club, Attn: Membership Chairman,
4915 Greenspring Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21209